

INSPECTION REPORT

BRADWELL VILLAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bradwell Village, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110369

Headteacher: Mrs Jan Kennington

Reporting inspector: John Burnham
5020

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 June 2002

Inspection number: 196622

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed Primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 - 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Walgrave Drive
Bradwell Village
Milton Keynes

Postcode: MK13 9AZ

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Carolyn Baker

Date of previous inspection: July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
5020	John Burnham	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
19436	Michael O'Malley	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20643	Ian Gardner	Team inspector	Science; art and design, physical education.	
24104	Mick Marsh	Team inspector	English; religious education; English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
3694	Margaret Riley	Team inspector	Geography; history.	How well are pupils and students taught?
18568	Mary Sinclair	Team inspector	Mathematics; music; equal opportunities.	
4144	Ian Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; design and technology; special educational needs.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bradwell Village Middle School is situated approximately two miles to the north-west of Central Milton Keynes. The school serves an area of mixed housing, and pupils come from a broad cross-section of social backgrounds. There are currently 373 pupils between the ages of eight and twelve years, of whom 195 are boys and 178 are girls; this number has fallen from 414 at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils arrive at school with standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally for pupils aged eight. Twenty-two pupils (6 per cent) have English as an additional language, which is just above average, and this proportion is rising. Twelve per cent of pupils come from non-white heritage backgrounds. The school has identified 32 pupils (9 per cent) as being entitled to free school meals, a figure that fluctuates but is usually in line with the national average. A significant proportion of the pupils (16 per cent) either joined or left the school during the last year at other than the usual transfer times. An above-average proportion (29 per cent) of pupils are on the school's special educational needs (SEN) register. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average at just over one per cent. Half of the teachers have been appointed within the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

After a period of instability, this is now an improving school. Standards achieved by pupils aged eleven are satisfactory in English, mathematics and science and are steadily improving. Standards for pupils aged twelve are satisfactory in English but unsatisfactory in science and mathematics. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. There is a positive climate for learning, and pupils work hard. The headteacher's leadership ensures good educational direction, supported well by the governors. Senior managers do not have enough information or opportunity to work as effectively as they might. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good direction and has a clear vision for the further improvement of the school.
- Pupils' social development and relationships are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good.
- Moral and cultural development are good.
- Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good.
- There is a very good range of extra curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics and science by the age of twelve.
- The assessment of pupils' attainments, and the use made of this to inform pupils and set targets for the next steps in teaching and learning.
- The overall quality of teaching at the school.
- The arrangements for checking and reviewing the teaching.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in July 1997, the school has made sound progress overall. Standards in English and science are similar to those reported previously, but standards in mathematics are lower. The school is on course to meet its targets for the current year. The quality of teaching is broadly similar, although some important weaknesses remain. Weaknesses in the definition and scope of the roles of subject co-ordinators have been addressed successfully, and the roles of year co-ordinators have been clarified. Schemes of work operate for all subjects, and the school has a programme to monitor the implementation of these schemes. Improved systems for the assessment of pupils' performance and a marking scheme have been introduced, but their implementation has been erratic, partly because of changes in staffing. They do not yet provide teachers or senior staff with enough information about the progress pupils make. A detailed professional development programme, linked to

school improvement and the management of teachers' performance, now operates. Measures to involve parents more in their children's education have been successfully implemented, particularly through a revised policy for homework. The school has the capacity to improve further.

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

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

In the 2001 national tests, overall standards in English and science were in line with the national average for all schools and similar schools, but well below average in mathematics. The results in English and science represent a steady improvement, and indicate that the school has kept pace with the national improving trend in these subjects, but not in mathematics. In the past two years, the rate of improvement has been greatest in English.

Inspection evidence shows that overall standards for eleven year olds are broadly satisfactory in all three subjects. Although they remain satisfactory in English, standards are unsatisfactory for pupils by the age of twelve in mathematics and science. The school achieved its target for 2001 in English, but results in mathematics were below the demanding target set. Pupils' numeracy skills by the age of eleven are improving at a satisfactory rate, and literacy skills are more often good at this age due to the school's emphasis on, and adaptation of, national strategies. Standards in other subjects are at the level expected by the ages of eleven and twelve, and above expectation in music by the age of twelve. Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make steady progress in their learning. Pupils' progress is broadly satisfactory in most subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy learning, and they are keen to get involved with activities both in and outside class.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well both in class and around the school. They are courteous, and show respect for their own property and the property of others. No pupils have been excluded in the last twelve months.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils' personal development is good, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to think through problems for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils arrive punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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 broadly satisfactory. There are several examples of good and very good teaching in all year groups, but there are weaknesses in some important areas. There are particular strengths in the teaching of French, art, music and information and communication technology, in which teaching is often good. The teaching of literacy is good; the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Teachers give an appropriate emphasis to the development of writing and number skills. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is lively and teachers' questioning skills are good. In too many lessons, however, the quality and use of assessment is often poor. In a substantial number of classes this contributes to inappropriate expectations of what pupils can do, and what they need to do to improve. Teachers often do not plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and work hard, but many of them have little awareness of how well they are learning. However, a positive, supportive climate in the school ensures that, in spite of weaknesses in teaching, the rate of progress in pupils' learning is satisfactory overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced in Years 4 to 6, but lacks balance in Year 7. Not enough use is made of problem-solving and investigative approaches in mathematics and science. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored very closely. Learning support staff make a good contribution to pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Staff working with these pupils have good skills. Pupils are well supported and make steady gains in their learning and use of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is a consistent, planned approach to promoting very good social behaviour. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory; opportunities are not consistently taken to promote a sense of awe and wonder. Moral and cultural development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school takes good care of its pupils. It monitors their personal development very well. Procedures for assessment and academic guidance are unsatisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development is very well promoted.

The school receives good support from parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides good educational direction and vision for the further improvement of the school. The management structures are sound, but staff with responsibility for subjects and year groups have too little information or opportunities to provide effective leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are active in their support of the school. They have a clear understanding of their role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The impact of systems for checking within the school is limited. The review of teachers' and pupils' performance does not yet consistently lead to improvements. The school is beginning to use data more effectively to pinpoint areas for improvement in pupils' performance.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school ensures that it receives the best value for money when purchasing supplies and services. The school's finances are secure and controls are effective.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory, but maintenance and repairs have been neglected for too long. Resources for French, design and technology and religious education are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable in approaching the school. • The school expects children to work hard. • Children like school. • The teaching is good. • The school provides an interesting range of activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework set for pupils. • Information about children's progress.

The inspection team fully endorses most of the parents' positive views but there are some weaknesses in important areas of the teaching. Inspection judgements do not support the areas for improvement identified by some parents. The school sets homework for pupils on a regular basis. Arrangements for formal reports are satisfactory; there are effective procedures and a good range of opportunities for parents to gain further information if this is needed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Assessments of pupils admitted to the school at the age of eight are based on their performance in national tests and tasks at the age of seven, teacher assessments from first schools and standardised tests administered on entry to the school. These indicate that pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and science.
- 2 In the 2001 national tests at the age of eleven (at the end of Year 6), overall standards in English and science were in line with the national average. Standards in mathematics were well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, results followed the same pattern, being average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. The low results in mathematics led to an overall performance for all three subjects, which was just below average. Given the pupils' broadly average attainment on admission, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.
- 3 In the 2001 national tests and teacher assessments for English, the overall performance of all pupils aged eleven in English at Bradwell Village Middle School was in line with the national average when compared with all schools. Results were below the national average at Level 4 and above, the level expected for pupils of this age, but average at the higher Level 5. Results when compared with those from similar schools were also below average at Level 4 and above, but above average at Level 5.
- 4 In the tests for mathematics, overall results were well below the national average in comparison with all schools. They were well below the national average at Level 4 and above, and also at Level 5. When compared with results in similar schools, results for the school were well below average at Level 4 and above, and at the higher Level 5.
- 5 In comparison with all schools, overall results in science were in line with the national average at both Level 4 and above, and at Level 5. When compared with similar schools, the school's results were also in line with the average at both levels.
- 6 Over the last four years, the school's overall results in national tests for eleven year olds have shown an initial decline in English and science, followed by a steady improvement, which has been most noticeable in English, rising from well below average in 1999 to average in 2001. Results for mathematics, however, have been below average since 1998 and were well below average in 2001. Inspection evidence indicates that this trend has been reversed and standards achieved in mathematics are now rising. These results indicate that since the previous inspection the school has kept pace with the nationally improving trend in English and science, but not in mathematics. Although there have been some fluctuations in the results of boys and girls, there has been no significant difference between the results of either group in relation to national averages.

- 7 Evidence from the inspection indicates that, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science, a position similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. By the end of Year 7, steady progress has been maintained in English and standards are satisfactory, being in line with those expected of pupils of this age. Progress in mathematics and science in Year 7 has been slower; standards in these two subjects are unsatisfactory, being below expectation and below those reported previously. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards achieved by the end of Years 6 and 7 are satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school achieve standards in religious education that are in line with those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject. In both ICT and religious education, the standards achieved by pupils are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.
- 8 By the end of Year 6, standards are satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. This position is similar to that identified at the time of the previous inspection. Standards in French and music are satisfactory, but not quite as high as those reported previously.
- 9 By the end of Year 7, standards remain satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and physical education, a similar position to that identified at the time of the previous inspection. Standards in music are good, a similar position to that identified previously. In French, standards are satisfactory although not as high as at the time of the previous inspection.
- 10 Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are satisfactory by the end of Years 6 and 7. Pupils in all years speak confidently when explaining their ideas and the work they are doing. Most pupils listen carefully to what is said to them by the teacher, other adults in the class and other pupils. Standards in reading at both ages are satisfactory; pupils read with increasing confidence, fluency and expression. Writing covers the full range of fiction and non-fiction texts; pupils write for different purposes and standards are satisfactory. The standard of presentation of work ranges from good to unsatisfactory, being better in some classes than in others, but is satisfactory overall. Although handwriting is generally neat, it is not consistently produced in a joined style.
- 11 The school's adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, albeit delayed, and the more recent Key Stage 3 Strategy for mathematics, is contributing to improved attainment, particularly in mental and written calculation for eight to eleven year olds. In this respect, pupils are now making satisfactory progress in Years 4, 5 and 7, and good progress in Year 6, although standards are unsatisfactory. Problem-solving is not sufficiently integrated into teaching and pupils do not have many opportunities to take responsibility in their learning. This restricts the level of challenge for all pupils and for gifted and talented pupils in particular. Where problem-solving is incorporated into the lesson, prerequisite skills have not always been identified to ensure appropriate challenge for pupils. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are too often limited because the work is not suitably matched to their needs.

- 12 By the end of Year 6, achievement is broadly satisfactory in science. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of life and living processes, physical processes and the properties of materials. Investigative work is inconsistent and lacks both range and depth. By the end of Year 7, achievement in science is unsatisfactory given these pupils' test results in 2001. The rate of improvement has not been maintained in line with the demands of the programme of study.
- 13 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Years 6 and 7 are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop appropriate skills in word-processing. Pupils access the Internet and handle data successfully using spreadsheets. A current lack of the necessary up-to-date resources impedes the development of their skills of monitoring and controlling. By the end of Year 7, pupils continue to make steady progress in word-processing and the use of spreadsheets. They learn how to create a web page and combine graphics. The great majority of pupils makes steady progress in the development of their ICT skills.
- 14 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by the end of Year 6 are improving at an appropriate rate due to the school's emphasis on, and adaptation of, national strategies. They use their literacy skills well in support of their learning in other subjects. Their writing skills are promoted effectively through work in history, geography and religious education. Pupils are frequently provided with good challenges to their reading skills through a wide range of classwork. They are familiar with the classification system used in the library and locate books appropriately.
- 15 Pupils are given opportunities to apply the numeracy skills developed in mathematics lessons to other subjects, notably science and ICT. In both mathematics and science, pupils' problem-solving skills are too often weak, and pupils' skills of investigation are under-developed. This limits the contribution that these skills make to pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' ICT skills are not applied well enough across other subjects of the curriculum, partly because pupils do not have access to computers other than in the computer suite.
- 16 The school does not undertake a sufficiently in-depth analysis of the school's results in national tests with respect to pupils with special educational needs. However, it maintains very detailed records of pupils' progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual educational plans (IEPs). Frequent evaluations carried out by classroom support assistants, together with regular reviews by the special educational needs co-ordinator, show that the great majority of pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in their learning.
- 17 Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress, and their progress is sometimes very good in French. A significant minority of these pupils achieves standards that are in line with those expected nationally in most subjects. The progress made by gifted and talented pupils is currently unsatisfactory, although they achieve well in music.
- 18 The school is developing comparative statistics relating to pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal transfer times, and is beginning to use these to target support for individuals and groups. However, this process is currently under-developed and does not yet have sufficient impact on the progress of these pupils.

- 19 The school achieved its demanding target for 2001 in English, but results in mathematics were below the target set. Assessment information is not used well enough to analyse general trends in performance or to help set targets, although the school's recently-developed system for achieving this is clear and well founded. The school has set suitably demanding targets for pupils at the age of eleven in English and mathematics for 2002. These targets, and the draft targets set for subsequent year groups, take appropriate account of those pupils with special educational needs in each year group.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 20 Pupils enjoy learning and have good attitudes to school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Their personal development is good and there are very good relationships between pupils and staff. The high standards noted at the last inspection have been maintained and this helps pupils to learn well.
- 21 Pupils are keen to come to school and many take part in activities outside class such as netball, football, choir and drama productions. They are willing to learn and respond well to good teaching. Pupils are interested and fully involved in their lessons. For example, during the inspection Year 6 pupils studied the use of metaphor and alliteration in poetry. They were enthralled by the teacher's enthusiastic presentation of the "Snow Shoe Hare" and consequently contributed very well to the discussions. They thoroughly enjoyed the lesson.
- 22 Pupils listen attentively and get on with the tasks set. They are keen to ask and answer questions. Pupils work hard and are keen to improve. For example, Year 6 pupils produced work in the style of famous artists using the computers. They marvelled at the stunning effects and worked hard to improve their pictures in the style of Seurat.
- 23 Pupils behave well in lessons and this makes for a calm learning atmosphere. They behave well around the school and on the playground. Pupils know what standard of behaviour is expected and respond well. Incidents of bullying or racism are rare. Pupils are friendly and polite. They take good care of equipment, such as in mathematics and when working on the computers. They handle books with care and tidy away neatly and quickly at the end of lessons.
- 24 Relationships are very good and this helps pupils' learning. They respect one another's views, co-operate and share ideas. For example, during the inspection Year 7 pupils were studying symbolism in religious art. They discussed their ideas in pairs and groups, and pupils were happy to express how they felt about the paintings because they were confident that their views would be respected. They listened well to each others' contributions and collaborated well in developing ideas. Pupils are well mannered and considerate. Pupils respect the teachers and are keen to please.
- 25 Pupils' personal development is good. They grow in confidence in response to the praise and encouragement they receive. They settle to group work quickly and many work well with little direct supervision. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and they are very aware of the consequences of their actions on others. For example, they show their consideration for others through raising money for charity such as an orphanage in Uganda. Older pupils write to the elderly at Bellfounder House inviting them to school productions. The choir sings to the elderly at Flintigil Court. As part of their lesson in personal, social and health education, Year 7 pupils were preparing role plays describing how they would treat someone suffering from

poisoning. They prepared their role-plays and made sure everyone was comfortable with their part. They presented their role-plays confidently and the rest of the class watched with much interest and appreciation.

- 26 Pupils respect differences. In Year 4 religious education the pupils were studying the “five precepts” that affect Buddhist life. They contributed respectfully to the discussions and were keen to talk about their own “promises” and experiences of how rules guide their lives. Pupils from minority ethnic groups contribute well to the discussions in class. Different points of view are readily accepted, and all pupils value each others’ contributions.
- 27 When given the opportunity pupils take responsibility for their own learning through group work, homework and research. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take initiative with their work and think through problems for themselves. This limits their intellectual and personal development.
- 28 Older pupils help responsibly with the daily routines such as helping in the office and the library, giving out lunches and showing visitors around the school. Year 7 monitors look after the younger pupils at break times. Younger pupils take responsibility by collecting registers and helping with routines in class. Pupils help at community evenings. Older pupils make presentations to the parents of new pupils and they look after the Year 3 pupils when they visit the school. Pupils are quick to take responsibility and the school rewards pupils who represent the school. The school council collects views in class and gives all pupils an opportunity to have some say in what happens at school. Currently they are discussing ideas for improving the school environment.
- 29 Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection. Attendance last year was 93.6 % which is broadly in line with the national average (93.3%). Unauthorised absence last year was 0.3 % which is broadly in line with the national average (0.4%). Most pupils arrive punctually and registration and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 30 Teaching throughout the school is broadly satisfactory but there are some significant weaknesses in the quality and consistency of important aspects of teaching. During the inspection, the quality of teaching in nine lessons in every ten was satisfactory or better, with one in every six of those very good or better. One lesson was judged to be excellent. Over half the lessons are good or better. One lesson in every ten was unsatisfactory. There are examples of good and very good teaching in all year groups, with particular strengths in the teaching in Year 6 classes where teaching is often good or very good. A good proportion of the teaching in English, mathematics, ICT, art and music was judged to be of good or better quality, although there were also weaknesses identified in some of the teaching in these subjects. Ten lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory overall. No lessons were judged to be of poor quality. In too many lessons, teachers' planning, assessment and evaluation of pupils' progress have weaknesses. There are also inconsistencies in quality both within classes in the same year group and across the school.
- 31 In a large majority of lessons pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning as a direct result of good teaching. This was the case in some aspects of English lessons, one lesson in mathematics that was judged to be excellent, teaching and learning in ICT and most music lessons. In unsatisfactory lessons, pupils'

progress was inhibited because the lessons were poorly planned, with too little attention given to the match between the work and pupils' needs and abilities. In a few cases the work was not challenging enough, and teachers were not in a strong position to assess pupils' attainment and progress in learning because they were not sufficiently aware of pupils' previous levels of knowledge and understanding. Teachers' expectations were, as a consequence, sometimes too low. In these lessons, not enough pupils reached the level of achievement that would be expected for their age, particularly in mathematics and science in Year 7.

- 32 On balance, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They receive very good support in their learning from classroom support assistants. However, there are weaknesses in the otherwise good provision made for them. Too often, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the tasks set for pupils with special educational needs by class teachers do not take sufficient account of their particular learning needs. Much of the work set is the same for all pupils in the class, with too little regard for pupil's prior attainment. A key weakness is the poor quality of marking and a lack of appropriate assessment skills. This results in unsatisfactory planning and the provision of unsuitable tasks and activities. Pupils do, however, benefit from the detailed knowledge that classroom assistants have of the pupils they work with regularly. Their support and advice was a positive feature that helped to rectify shortcomings in several lessons observed. Much of the support for pupils whose literacy skills are below average or below the levels expected for their age takes place within the classroom; there is little support by withdrawal, except where this is a requirement of a pupil's statement.
- 33 The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. The school has implemented the national strategies for teaching and learning reading, writing and mental and written calculation. Where the teaching of these skills is particularly good, the teachers have planned their lessons to the relevant requirements and objectives of the strategies and have given a good level of attention to the necessary progression of pupils' skills. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 Strategy for mathematics has begun to make a positive contribution to the progress and attainment of twelve year olds in the school. There is evidence that a majority of teachers have benefited from access to training programmes linked to the major national strategies, but the effects have yet to be felt in all classes and year groups. The school has successfully used some of the intervention schemes designed to accelerate pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy. A good feature of the school's work in this area is the way in which they have targeted the under achievement of boys and taken positive steps through additional staffing to redress the problems.
- 34 In both English and mathematics, the teaching in Years 5, 6 and 7 is organised in broad ability sets. This is designed to offer better quality for pupils because, in theory at least, the range of attainment in each group is narrower. In practice, some of these arrangements are too complex, involving staff exchanges that mean no one teacher has a clear view of pupils' progress in learning. The procedures for assessment in the school are not yet developed sufficiently to allow an individual pupil's achievements in English and mathematics to be tracked and recorded successfully.
- 35 In the best examples of lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching of English and mathematics identified clearly what was to be learned in the lessons, ensured that the objectives were shared with pupils and used teachers' own knowledge of the subjects to good effect. There were good examples, particularly in Years 6 and 7, of lessons that made clear links to other subjects in the curriculum. For example, writing activities that referred to work in history, geography and

mathematics were linked appropriately to science and ICT.

- 36 In science teaching, there is an unacceptable level of variation in quality. Overall, the teaching of scientific skills is under-developed and the investigative aspects of science are not planned for or taught consistently well. Whilst there are examples of good teaching where the teacher's own knowledge of the subject is secure, there are also too many occasions when teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be effective in developing their pupils. There are differences in the interpretation of the curriculum, some unnecessary repetition of content and inadequate planning to support non-specialist teachers. The impact of teachers' actions on the progress made by pupils in their learning and scientific understanding, is limited.
- 37 Teachers are developing better understanding and improving their own skills in ICT. Pupils make steady progress overall and are often proficient in their use of the technology. Direct teaching is often good and methods used are generally effective. In some cases, though, the quality of the teacher's planning is unsatisfactory because too little attention is given to the assessment of pupils' progress. This means, in practice, that the highest attaining pupils are not always asked to achieve all that might be expected of them.
- 38 There is too little use made of the skills pupils have developed in ICT lessons as a way of developing skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects. Subject planning does not identify sufficient opportunities for the pupils to access ICT as a routine possibility for independent research, investigation or as a route to solving problems.
- 39 Teaching in all other subjects is broadly satisfactory, often with good or very good features. Good or better teaching is present in most subjects, often characterised by teachers who are enthusiastic about the work and secure in their subject knowledge. They use challenging questions to probe and extend pupils' understanding and plan to ensure that pupils make progress in their learning. Good teaching in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, history, geography, art, French and music enabled pupils to be fully involved as learners. The teaching was conducted at a brisk and lively pace, the content was challenging, expectations were high and the needs of all pupils were met appropriately. When teaching was unsatisfactory teachers had not given sufficient consideration to these aspects of their work. The pace of lessons was slow, pupils were not aware of how or what they were expected to learn and consequently teaching had too little impact on learning.
- 40 Teachers generally use a satisfactory range of teaching styles and methods in their lessons. There are good examples of paired, small group and whole class work being used selectively and enabling pupils to develop their thinking and ideas. However, teachers do not always plan for this in a systematic way. Too often the methods used are decided at the beginning of the lesson, not as part of the planned teaching and learning that is to take place. Because of the "ad hoc" nature of much of this aspect of their work, the structured development of pupils' key learning is limited. In many subjects, this includes in particular the development of methods of investigation, problem solving and thinking skills

- 41 Pupils are developing positive attitudes to their work. This is a uniformly good feature of teaching and learning throughout the school. In most lessons, teachers make their expectations of behaviour very clear. Pupils respond well, and even on the few occasions when a small minority of pupils challenge the expected standards, teachers and supporting adults handle the situation calmly and effectively. There are greater inconsistencies in the levels expected of pupils' learning and achievement. In some lessons in most subjects, teachers do not make clear what it is pupils should learn by the end of the lesson. Although all teachers have begun to use a structure that identifies learning, in practice, all too often there are weaknesses in the way in which the learning is identified. Objectives are often too broad, defined by the wider curricular guidance of the schemes of work or national strategies rather than the needs of the specific groups of pupils.
- 42 Approaches to the assessment of pupils' progress are currently unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard during the last two years to improve procedures and methods but, as yet, there is little positive impact. The quality of teachers' marking varies from poor to good. There is a useful policy to guide teachers but it is not adhered to consistently. Very little use is made of developmental comments to help pupils to improve on their present performance. Too little evaluation of teaching and learning takes place, although there are systems that are now being discussed in the school. There is an urgent need for such discussion and for teachers to reach agreement about what constitutes good quality teaching, learning and appropriate assessment strategies.
- 43 The deployment and use of learning support assistants is variable. There are examples of good practice, though not consistent across the school, where additional adults in the classroom make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and behaviour management. In these lessons supporting adults know what is expected of them and are aware of the lesson objectives so that they can support individuals and small groups of pupils well. In general, though, there are too few occasions when the quality and expertise of classroom support staff is used to the full.
- 44 Homework is generally used satisfactorily. The use of homework diaries is a good feature that pupils recognise and value. In some instances homework involves a good level of challenge through independent research as well as providing opportunities for reinforcement and practice. A few inconsistencies remain within and between year groups, but homework is usually set on a regular basis.
- 45 At the time of the last inspection in 1997, teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. The current picture is similar, although the proportions of good and very good teaching are lower than last reported. There has been considerable disruption and change in the teaching staff during the last two years. This has had a negative influence on the potential for improvement. Nevertheless, the evidence of this inspection indicates that the school is now in a better position to effect improvements and to introduce a coherent policy for teaching and learning throughout the school.

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

- 46 The curricular arrangements at the school are satisfactory. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is planned to reflect the National Curriculum, the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education and personal, social and health education. Personal, social and health education appropriately includes sex education and drugs misuse awareness. Parents are informed of the times and content of these sessions and are routinely invited to make decisions about the appropriateness of the sessions for their children.
- 47 Strong emphasis is placed on literacy and the teaching of English. However, although the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 4 to 6, there is an imbalance in the amount of curricular time allocated to ICT in Year 7. Curricular provision for mathematics and science, especially in Year 7, does not place sufficient emphasis on problem-solving and investigative approaches. As a result, pupils have some difficulty in applying their knowledge and understanding gained from other aspects of subject teaching in more practical, open-ended situations.
- 48 Over the last two years the school has made substantial improvements to the curriculum. A whole-school curricular plan has been developed, with guidance in the form of policies and schemes of work, for each year group and each subject. The policies and schemes of work, alongside the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, mostly provide a sound basis for planning. However, the school does not use assessment procedures and information on individual pupils sufficiently well to inform short-term planning. The result of this deficiency is that more-able pupils are not always fully challenged and are not working at a level that furthers their learning. In addition, less-able pupils are not always sufficiently supported for them to participate fully in the learning. The school places too much emphasis on teaching knowledge rather than developing skills. There is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' abilities to apply these skills independently, or to reason and generalise. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics and science, but is in evidence across the curriculum.
- 49 The school has responded enthusiastically to national guidance about the curriculum for literacy, and this has helped to improve levels of achievement across the school. National guidance for numeracy has, as yet, had little impact in the school, but a new co-ordinator for mathematics has recently been appointed and has started to initiate improvements in this area.
- 50 Bradwell Village Middle School is an inclusive school. All its pupils have full and equal access to its curricular and extra-curricular provision. The small amount of teaching by withdrawal that occurs is in line with statement requirements and serves to improve pupils' access to the curriculum. However, teachers do not always plan appropriately for the specific needs of all pupils, particularly in the foundation subjects. Too often, the set tasks are the same for all pupils. While this arrangement is suitable in a few lessons, it frequently fails to meet the needs of high-attaining pupils and those of low ability.
- 51 In one example, pupils in a design and technology lesson were introduced to a wide

range of breads from different parts of Europe. Few pupils had previously met any of the examples provided for them other than the plain white loaf that is readily available in Britain. This greatly enhanced their knowledge and appreciation of one type of food from across Europe and thus contributed to their cultural development. In evaluating the appearance, smell, texture and, subsequently, the taste of different samples, all pupils undertook the same task. This was not inappropriate. In another lesson in the same subject, all pupils in the class were set the same challenging design task. This proved to be too hard for the higher attainers and almost impossible for the least able in the class. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs made no progress at all on this occasion.

- 52 Setting arrangements in English and mathematics, where these occur, help to ensure that work is planned with the prior attainment of pupils in mind. However, it does not happen in all year groups.
- 53 Pupils with English as an additional language have full access to the school's curriculum. Where the school identifies that pupils have significant needs in developing their language skills, they are provided with good support from a specialist language teacher from the local education authority.
- 54 A good range of specialist music teaching is also offered. The curriculum for Years 6 and 7 is enhanced by the inclusion of French. Residential educational visits and a range of visiting speakers who come into school also enhance the curriculum. The curriculum is also enhanced by visitors from the local community, local churches and musicians.
- 55 Pupils benefit greatly from the extensive range of extra-curricular activities that is offered to them. At the time of the inspection, this covered areas such as board games, handicrafts, sports (including sailing), computers, music, creative arts, outdoor recreation and foreign languages. A high proportion of pupils in the school regularly attend these activities.
- 56 Provision for personal, social and health education is good. There is a comprehensive scheme of work, and time is set aside for each class once a week. Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively through the use of circle time. The school has a school council which meets regularly. This group has made suggestions which have led to improvements in the movement of pupils around the school, school uniform and the internal and external environment at the school.
- 57 Useful and productive links have been established with a local Beacon School. This had led to the two schools sharing their best practice with teachers and classroom support assistants, and sharing in-service training. The school has good links with Nottingham University and is currently involved in a research project on the curriculum. De Montfort University works closely with the school over the training of student teachers.
- 58 The overall provision for pupils' personal, moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is good. This is well supported by the school's programme for personal, social and health education. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for tasks, such as taking class registers to the office, showing guests around the school, visiting senior citizens, carrying out telephone duty during lunch hours, organising games for younger pupils and as representatives on the school council.
- 59 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school places a strong

emphasis on ensuring that all pupils are included in the life and work of the school. Pupils work collaboratively in lessons. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils worked in groups discussing and defining the meaning of idiomatic expressions. Pupils in a Year 7 physical education lesson worked very well in pairs developing their batting and fielding skills in cricket. Pupils have also helped the local area and the wider community through charity fund-raising activities for, locally, the Willen Hospice, and for a children's orphanage in Uganda.

- 60 Staff make good provision for pupils' moral development through the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy. They give particular emphasis to helping pupils to understand that they have a choice about how they behave. This helps pupils to distinguish between right and wrong. It contributes substantially to pupils' good behaviour in lessons and at other times. Teachers take good advantage of opportunities in lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education to discuss moral issues as they affect pupils of this age.
- 61 Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Very few opportunities are planned. The whole-school and class assemblies deal mainly with social and moral aspects and with themes such as trust, helpfulness and determination. Sufficient time is given in assemblies for pupils to reflect on the various issues raised by the daily theme. Assemblies broadly meet the requirement for a daily act of worship. During the week of the inspection, there were too few planned opportunities, or occasions where teachers made good use of what had occurred during the day for pupils to experience, and reflect on, awe and wonder
- 62 The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. Work is planned across the curriculum to increase pupils' understanding of their own and other pupils' cultures. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were developing a clear understanding of Indian culture through the use of stories from that country. In a Year 6 art lesson, pupils studied the work of artists from different countries and discussed thoughtfully the cultural influences on their styles and techniques.
- 63 Some improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection. The school now has a whole-school curricular overview and schemes of work for all subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced, although the Literacy Strategy is better established than the Numeracy Strategy at the time of the inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 64 The school cares well for its pupils. The staff know the pupils very well and provide a caring atmosphere that contributes greatly towards pupils' learning. There is good, additional support from outside agencies. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. However, because the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory, pupils' academic performance is not monitored well enough and the provision for support and guidance is unsatisfactory. The school has made insufficient progress in addressing this weakness since the last inspection and this is a major factor restricting pupils' progress.
- 65 There are satisfactory arrangements for child protection, but staff have not been trained recently. There are satisfactory procedures for health and safety, and staff make sure that pupils learn safely. There is good first aid coverage and staff know

pupils with medical conditions. The premises are checked regularly and safety hazards are addressed but procedures are not evaluated on a regular basis.

- 66 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Unexplained absence is followed up with telephone calls and letters. Teachers note patterns of poor attendance, and a senior teacher checks the registers each term. The Education Welfare Officer visits frequently and effectively follows up poor attendance and instances of lateness. Pupils with good attendance receive certificates. This term the school has started to use a computerised system and this will improve attendance monitoring. However, at the moment there is insufficient done to address moderately poor attendance and promote the importance of good attendance.
- 67 There are effective measures to monitor and promote good behaviour. Staff expect high standards and reinforce good behaviour by consistently recognising and encouraging it. Pupils know exactly what is expected. They have a say in classroom rules and so have a stake in keeping them. The behaviour policy emphasises a positive approach and teachers have been trained in positive behaviour management. There are satisfactory arrangements for maintaining high standards of behaviour at break time. There are lunchtime clubs and some games equipment to keep pupils occupied constructively. Year 7 monitors look after the younger pupils and set a good example. Lunchtime supervisors are given good support by teachers but they have not been trained recently. Parents are well informed and support the behaviour policy. There are good systems for monitoring unsatisfactory behaviour. The school is very effective at eliminating oppressive behaviour and promoting good relationships. Incidents of bullying or racism are rare and dealt with in an effective manner. There is an after-school club which is popular with pupils and parents. This provides good quality care for pupils from the school and from other local schools.
- 68 The school promotes pupils' personal development very well through personal, social and health education lessons. These, together with clear communication and effective links with parents, help to monitor and note concerns. End-of-year reports include a thorough record of pupils' work habits and an evaluation of their personal development. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are promoted through very good relationships in every aspect of school life.
- 69 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attainment is accurately assessed on entry to the school. Standardised tests in the core subjects are used to track pupils' attainment each year. The school has started to analyse the outcomes of assessments to identify whole-school trends in attainment and progress but, as yet, this is not done routinely and systematically for all groups of pupils. As a result, teachers do not have a clear understanding about the effectiveness of the curriculum offered, and long-term plans do not take account of current strengths and weaknesses.
- 70 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. The school has tested a number of approaches for assessing pupils' work more frequently, and there is now an agreed system. However, this system is not yet implemented. Therefore, at this stage, teachers do not have an accurate and detailed understanding of what pupils can do and areas where they need help. They are unable to track pupils' progress accurately and give them targeted support to improve achievement. Marking is not clear enough to show pupils how to improve. Procedures for marking are standardised but teachers do not use them consistently. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to become more involved with assessing their own work.

- 71 There is poor use of assessment information to guide curricular planning. Procedures for planning have recently been reviewed; now, all medium-term plans include criteria for judging what pupils have learned. However, at this stage, only some teachers record their evaluations against these criteria, and therefore future lessons are not adjusted systematically to account for what pupils have learned well and where they have had difficulties. This leads to lessons where a minority of pupils find the work too difficult and others are not challenged enough.
- 72 Pupils with special needs are given very good support. They are supported very well in class and there are very good procedures for monitoring their academic progress. Parents are fully involved in termly and annual reviews, and there is good support from outside agencies.
- 73 Records are of a very high quality. The documentation on all four of the pupils with statements of SEN is extensive and detailed. The required provision is clear and is met in full. Scrutiny of a large sample of pupils' individual educational plans (IEPs) showed that the progress that pupils make is evaluated and recorded in excellent detail at least once, and often more frequently, each week by classroom support assistants (CSAs). As a result, there is a very clear picture of individual SEN pupils' progress.
- 74 CSAs provide very good support for special educational needs pupils. They are briefed well by the teachers in whose classes they provide support and they contribute to evaluations. They are effective in helping pupils meet the targets set for them in their IEPs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 75 Parents are satisfied with the school. In particular they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and problems. They are confident their children like school and they think their children are expected to work hard. They think the teaching is good and the school provides a good range of activities outside class. A few parents have reservations about the amount of homework and they feel they are insufficiently well informed about their children's progress. The inspection confirms the majority of parents' positive views. While there are some weaknesses in teaching, there are satisfactory arrangements for homework and keeping parents informed about their children's progress.
- 76 Links between the school and parents have a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning. The information provided for parents is satisfactory. There are regular newsletters, and the notice board outside school is informative and well presented. The prospectus and governors' annual report provide a satisfactory summary of what is going on in school. Arrangements for keeping parents informed about their children's progress are satisfactory. Parents can meet formally with the teachers each term to discuss their children's progress, and pupils take home certificates and awards noting achievements. Teachers are readily accessible and the school is quick to involve parents if there are problems. Overall, the end of year reports are satisfactory. The best reports are very clear about pupils' progress, strengths and what they need to do to improve, but a few of the reports sampled did not meet this high standard and were insufficiently detailed.
- 77 Parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. The school works closely with parents. They are encouraged to raise concerns and keep the school

informed about their children. There are good arrangements for introducing parents and children to the school, and there is a governing body committee dedicated to strengthening the relationship with parents. The school consults with parents, but many parents fail to return questionnaires. Arrangements for keeping parents informed on what is taught are satisfactory. Termly letters explain what pupils are learning and keep parents informed on special activities such as trips and visitors. Community evenings include activities and displays on such things as literacy and numeracy. The school has consulted with parents about curricular evenings and there has been a meeting to explain national tests. The last inspection noted that there was too little homework and the reading records were unsatisfactory. Arrangements for homework are now satisfactory. The school has consulted with parents about homework; termly letters explain the plans for homework and homework is now set regularly. Pupils complete homework diaries and parents are asked to sign and comment. Many parents support their children at class assemblies, school productions and events such as the summer fayre. Parents encourage their children to take part in activities outside school such as football, dance, sailing and gardening. The school association organises social events and raises funds, but few parents help in school.

- 78 Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress. They attend termly and annual reviews, and the school gives them good guidance on how they can support their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 79 The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear educational vision for the school. This is shared effectively with governors, staff, parents and pupils. With the governors and senior staff, the headteacher has worked hard and with determination to tackle the issues which were raised by the previous inspection and those arising in the intervening period. Despite a three-year period of relatively slow development after the previous inspection, the school is now moving forward at a satisfactory rate under the clear direction of the headteacher since her appointment. The overall rate of improvement in some key areas, most notably in assessment of pupils and the development of teaching and learning, has been hampered by a period of instability and substantial changes in the teaching staff, further compounded by difficulties in recruiting teachers. Nevertheless, the headteacher, governors and senior staff are gaining an increasingly clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development at the school, and this provides a secure foundation for the further improvement of the school.
- 80 The new management structures which have been implemented are sound. However, assessment data and analyses from checking and reviewing activities are not yet yielding sufficient information, and there are several weaknesses in the implementation of these activities. The quality of leadership provided by subject coordinators and the year team leaders is weakened by the limited data available to them. The decision-making of managers at different levels is not sufficiently well-informed. This has made it difficult for them to make enough of an impact on teaching and learning, and on overall standards.

- 81 The school's aims highlight the provision of a challenging curriculum, valuing individuals and celebrating their achievement in a caring, tolerant environment, and promoting social responsibility. These aims also seek to provide opportunities and support for staff to develop as professionals and perform effectively. The school's mission statement, 'striving for excellence, we provide a caring environment where every child matters', is evident in the high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils, and the school's aims are largely met on a day-to-day basis. Pupils respect the mission statement, and the aims are supported by parents.
- 82 The governors support the school well and fulfil their statutory duties. Their committee structure is organised well and they take their management responsibilities seriously, playing an important role in strategic development of the school. They play a part in monitoring the school's performance through analysing test results and through informal visits to help and support in classes. They are engaged in a programme of monitoring teaching and learning with subject co-ordinators. This is beginning to provide them with a more detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the implications of these for strategic leadership and management.
- 83 Governors have a good understanding of the principles of best value, and tender for major purchases of supplies and services. They deliberate carefully before committing the school to large expenditure, such as much-needed repairs to the fabric of the building, and seek possible sources of funding to support bids.
- 84 Governors are closely involved in strategic planning. The school's development plan identifies priorities clearly and includes satisfactory levels of detail of costs, key responsibilities, monitoring arrangements and measures of success, although the timescales for completion of actions are too broad. The plan also usefully identifies links with the local education authority's own education development plan. Priorities are based on a realistic analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and set a very clear agenda for the next three years. Progress in meeting the targets is reviewed regularly by staff, governors' sub-committee and whole governing body meetings.
- 85 A member of the governing body has responsibility for overseeing and evaluating the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs. She is an extremely active and supportive governor who devotes much of her spare time to the work of the school. While her monitoring takes place frequently, the limited use of this in evaluation with other governors or senior staff is a relative weakness. The governing body's annual report to parents describes in good detail, but does not evaluate, the school's provision.
- 86 Since the previous inspection in July 1997, the school has made sound progress overall. Weaknesses in the definition and scope of the roles of subject co-ordinators have been addressed successfully, and the roles of year co-ordinators have been clarified. Schemes of work operate for all subjects, and the school has a programme to monitor the implementation of these schemes. An improved system for the assessment of pupils' performance and a marking scheme have been introduced, but their implementation has been erratic; they do not yet provide enough information about the progress pupils make. A detailed professional development programme now operates, linked to school improvement and the management of

teachers' performance. Measures to involve parents more in their children's education have been successfully implemented, particularly through a revised policy for homework. The school has the capacity to improve further.

- 87 A scheme for monitoring teaching has been introduced and a substantial number of observations of teaching have taken place, especially in the core subjects of English mathematics and science. Arrangements for monitoring operate at several different levels and are co-ordinated by the headteacher and senior staff, but the overall impact of this has been weak, despite some improvements in English. There is a rolling programme of observation by year leaders as part of the school's Performance Management Scheme, and subject co-ordinators monitor teaching, with the participation of a number of governors. The monitoring scheme has been applied systematically according to an agreed programme, but the timescale for the completed cycle of monitoring of all subjects has been too long. The analysis of the results of monitoring also lacks sufficient depth and detail for managers to set clear and precise objectives for professional development. All this has contributed to the now urgent need for improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, and thereby raising standards.
- 88 There have been many changes in staffing in the intervening period, and these have led to delays and an incomplete picture of the quality of teaching across the school. The new system enabled the school to identify some of the strengths in the teaching around the school, and to move rapidly to re-cast the Year 4 classes part way through the year when teacher recruitment difficulties could not be resolved. There have also been changes to the setting arrangements for English and mathematics. However, the monitoring arrangements have not been applied rigorously enough since that time to evaluate the impact of these changes, some of which have led to disruption to learning for pupils.
- 89 The headteacher and members of the senior management team undertake an analysis of the standards that pupils achieve. The results of this are shared with staff and governors, and targets for whole-school improvement are set. Target-setting, however is not based on a thorough assessment of the achievements of each pupil. The school marginally exceeded its target for 2001 in English but results were significantly below the target set for mathematics where, it was acknowledged, the target agreed with the local education authority had been over-ambitious for the pupils concerned.
- 90 Financial control is secure; there are good systems to control and manage expenditure. The amount of money brought forward from the previous financial year, at 12.5 per cent of the total expenditure, was significantly higher than would normally be acceptable. This amount has been clearly identified for specific expenditure on much-needed repairs and maintenance to the accommodation which has been neglected in recent years. The carry-forward figure estimated for the current year is within acceptable limits and will be used to support staffing levels. Financial decisions receive serious attention, and funds, including specific grants, are used appropriately. The administrative staff provide very good support. Their good organisational skills and pleasant, efficient approach contribute greatly to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. A new ICT system for school administration has recently been installed, and the school is adapting well to the new procedures. The system will enable senior managers to make more effective use of a wide range of data. Subject co-ordinators are allocated a budget according to the priority in the development plan.

- 91 The school is at an interim stage in its adoption of the revised Code of Practice (CoP). There is a detailed policy in place that goes a long way towards meeting the requirements of the revised Regulations published in 2001. The designated special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is a suitably experienced and well-qualified teacher whose leadership is good and whose management is first class. Her multiple responsibilities are not matched by an appropriate allocation of time in which to undertake the full range of tasks required of her. The revised CoP statutorily requires that the SENCO must have sufficient time in which to carry out her tasks effectively.
- 92 The realisation of plans for more effective teamwork across the school has been disrupted by changes to the teaching staff. This has delayed the full implementation of a school-wide culture of monitoring and evaluation, although there is clear evidence that this is improving. All staff are conscientious in supporting pupils' welfare and a positive climate for learning has been maintained. There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils, but a few teachers lack the necessary experience or expertise to make a full contribution to the improvement of the school. However, the careful deployment of experienced teachers in supporting roles has minimised disruption to learning for pupils during a period of significant change.
- 93 The school is well staffed with classroom support assistants. It makes satisfactory arrangements for their continuing professional development. All have received some training for the work that they carry out. Several have gained accreditation in child care. They are very effective in the role that they undertake. However, their management and deployment is in the hands of year group leaders. There are occasions when one class has too much support while another is in great need of additional support.
- 94 The school's staff development programme is efficiently organised and is closely linked to priorities in the school improvement plan. The effects of good training in literacy, including that provided by the English co-ordinator, have been successful. The slow introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy at the school has resulted in too little benefit being gained from staff training to improve practice. However, during the last six months, substantial improvements have been made.
- 95 Arrangements for supporting newly-qualified teachers are in place, and new staff receive appropriate support and guidance. Arrangements for the training of new and returning teachers are secure, including good local links with institutions of higher education and a Beacon School. The arrangements for performance management are satisfactory; objectives for improvement are set for teachers. The staff handbook provides satisfactory information and guidance for new teachers and supply staff.
- 96 The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are some weaknesses which adversely affect the learning environment. The external and internal maintenance of the building has been inadequate. The school has identified substantial funding to redecorate interior spaces, repair gutters, windows and to upgrade pupils' toilets and changing areas. The shared teaching spaces around the school are generally used well for practical activities and group work. A temporary classroom does not have running water, and access to toilets in the main building is difficult because of the necessary security measures which operate. The main accommodation is suitable for the needs of pupils with special educational needs. There are ramps and toilets suitable for disabled pupils. The school has a large playing field for sports, and an environmental area with many wild plants and a pond, but this latter area is in need of maintenance before its value as an educational resource can be fully utilised. In the short time since his appointment, the new site

manager has already contributed much to improvements in the appearance and maintenance of the accommodation.

- 97 There are weaknesses in the provision of resources for learning. The school library has a small stock of books for the current size of school. The book stock is being audited and a new, computerised system for book loans, purchased by the Parents and Friends Association, is being introduced. Old and out-of-date material is being removed. Although the space occupied by the library is rather cramped, it has the potential to be a useful resource, and pupils develop the necessary research and retrieval skills to use it well. Resources in most subjects are satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in the provision of reading resources for French, tools and consumable resources for design and technology, and software for control and monitoring within ICT. Resources for religious education are poor. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are not always appropriate. Too little use is made of ICT to assist SEN pupils in their learning. Computer keyboards do not meet the needs of younger pupils whose literacy skills are limited to the point that they do not recognise the upper case letters of the keyboard. This is a barrier to their best progress. The school makes good use of external resources in the locality and annual residential experiences.

Taking into account:

- pupils' average attainment on entry to the school and the average costs of educating the pupils;
- the steady improvement in standards in English and science over the past two years; and,
- the satisfactory improvement made since the previous inspection,

the school provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 98 To improve further the quality of education and the standards of achievement the headteacher and governors should:

1) Raise standards in mathematics and science by the age of twelve by:

(in mathematics)

- (i) simplifying the arrangements for grouping pupils to ensure consistency of teaching through the week; and
- (ii) ensuring that the level of planned work set for pupils is appropriate to their needs.
(please refer to paras 11,34,35,36,53,89,122,126,129,130,132,133,136)

(in science)

- (i) providing more opportunities for first-hand experience;
- (ii) building on the learning of topics taught in years 4 to 6, avoiding unnecessary repetition; and
- (iii) ensuring greater consistency in planning and teaching science.
(please refer to paras 12,15,37,48,139,140,141,142,143,144)

(in mathematics and science)

- (i) ensuring greater consistency in the development of pupils' problem solving and investigative skills.
(please refer to paras 11,12,48,122,139,141)

2) Improve the assessment of pupils' attainments, and the use made of this to inform pupils and set targets for the next steps in teaching and learning by:

- (i) ensuring assessment and planning are more rigorous and applied consistently;
- (ii) conducting a rigorous analysis of all performance data including national statutory and optional tests;
- (iii) using the outcomes of assessments to identify, monitor and set targets for individuals, specific groups, classes and year groups; and
- (iv) ensuring the school's marking policy is consistently applied so that pupils know what they have learned and what they need to do to improve.
(please refer to paras 16,18,19,40,42,43,70,71,72,81,87,90,113,130,136,144,145,165,168,179,186,198,209,217,223)

3) Improve the overall quality of teaching by:

- (i) using analyses of performance more rigorously to identify potential strengths and weaknesses in teaching;
- (ii) analysing learning objectives to identify what needs to be taught and at what level the learning needs to be pitched;
- (iii) reviewing, agreeing and sharing what constitutes effective teaching strategies, and implementing a consistent approach to teaching and learning throughout the school; and
- (iv) ensuring that information gained from assessment is used to plan for the teaching of all pupils.
(please refer to paras 31,32,33,41,42,43,46,70,71,72,88,113,126,165,177,185,193,209,235)

4) Improve the effectiveness of the arrangements for monitoring the teaching and learning by:

- (i) establishing clear criteria for monitoring teaching and learning;
- (ii) ensuring those with responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation receive appropriate training to carry this out; and
- (iii) implementing a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation, leading to points for action which will enable teachers to improve their practice.
(please refer to paras 46,81,83,88,89,93,178,200,209)

OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL:

- 99 Ensure that gifted and talented pupils are appropriately challenged.
(please refer to paras 17,32,38,49,52)

Improve the balance in time allocations for subjects for pupils aged twelve.
(please refer to paras 48,169)

Provide more planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.
(please refer to paras 62,238)

Improve the amount and quality of resources for French, design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education.
(please refer to paras 98,170,199,210,237)

Improve access to information and communication technology for pupils with special educational needs.
(please refer to paras 98,198)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	105
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	15	39	40	10	0	0
Percentage	1	14	37	38	10	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)	373
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	108

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	6.2
National comparative data	6.3

School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.4

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	45	54	99

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	20	40
	Girls	47	30	51
	Total	72	50	91
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (71)	51 (63)	92 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	22	31
	Girls	46	36	44
	Total	69	58	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (73)	59 (73)	76 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	5
Indian	7
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	333
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	28.7

Education support staff: Y4 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	778694
Total expenditure	755185
Expenditure per pupil	2042
Balance brought forward from previous year	73905
Balance carried forward to next year	97414

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	373
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	47	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	61	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	56	6	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	51	21	6	1
The teaching is good.	32	60	6	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	50	18	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	51	4	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	54	10	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	32	50	5	2	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	38	6	1	3

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

ENGLISH

- 100 In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in English in 2001, pupils' overall performance was in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was also average. In comparison with similar schools, performance was also average. The school marginally exceeded its 2001 target for pupils attaining level 4 and above in English. Teacher assessments were slightly below the test results. There has been a year-on-year improvement in standards since 1999 when they were well below average. Standards in English have now regained the position achieved in 1998 when they were in line with the national average.
- 101 By the age of eleven, pupils' literacy skills are improving at an appropriate rate due to the school's effective implementation and adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). Given the pupils' average attainment on entry to the school at the age of eight, the improvements made as a result of successful implementation of the NLS and some good teaching, their achievement is satisfactory in English. By the age of twelve, standards in English are satisfactory. Evidence gathered during the inspection from lesson observations, samples of work and through discussions with pupils, indicates that standards achieved in speaking and listening, reading and writing are satisfactory. There are no significant variations in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Progress is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 102 The school has successfully implemented the NLS. In Years 4 and 5, pupils are taught literacy in class groups. In Years 6 and 7, each year group is divided into three sets according to prior attainment, with the intention of providing a better match of work to pupils' needs. The structure sometimes leads to an ineffective match of work to the individual needs of pupils within these groups. The school needs to carefully check and review the effectiveness of these groupings to ensure appropriate learning for all. The school uses the Additional Literacy Strategy effectively, and has identified pupils who would benefit from its use. All pupils spend at least an hour a day on the development of literacy skills.
- 103 By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils' speaking and listening skills are appropriate for their age. Most pupils listen carefully to what is said to them by the teacher, other adults in the class and other pupils. They ask and answer questions about topics that have recently been discussed. When asked by the teacher they make choices and give reasons for their choices, and they offer their own opinions appropriately. Pupils in all years speak confidently when explaining their ideas and the work they are doing.
- 104 Pupils in Year 4 explained that connectives are words that link different ideas together and then give examples of suitable connectives. In Year 5, pupils used their previous knowledge of fables to explain the use of morals in stories. Pupils in Year 6 used very good speaking skills to evaluate their ideas in a lively discussion about the meanings of idioms. In a lesson on Romeo and Juliet, Year 7 pupils talked about the play's elements of romance, tenderness, death and comedy. Through further group discussion, they made a good verbal summary of the play.
- 105 The school council represents an excellent example of pupils' ability to speak on

behalf of others and represent their views. During whole-school assemblies, pupils listen very carefully and use the ideas they have gained from class assemblies through the week. Pupils' vocabulary and use of words is developing steadily through the language associated with the literacy hour. Pupils have ample opportunities to practise and develop their speaking and listening skills, including the use of correct terminology, across the curriculum. The emphasis upon spoken language helps those pupils with English as an additional language to make satisfactory progress.

- 106 Standards in reading at ages eleven and twelve are satisfactory. Pupils read with increasing confidence, fluency and expression. They read together confidently during whole-class sessions, when teachers successfully model expressive reading, and pupils read independently at the start of school sessions. No group reading with a teacher was seen during the inspection week. Younger pupils make good use of pictures to help them with their understanding, and many self-correct as a result of reading on and making sense of the text. Pupils make limited use of letter sounds to help them tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. Higher-attaining pupils read fluently and accurately, with good expression, and discuss text knowledgeably. Older pupils read and understand complex texts and discuss ideas, themes, events and characters. This was evident when a pupil in Year 6 compared the development of the story in the book 'The Lord of the Rings' with the story in the film. Although there are limited opportunities to take books home from school to read, most pupils are keen readers and read books that they have at home and books that they borrow from the library. Pupils state preferences, and know why they like particular books and authors. They are familiar with terms such as fiction, non-fiction, author and illustrator. They know how to find information within books using contents and index pages, but only higher-attaining pupils could make good use of skimming and scanning skills. Assessment of reading by teachers is inconsistent and lacks informative detail about progress.
- 107 Writing across the school covers the full range of fiction and non-fiction texts, and pupils write for different purposes. Year 4 pupils make good progress identifying and using connectives to link different ideas in their work on discursive texts, when working on arguments for and against school uniform. In Year 5, pupils have worked on myths and legends, using the structure from traditional tales to write their own versions. In Year 6, pupils have produced good pieces of extended writing. This work displays a secure development of skills in writing in paragraphs. They use different genres and speech effectively, develop more detail and depth in characters, and a variety of punctuation gives emphasis to mood and atmosphere in their accounts. Year 7 pupils have produced books based on their work on Chaucer. These provide readers with a background knowledge of the period and setting for the Canterbury tales. They also provide an insight into how present-day English has developed from Middle English. There is a sound range of other work including dialogues, poems, letters, playwriting and note-taking. Pupils attain a satisfactory degree of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. The standard of presentation of work ranges from good to unsatisfactory. There are inconsistencies within year groups, but standards are satisfactory overall. Although handwriting is generally neat, it is not consistently produced in a joined style.

- 108 Pupils' writing skills are promoted effectively through work in other subjects, notably history and geography, and also in religious education. A good example of this was in a Year 5 class where pupils had written diary extracts based on the adventures of a Tudor sailor. Pupils are frequently provided with good challenges to their reading skills through a wide range of classwork. Pupils are familiar with the classification system used in the library and can locate books appropriately.
- 109 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their daily literacy lessons and mostly work with commitment on the tasks set for them. They work well in collaborative situations and readily contribute to class and group discussions. They are eager to please their teachers and most show pride in their work.
- 110 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Seven out of every ten lessons are good or better. Approximately one lesson in ten lessons is unsatisfactory. All teachers clearly identify learning objectives, which they share with pupils. The use of WALT (we are learning to) and WILF (what I'm looking for) ensures that pupils understand what they are learning and know how to achieve the learning outcome. Relationships in all lessons are good. Where teaching is particularly good, the teaching is planned well, making good use of the NLS. The introductory parts of these lessons are brisk, starting with a reminder of previous learning which makes good use of information provided by pupils. Where learning support assistants are available, they are well briefed and give appropriate guidance to pupils, enabling them to remain on task and complete the work without doing it for them. Teachers model reading effectively, engaging pupils' interest and attention.
- 111 Where the teaching is unsatisfactory it is characterised by weak subject knowledge, work not matched to pupils' abilities and a slow pace to lessons. Teachers are not clear about the lesson objectives that they communicate to pupils at the start of lessons and use a limited range of teaching strategies. They do not make clear the quality and quantity of work that they expect pupils to produce.
- 112 Teachers do not use assessment information sufficiently well to match the learning to pupils' individual needs within class lessons and where pupils work in different sets. Verbal feedback to pupils in lessons is both positive and constructive. Although there is a marking policy, it is not applied consistently across the school. In many instances, teachers' marking is ineffective. It does not provide pupils with constructive feedback about what has been done well, or provide pupils with clear targets for improving their work.
- 113 Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education plans which are followed carefully. They make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them and are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants. The use of ICT in support of English is unsatisfactory. Very little use was made of it during literacy lessons, and there was little evidence of it being used in displays of work in English around the school.
- 114 The school has benefited from the support of the local education authority, as well as from the subject co-ordinator's enthusiasm, energy and vision for the subject. As a result, teachers have gained in confidence in managing the literacy hour. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator has updated the English policy and produced good, detailed medium-term plans, in line with the requirements of the NLS, for all year groups. Standards of attainment are closely monitored through observation of the literacy hour being taught in classes across the school, looking at

pupils' work and the analysis of test outcomes. Monitoring has resulted in appropriate school targets for development.

- 115 Resources for the teaching of literacy are adequate. There are resource areas for reading books situated in all year groups. These include reading scheme books and fiction books which are used well in school by pupils. Sets of books and texts are also available for guided and shared reading. The school has a small library which is in the process of being up-dated. This has resulted in an audit of books with out-of-date books and those in a poor condition being discarded. Gaps have been identified and, subsequently, funding has been allocated for the purchase of new non-fiction books. Funding has also been made available to purchase a computer to use in the library. Discussions with pupils indicate that they make good use of the library. Topic books are borrowed from the local education authority's loans service.
- 116 Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. A good, full-time co-ordinator is now in post. Through monitoring, she has identified areas of weakness in teaching and provided good quality training in those areas. The successful adoption of the NLS has introduced continuity and progression in this area and this has been further developed through the medium-term plans for all year groups by the co-ordinator. The NLS has also resulted in pupils making better progress in imaginative and literary work. The presentation of work and pupils' handwriting is still unsatisfactory overall. The use of assessment information by teachers does not always lead to work being matched well enough to pupils' abilities.

MATHEMATICS

- 117 Standards in mathematics are satisfactory overall and improving. They are satisfactory in Years 4 to 6 but unsatisfactory in Year 7. In the 2001 national tests at the age of eleven the school's performance in mathematics, judged by the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4, was well below the national average when compared with all schools and similar schools. Similarly, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well below the national average. The school did not meet the ambitious target set for mathematics for 2001. Test results for eleven-year-olds in mathematics have not kept pace with the nationally-improving trend, and in the last two years girls have been out-performing boys. The school has started to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and Key Stage 3 Strategy for mathematics. This is contributing to improved attainment, particularly in mental and written calculation, for eight to eleven year olds. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in Years 4, 5 and 7, and good progress in Year 6.
- 118 Achievement for 8 to 11 year-olds is satisfactory. Whilst most pupils of average attainment are achieving the standards expected for their age, higher-attaining pupils throughout the school do not often exceed this standard. By the age of eleven most pupils multiply a three-digit number by a two-digit number, and express simple fractions as percentages. They use a protractor to measure acute and obtuse angles and calculate the area and perimeter of simple compound shapes that can be split into rectangles. Average and higher-attaining twelve year-old pupils simplify linear algebraic expressions by collecting like terms. They reduce a ratio to its simplest form and divide a quantity into parts in a given ratio. Lower-attaining pupils find the range, mode and mean of a set of data and change a fraction such as $\frac{23}{8}$ into the equivalent mixed number.

- 119 Inspection evidence shows that standards for twelve-year-olds, the cohort of pupils tested in 2001, are unsatisfactory. Pupils in the lower set in Year 7 rarely exceed the standard expected for Year 6 pupils.
- 120 An additional teacher was employed for one term to motivate disaffected Year 6 boys. Throughout the inspection there has been no evidence of gender imbalance in mathematics.
- 121 Pupils in all years have access to all relevant mathematics content topics, although work is not appropriately pitched for all pupils and there is insufficient emphasis upon interpreting data for the older pupils. Problem solving is not sufficiently integrated into teaching, and pupils do not have many opportunities to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning. This restricts the level of challenge for all pupils and for gifted and talented pupils in particular. Where problem-solving is incorporated into the lesson, required skills have not always been identified to ensure appropriate challenge for pupils. In one lesson pupils were challenged to use some given lengths and angles to construct an irregular pentagon. Although higher-attaining pupils identified the sequence of steps required to construct the pentagon, they could not complete the task because they did not have the skill to use a 180° protractor to construct a reflex angle.
- 122 Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to apply the numeracy skills developed in mathematics lessons to other subjects. Those in Year 6 used bar and line graphs to represent force and temperature data collected in science experiments. In an ICT lesson, Year 7 pupils developed formulae to enter data onto a spreadsheet to show the cost of multiple items.
- 123 Attitudes to the subject are good. Throughout the school pupils are keen to participate and ready to learn. Their concentration wanes only when the pace of the lesson is too slow. When given the opportunity, pupils collaborate well in pairs and groups. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils, are good. This gives pupils the confidence to ask when they do not understand. Despite these positive attitudes, pupils in a significant number of sets offer poorly-presented work.
- 124 Overall, teaching in all years is satisfactory. Half the lessons taught in each year are of at least good quality, with one example of very good and one of excellent teaching. Two lessons were of an unsatisfactory standard. In addition, there are some significant weaknesses contained within satisfactory lessons.
- 125 The National Numeracy Strategy's three-part lesson structure is in place throughout the school. Teachers set clear learning objectives for the main activity; these are discussed and related to prior learning by a minority of teachers. Some teachers do not identify separate learning objectives for the start of lessons when pupils are sharpening their mental strategies and knowledge of facts. A feature of unsatisfactory lessons is insufficient analysis of objectives at the planning stage to identify the required knowledge, skills and understanding, the key teaching points and the tasks to support mastery of the objective.
- 126 Teachers with good mathematical knowledge are spread throughout the school and act as a resource for other teachers when planning in year groups. In most lessons, mathematical vocabulary relevant to the lesson is explained and used by the teacher and by pupils. Many teachers engage in direct, interactive teaching for a substantial part of the lesson. In some of the more effective lessons teachers maintain a good

pace and continue direct teaching to a focus group in the main part of the lesson. The mathematics homework set develops class-work and is welcomed by pupils. Behaviour management is good in the majority of lessons.

- 127 In a few good lessons, teachers use resources large enough to be seen by the whole class to model mathematical ideas, generate discussion and develop understanding. In one Year 4, lesson the teacher flipped over a circle folded on a line of symmetry and discussed the similarities and differences between the two images. The teacher then placed a mirror along the line of symmetry and compared the image in the mirror with the flipped image.
- 128 In one Year 6 lesson, the teacher used questions to assess pupils' understanding of mathematical terms, to elicit pupils' strategies for calculation and to provide support for pupils attempting to solve a problem. Whilst several teachers, particularly those in Year 4 and Year 6 who base their planning on National Numeracy Strategy Pilot Plans, are incorporating planned key questions into their teaching, few teachers plan key questions for a range of purposes in the lesson. In many lessons there is insufficient use of open-ended questions to probe and gather evidence of pupils' knowledge and understanding to inform planning and modification of tasks for pupils of different abilities in the next stages of learning. Where tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs the pace of learning is slowed. In the plenary part of the lesson assessment is often reduced to asking the question 'Have we met our learning objective?' without any further attempt to analyse what pupils have actually learned.
- 129 Marking and assessment are poor. Marking does not inform pupils sufficiently of how well they have learned and what they need to do to improve. There is limited evidence of teacher assessment through marking pupils' work. The school is starting to keep records of individual pupils' attainment against key learning objectives; monitoring of these records has not yet taken place. Insufficient rigour in assessment and its record keeping accounts for the 8 per cent discrepancy between teacher assessment and test results for eleven-year-olds in 2001.
- 130 The school has run the National Numeracy Strategy's intervention programmes in Years 5 and 6 for pupils who, without additional support, are unlikely to reach Level 4 in the tests for eleven-year-olds. Pupils have benefited from these programmes, although the analysis of pupils' needs and achievements which led to their involvement in the programmes was not as rigorous as it could have been.
- 131 The time allocations for mathematics are appropriate for all years. The school sets pupils for mathematics in Years 5, 6 and 7. The arrangements are complex. In Year 6, the five sets were re-organised at the beginning of the Spring Term and were reduced to four sets at the beginning of the Summer Term. In Year 7, pupils are organised into sets for three days and are taught in mixed-ability classes for two days per week. These arrangements prevent one teacher having a clear view of a pupil's mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. In Year 7, the pitch of work is better matched to the needs of low-attaining pupils in mixed-ability classes, when tasks are modified to provide appropriate challenge, than in the lower-ability set where the level of work is too low for a few pupils. These setting arrangements have an adverse affect on the standards achieved by pupils, their rates of progress and teachers' ability to accurately assess and plan to meet pupils' needs.

- 132 Many teachers have benefited from attending the National Numeracy Strategy's five-day course to develop subject knowledge. Some have observed demonstration lessons by leading mathematics teachers in other schools. The school is using the National Numeracy Strategies' Pilot Plans for Years 4 and 6 to support lesson planning; this is helping teachers to focus upon the identification of key teaching points. Teachers in Years 5 and 7 use the National Strategies' Sample Plans. A few teachers do not use the Strategies Frameworks for Mathematics sufficiently in conjunction with these plans. The local education authority's numeracy consultant has guided the mathematics co-ordinator in the selection of resources for mathematics.
- 133 Overall, mathematics resources are satisfactory. Most are stored adjacent to classrooms and are accessible to pupils. Recently-ordered resources to support mental activities are used effectively throughout the school. Much of the measuring equipment is worn and needs replacing. ICT software for use in whole class and group teaching is limited and needs to be developed for use throughout the school.
- 134 The mathematics co-ordinator has been in post since January 2002 and has had insufficient time to make a significant impact upon the leadership and management of the subject. She has used the National College of School Leadership's self-evaluation to identify aspects of the role which require development and, in collaboration with the mathematics adviser, has developed a programme to monitor and evaluate planning and teaching. Initial observations revealed the need to use resources effectively during whole class teaching. Appropriate resources have been identified, purchased and stored in classrooms. In-service training has promoted the effective use of resources, including ICT, to develop pupils' understanding.
- 135 The co-ordinator is just starting to address assessment, monitoring and evaluation issues. She led in-service training to promote effective use of two lessons per half term to gather information about individual pupils' performance against key learning objectives to enable the completion of individual records. These records have been introduced recently; to date they have not been used to modify future lesson plans. Analysis of end-of-year test outcomes has not yet taken place to inform planning. Records are kept of individual pupils' progress in end-of-year tests. These are not used fully to track progress, predict future test outcomes and identify pupils who would benefit from additional support. Few pupils with special educational needs have mathematics targets identified in their individual education plans. Lesson observations are not analysed with sufficient rigour. As a result, they do not identify potential strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Action points arising from this analysis do not focus clearly enough upon helping teachers to improve their teaching strategies.
- 136 Since the previous inspection, standards in mathematics have fallen, but are now improving. The quality of teaching and resources for the subject are broadly similar. The assessment of pupils and the quality of marking remain areas of weakness. There is now clear guidance for teachers to provide a framework for progression in mathematics.

SCIENCE

- 137 In the 2001 national tests for pupils aged eleven, overall standards in science were average. Both the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, and the proportion attaining at the higher Level 5, were in line with the national average. Results are also average when compared with similar schools. These results represent a steady improvement since 1999, when standards were below average. Given the pupils' average attainment on entry to the school at the age of eight, their achievement is broadly satisfactory in science. By the age of twelve, standards of attainment in science are below average, and are lower than they should be given these pupils' test results in 2001. Inspection evidence, including a review of pupils' work and discussions in the classroom, indicate that the rate of improvement in this year group does not keep pace with the demands of the curriculum. There are no significant variations in the performance of boys and girls.
- 138 During the week of inspection, the focus of the work of many classes was on life processes and living things. Evidence from discussions with teachers, scrutiny of planning records, and the work in pupils' exercise books, indicates a balance of study including physical processes and the properties of materials. Evidence of investigative work is inconsistent and, in most cases, lacks both range and depth. Where experimental work is recorded, the quality is sometimes inhibited by a prescriptive and inflexible approach to reporting pupils' findings. Another feature of work across the school was the evidence of repetition when related units were revisited. Whilst some revision is often required, there is insufficient enrichment to enable pupils to significantly extend their scientific knowledge. This is exemplified in the progression of work on the solar system from Year 5 to Year 7, which contains little additional knowledge for the older age group.
- 139 Pupils have positive attitudes to science. They concentrate well, even when work is over-directed and does not require the pupils to raise their own questions and attempt explanations for scientific phenomena. Pupils' behaviour is usually good, and they show good levels of interest in the subject. In Year 7, the length of time spent on single activities is too long to sustain pupils' interest.
- 140 The teaching of science is satisfactory overall, but is too often unsatisfactory in Year 7. The teaching of science lacks consistency and this has a negative effect on the overall standards and pupils' progress in the subject. Elements of the teaching programme for previous years are re-taught with insufficient progression in Year 7. The teaching of scientific skills remains under developed across the school although there are some good examples. In Year 4, for instance, there are some good examples of skills teaching involving Newton meters and thermometers. There is an inadequate level of planning to ensure that the teaching of scientific skills is both routine within year groups and progressive throughout the school.
- 141 There were several examples, dispersed throughout year groups, of both very secure and also poor subject knowledge on the part of teachers. Where subject knowledge is secure, this has a very positive impact on the classroom climate. In one Year 5 class, for example, a lesson on the human heart was particularly successful because the teacher responded effectively to children's questions. The lesson included opportunities to work in practical ways, such as measuring out an equivalent amount of liquid to that pumped by the heart in a single beat. In other cases there were examples of confusion between the process of photosynthesis and that of germination, and the impact of different factors on the performance of electrical circuits.

- 142 Across the school the coverage of topics takes account of national guidelines, but the different interpretation by teachers of the objectives for lessons results in differences in what is taught to pupils within year groups. The exception to this is in Year 6, where pupils are taught by a teacher with specialist knowledge in science. As a result, the progress made by this year group is more consistent and is sound overall.
- 143 Assessment practices are under developed. Although there is evidence of teacher assessment in classes, this was not sufficiently sustained to offer insights into future planning. As a result, units of work are not routinely adapted to match the needs of particular groups of children. Whilst children were observed receiving additional support in some lessons, there were too few differently planned tasks which allowed the most-able and least-able pupils to make significant progress.
- 144 The quality of marking in science books varies from poor to good. In the majority of classes there is very little evidence of a sustained approach to marking which might offer pupils qualitative insights into their understanding of topics. Where good practice does exist, as witnessed in the work of one Year 7 class, the comment offers clarification and advice.
- 145 There are some excellent examples of links between science and literacy. In a Year 4 class, children created poems to warn of the dangers of electricity. Not only did this demonstrate well-developed writing skills, it also encouraged the class to engage with the scientific content and the associated vocabulary. In an older age group, the class had created posters to inform the reader about topics such as the process of photosynthesis in plants and the function of vital organs in humans. This was in stark contrast with much of the work in exercise books, which featured an unduly strong emphasis on teacher-directed study involving copied text.
- 146 The application of ICT skills to enrich the science curriculum is under developed, particularly in respect of control and modelling. The school is aware of this shortcoming and is exploring the potential of, for example, the use of sensors to monitor temperature changes. Although some number work is evident in pupils' books at all ages, the application of data handling skills does not always offer enough scope for analysing the data. In one example, work on variation had the potential to show a correlation between variables involving measurements of the children. However, instead of using a scatter graph, the data was expressed in a different graphical format which did not help the pupils to make what should have been a clear link between the data.
- 147 The subject manager offers satisfactory leadership. There is a clear view of the schools' priorities for developing the curriculum, and this includes raising the proportion of pupils aged eleven who attain Level 5 in the national tests. An analysis of performance in the national science tests has been undertaken, this is just beginning to inform the practice throughout the school. Although some monitoring has taken place, this has not been sufficient to support some teachers develop their specialist knowledge of science. The schools' science resources are well managed by the subject leader. Shared items of equipment have been organised in a central store and informal systems are in place to ensure that the stock is maintained in good order. There is a suitable range of scientific apparatus, although some newer items of equipment, such as microscopes, are presently under-used. The school benefits from having a natural area located within the school grounds which is used well by pupils as an integral part of their studies. This area is in need of maintenance so that pupils may gain access more easily.

- 148 There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the previous inspection when the school had both strengths and weaknesses reported in the science section. Attainment by the ages of eleven is similar to that reported previously, but evidence currently indicates the slowing of progress by pupils in Year 7. The teaching of science is satisfactory, but not as good as identified previously, because teaching currently lacks consistency. Nevertheless, the school has sustained the ability to maintain good order and interest in most lessons and, with the exception of the investigative strand of learning, continues to offer a broad curriculum. The use of national guidance has clearly helped to secure this. The management of the science curriculum has improved and is now satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

- 149 On the basis of a small sample of lessons, discussions with teachers and pupils, and examples of retained work and photographs, standards achieved by the end of Years 6 and 7 are judged to be in line with what is expected nationally. Whilst pupils make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and, to a lesser extent, in their understanding, the progression of skills is insufficiently developed to enable pupils to reach higher standards.
- 150 There are some good examples of art and design work, particularly in and around the Year 4 and 5 bases. In Year 4, pupils have developed some excellent artwork, drawing heavily on Aboriginal styles. Not only do these offer opportunities for cultural development, they also show a good level of detail which is not typically expected at this age. Three-dimensional work on display features the use of plastic chairs as a basic framework for forming more elaborate objects using papier maché techniques. Whilst these are still under developed, the working drawings demonstrate good standards in themselves.
- 151 Pupils work with a variety of media including paint, pastels, chalk and ink. These are all applied to a satisfactory level, although there are insufficient opportunities to experiment in advance of the finished product.
- 152 The use of sketchbooks is a feature in all year groups. There are examples of both effective and unsatisfactory practice. In the best examples, pupils use a good range of media to explore their potential. In one class, pupils were regularly encouraged to comment on their efforts and to consider alternative lines of enquiry. In several classes, the sketchbooks are little more than scrapbooks, and feature work which is both poorly presented and unrepresentative of pupils' capabilities. The quality of provision in this respect is inconsistent.
- 153 Pupils enjoy their work and they demonstrate a capacity to acquire knowledge. In one class, pupils were fascinated by the teacher's account of famous artists such as Matisse, Seurat and Degas.
- 154 Teaching is satisfactory overall, with several good features. A good feature of the teaching is the clarity with which teachers explain to the pupils what they will be learning. Teachers are also confident in talking about the different qualities within famous works of art. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to offer their own responses to art samples, to contrast the work of different artists, or to compare such work with their own. Good use is made of the vocabulary of art. In one Year 5 lesson, for example, the children were encouraged to use appropriate words such as "medium" and "texture". However, too many lessons are over-directed by teachers and other adults; this reduces opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their imagination

and creative energies.

- 155 A significant proportion of the school's teaching programme draws from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) units of work documentation. Whilst this has supported a diversity of experience, the progression of skills has not yet been sufficiently identified to enable standards to improve. There are several instances where aspects of design and technology are presented in sketchbooks. Whilst the subjects do have an element of overlap, the integration of the two subjects does, at times, detract from the aesthetic focus of the pupils' energies.
- 156 The use of ICT is increasingly having a positive influence on the wider applications of art. In Year 4, for example, there are some colourful and attractive freeform pictures, developed using a computer graphics package. In a Year 6 class, the pupils have been using the computer's software facility to create digital images in the style of Pointillist artists.
- 157 The quality of the school environment is enriched through the display of artwork. Items judged to be of particular merit have been framed and located in the main reception areas. Valuing pupils' work in this way is a good feature of the school.
- 158 The subject manager has only recently been appointed and does not yet have a clear view of the school's development priorities. Whilst the school has a satisfactory range of art resources across the school, the current arrangement of year-based storage has resulted in some materials being used inefficiently.
- 159 Since the last inspection the school has maintained the standards reached by the ages of eleven and twelve. Pupils continue to be interested in learning new techniques and acquiring knowledge. The progression in skills in art is less evident than was previously reported. This is limiting a few pupils' potential to achieve at a higher level. Good practice has been sustained in studying the work of famous artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 160 At the time of the previous inspection, standards at the end of Years 6 and 7 were judged to be in line with national expectations in all aspects of the subject. However, progress in individual lessons was judged as unsatisfactory. Standards have remained much the same: attainment is broadly in line with expectations for age, although this varies from above to below the standards normally seen in Years 4 to 6, depending on the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. This arises, to an extent, from a confusion between what comprises design in design and technology and what is design in the context of art and design. The art folders of younger pupils contain some design work that is clearly design and technology.
- 161 The rate of pupils' progress in Years 4 to 6 is similarly uneven. Overall, it is steady. Pupils gradually develop their skills of planning, designing and making. For example, in Year 4, they have identified the key features of different containers according to the material used, the type of closure or fastener employed and the use made of the container. This has led onto an evaluation of different materials that could be used to make containers for money, including purses. Too little work has been completed in Year 4 in the time available.
- 162 In Years 5 and 6, pupils have completed substantially more work and the evidence of

attainment and progress is clearer to see. In Year 5, completed artefacts include wooden batik frames that show satisfactory standards of measuring and cutting, with corners fixed firmly at right angles, using small triangles of card to ensure accuracy of the right angle. Much of the work has focused on mechanical devices and the use of cams to bring about movement in the vertical plane. Again, the quality of cutting and fixing is satisfactory, but pupils' skill of drilling is uniformly poor. This arises from a failure to mark with sufficient precision where the drilled hole should be.

- 163 In Year 7, pupils' work shows good progression from similar work undertaken in earlier years. Good links are made with science in food technology. Pupils know the different categories of food alongside their nutritional values. They evaluate commercially-produced convenience foods from the standpoint of packaging and presentation, and plan a healthy, balanced meal. They have also designed and made wall clocks using manufactured electrical components. In one class, the standard of presentation in pupils' designs is poor. This indicates low expectations of pupils by their teacher. The current emphasis is on lettering. Pupils successfully compare and contrast the quality of lettering produced by mechanical, electronic and freehand methods, and evaluate their effectiveness for display purposes.
- 164 On balance the quality of teaching is satisfactory. This results in a rate of progress in learning that, taken across the school, is steady. It is very similar for almost all pupils, irrespective of their ability or prior attainment in the subject. This is because there is insufficient differentiation in the planning of tasks. Teachers undertake too little detailed marking of pupils' work. As a result, they are not sufficiently aware of the differing skills shown by pupils in the work that they complete or the degree of difficulty that open-ended tasks impose on pupils, especially those whose planning, designing and making skills are below average. In a Year 4 lesson, the task of designing a light for an undefined purpose led to almost all pupils thinking in terms of torches or lanterns with which they were already familiar. A lengthy introduction and the need for repeated interventions by the teacher to clarify the task resulted in pupils making little progress in the limited time available for the subject.
- 165 In a satisfactory initial lesson in food technology on the topic of bread in Year 5, pupils experienced a wide range of different samples of bread from across the countries of Europe. They evaluated successfully the appearance, smell, texture and taste of the many types of bread. This was a well-resourced lesson that benefited from the many different samples of bread made available to the pupils by the teacher. In particular, it contributed well to the development of pupils' cultural awareness of differences in the types of a commonplace staple food. Unfortunately, all pupils had the same, undifferentiated task of evaluation. Planning did not take into consideration the differing literacy skills of the pupils in the class. As a result, recording skills were not developed as well as they could have been.
- 166 In a successful lesson involving textiles in Year 6 in which pupils were introduced to the skills of pattern-making, cutting and pinning, the teacher gave a good exposition and demonstration of what pupils were to do. The lesson moved along briskly in a bubbly atmosphere, with the classroom support deployed well to help pupils tackle a set of new skills. The teacher introduced her "tip of the day" to help pupils with the task of hemming along the curve of a quadrant of cotton material. Pupils paid close attention to clear instructions, compared the progress and the standard of their own work with that of others and, in discussion, agreed that they enjoyed this new aspect of design and technology. They had sufficient time to complete each new stage of the work undertaken before moving onto a new task.

- 167 Assessment of pupils' work is a common weakness throughout the subject. At best, marking is very superficial. Pupils do not know how well they are attaining other than by comparing their own work with that of others. Because teachers have an incomplete understanding of individual pupils' skills, planning is not as effective as it should be and expectations are not high enough. These are the root causes of why standards are not as high and progress is not as fast as both could be.
- 168 Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. Design and technology has a low profile in the school. For a skills-based subject, it is given a low allocation of curricular time. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work is used but has not been sufficiently well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. The co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor directly the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms other than his own. He does, however, monitor pupils' work around the school.
- 169 For a school of its size, tools and consumable resources available for teaching and learning are inadequate. Too little use is made of ICT in support of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

- 170 Standards in geography are satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, when pupils are eleven years old, they are developing an appropriate understanding of their local environment and compare and contrast physical and human features in differing environments around the world. High standards were achieved in a Year 6 class where pupils made a study of mountain regions around the world. They researched and prepared presentations that demonstrated their knowledge of how mountains are formed. Pupils' understanding of climatic influences was clear and they were able to draw comparisons between the United Kingdom, Europe, Africa and Asia. In Year 7, pupils' knowledge of why places are like they are is sound. Through a study of settlements, pupils show that they understand the way in which patterns of settlement occur and use their local knowledge of Milton Keynes to discuss how the provision of goods and services to communities varies. They understand the variable features of population, communication, industrial demands and economic factors that can influence provision. The development of geographical skills and the ability to undertake independent research is more limited.
- 171 Through their study of geographical topics and units of work, pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress in their learning. Many pupils are enthusiastic about their work in geography, keen to build on previous learning and beginning to use the skills of enquiry and research to find information. Year 4 pupils made satisfactory progress when comparing their own locality with that of Castleton in the Peak District of Derbyshire. In Year 5, pupils added to their knowledge and used different learning styles as they prepared for a field trip to Stony Stratford by using local maps to locate features that would influence traffic flow. In most lessons observed during the inspection a large majority of pupils made appropriate gains in their factual knowledge and increased their understanding at an appropriate level in relation to the requirements of the National Curriculum for geography. In lessons in Years 6, pupils made good progress because they were encouraged to find out for themselves and to share their knowledge with others. The rate of progress is slower in Year 7 because the demands on the pupils are not so challenging.
- 172 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress in lessons. In some cases they are well supported by classroom support assistants who ensure that they have full access to the topics under discussion. In lessons where there is no

additional support the pupils' rate of progress is slower but they are generally helped to make steady progress through the provision of appropriate learning resources. They make good oral contributions to the lessons that are valued by the teachers and their classmates.

- 173 Pupils have good attitudes to their work in geography. They behave well, participate enthusiastically and are keen to make contributions to class discussions and activities. In the best lessons, where pupils are encouraged to use research techniques and to work in co-operation with others, pupils respond positively and meet or exceed their teacher's expectations. Pupils remember with pleasure the visits they have made as part of their work in geography and show an appreciation of how such events contribute to their knowledge and understanding. Year 4 pupils who were writing a Visitors' Guide for tourists used their knowledge to write persuasively about the attractions offered in the Peak District.
- 174 Overall, the quality of geography teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The best teaching combines the factual knowledge required, good use of the specialist vocabulary, a focus on skills and stimulating opportunities for pupils to engage in their own research. The pace of some lessons is too slow, with over-long introductions and too few opportunities for pupils to work with good quality resources to aid their learning.
- 175 Planning for the study units is of good quality and does identify the need for developing enquiry skills. In practice, lessons do not always reflect this aspect of the work sufficiently. There are some inconsistencies in the way in which teachers interpret the plans. This is apparent in the way in which teachers within the same year group deliver their lessons. Pupils respond best when teachers have prepared their lessons using key questions, challenging activities and good quality resources to support the learning. Examples include: Year 4, where very good quality photographs were used to stimulate comparisons between localities; Year 5, where Ordnance Survey maps provided pupils with real interest; and Year 6, when pupils used good quality material drawn from the Internet to aid their own research. When the planning is interpreted well by teachers there is a positive and observable impact on the quality of pupils' learning and their development of geographical skills.
- 176 In a minority of lessons teachers plan well for the needs, interests and abilities of their class groups. In these lessons there are planned opportunities for pupils to explore and discover links to other subjects. Again, this practice is not consistent so that pupils can have differing experiences depending upon the way in which individual teachers work. There are too few planned links with ICT, although a few aspects of geography are used to provide working examples in some ICT lessons. The school has a well-planned programme of residential visits and field trips to support the teaching in geography. Visits and visitors have a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- 177 The policy document guides teachers well. Planning and good quality, detailed schemes of work are in place. The role of the subject manager is clearly defined. Development of the subject is currently limited, in part, because there is to be a new co-ordinator from September, 2002. There are plans to enhance the work throughout the school through clearer monitoring practices that will include a stronger focus on the teaching and learning in the subject. This is an urgent requirement in relation to the progression of skills for pupils in all year groups. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.
- 178 At the time of the last inspection there was no co-ordinator, policy or scheme of work

to guide teachers. All these are now in place and signify considerable improvement. There are, however, still issues that have not been fully resolved. These include the continuing need to be clearer about the development of skills for all pupils, formal monitoring of teaching and learning and the need to identify and implement consistently a pattern of assessment of pupils' progress.

HISTORY

- 179 Standards in history are satisfactory. By the time pupils are eleven years old. They are developing an understanding of chronology and talk and write about people, places and events in both the recent and distant past. In Year 6, pupils studying British Life since 1948 show that they have knowledge of changes in fashion, transport, travel, medicine and the economic climate. They describe some of the significant events of the past fifty years. When using source materials such as books, newspapers and historical artefacts they describe the need to be selective about the information gained. In discussion, pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between subjective and objective evidence and how this can be used to support an interpretation of historical events. In Year 7, pupils achieve at an appropriate level. The study unit, focused on The French Revolution, provided them with opportunities to use primary source materials to explain why some people supported the decision to execute King Louis XVI. Higher-attaining pupils talk confidently about the cases for the defence and prosecution. They also show that they have formed their own opinion based on the evidence presented to them. In both Years 6 and 7, pupils refer to different periods of history with a good degree of accuracy and a depth of factual knowledge that indicates that they have made satisfactory progress during their time in the school. Some of the oldest pupils make good links between the events of the French Revolution and the competing and different views expressed at the time by politicians, economists and social commentators.
- 180 All pupils make steady progress in history. There are examples of rapid progress, for example, when pupils in Year 4 studying Viking Settlements use archaeological evidence as the basis for research. Many pupils make good progress as they use pictures as a way of finding out more about the way people lived at the time. They deduce accurately what objects were used for and how they were made of local materials. In history lessons pupils add to their knowledge of specific periods of time and, for the most part, learn how to use their knowledge to consider the reasons for situations and changes that have taken place over a long period. In only one lesson observed during the inspection was progress less than satisfactory. This was directly related to unsatisfactory planning and use of poor resources to support the pupil's work.
- 181 Pupils with special educational needs make steady progress. In lessons they make good contributions to class and group discussions. Pupils are sometimes well supported by classroom support assistants who help them to read difficult texts. When there is no direct support the pupils continue to make progress when the work is well matched to their needs. In lessons in Years 6 and 7, when an additional teacher was in the classroom less-able pupils made very positive contributions to the work when working in a small group.
- 182 Almost all pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They apply themselves with interest to the tasks set for them and are keen to participate in discussions and reporting about their findings. Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils work together in pairs and small groups showing good levels of co-operation. They listen to each other and show that they value the contributions of their classmates. In Year 6, pupils

applauded when they had listened to other pupils presenting their research findings.

- 183 The teaching in history is satisfactory, with some good teaching, particularly in Years 6 and 7. Teaching is at its best when the teacher has planned a variety of styles for both teaching and learning. In a good Year 7 lesson, two teachers presented differing views of an event. This style enabled pupils to see and hear at first hand how history can be interpreted through opinions expressed at the time. In lessons where teachers make the links to other subjects clear, quality is improved. In the best lessons, pupils are given clear explanations of the tasks and activities with direct references to the development of the historical skills that are to be used. Questions are well formed, challenging pupils to enquire and interpret sources of evidence. When teachers are enthusiastic about the work there is a direct and positive impact on pupils' learning.
- 184 Curricular planning is detailed and relevant to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The topics and themes that form the basis of study in each year group are planned well. The implementation in individual lessons is usually at least satisfactory but teachers' lesson plans do not always focus sufficiently on the development of skills. The themes for lessons are often developed by individual teachers so that there can be inconsistencies in the delivery between classes in the same year group. During the inspection, only one lesson was poorly planned. Teachers do not plan sufficiently for pupils to be involved in independent research and investigation. When this does happen, as in some Year 6 work undertaken as homework, the results are good because pupils are engaged and challenged.
- 185 Subject management and development are satisfactory although the subject does not currently have a high profile in the school. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a few months and has not, as yet, undertaken any substantial role in checking and reviewing teaching and learning in history. The policy and scheme of work provide useful guidance to teachers about the way the subject should be approached. There is too little reference to assessment of pupil's progress. Resources are generally adequate. The school makes use of the local museum services to provide supplementary artefacts and study materials. Visits and visitors enhance history teaching. There are too few, good quality books available to pupils and the use of ICT to support the history study units is currently limited.
- 186 At the time of the last inspection pupil's attainment was judged to be average and teaching satisfactory. The school has maintained these standards but there are still some areas of work in history, such as monitoring and assessment where development has been slow.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 187 Since the previous inspection, there has been good progress made in information and communication technology (ICT). Even so, there is still room for further improvement, especially in the development of pupils' ICT skills through application across all subjects of the curriculum.
- 188 In 1997, attainment at the end of Years 6 and 7 was judged to be just about average and in line with national expectations, but with limited evidence of progress in several key areas of the relevant programmes of study. Standards by the end of both years remain average but with much clearer evidence of a steady rate of progress made by the great majority of pupils.
- 189 The school now has a suite of high-quality computers, together with several other

high specification machines, and appropriate software packages to meet the requirements of the major strands within the subject. An experienced specialist teacher has been appointed within the past year. He has been identified as a leading ICT teacher within the local authority and he provides good co-ordination of the subject. A major focus of the school's improvement plan has been to "improve the delivery of ICT". In this, it has met with moderate success to date.

- 190 By the end of Year 6, pupils have experience of word processing and develop appropriate skills within the area of exchanging and communicating information. For example, they log onto to the network, open their own files, access shared folders, open new folders, rename files and manipulate text by cutting or copying and pasting. They access the Internet using the school's broadband facilities and handle data successfully using spreadsheets. In respect of developing ideas and making things happen, the one area of weakness is the inability to monitor conditions. The school currently lacks the necessary up-to-date resources. Similarly, there are very few opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of control.
- 191 By the end of Year 7, pupils cut and paste information with satisfactory facility. They enter information onto spreadsheets and reformat the presentation into sectograms or column graphs. Pupils learn how to create a web page and combine graphics to create short, graphic interface files known as roll-over GIFs – a series of interactive pictures such as are seen on web pages of the Internet. One class has successfully combined images with sound to produce short video clips of plays that they have written in literacy lessons.
- 192 The progress of the great majority of pupils is uniformly steady and achievement is satisfactory. They build progressively on their skills as they pass through the school. The progress of the most-able pupils is seldom as fast as it should be because teachers' planning does not routinely take appropriate account of their prior learning. In only one of the lessons observed was there suitable provision for a talented, high-attaining pupil. Similarly, the needs of the least able are not met well. In a Year 4 lesson, a pupil with special educational needs made no progress with the task set for her because she could not read all the upper case letters of the keyboard.
- 193 Pupils have positive attitudes towards ICT. Their behaviour in lessons held in the computer suite is very good. Working alone or in pairs, they show good care for the resources and work well with each other when sharing a work station. Pupils of all ability show a keenness to spend time on the computers at lunchtimes as members of the computer club.
- 194 On balance, the quality of teaching is good. It is marginally better in Years 4 to 6 than in Year 7. Teachers have benefited from New Opportunity Funding to develop their own ICT skills. As a result, there is a growing confidence among teachers, some of whom are both knowledgeable and capable, to teach the more demanding ICT skills. Teaching methods are effective. Little time is spent in exposition: instead, pupils spend most of the available time at the keyboard and computer monitor practising or extending their existing skills. When deployed, good use is made of support assistants.
- 195 In a Year 4 lesson, for example, in which the teaching was very good, pupils put text into columns or boxes in the manner of a newspaper or magazine. They cut and pasted text to enhance its appearance and, therefore, its appeal to the reader. Although attainment matched the expectation for the age of the pupils, the rate of

progress in developing a new skill was fast because of the way in which the skill was demonstrated by the teacher then practised by pupils. It could have been even faster for several pupils had their mouse been in more serviceable order.

- 196 A good example of pupils' good learning in ICT was seen in a Year 6 art and design lesson. A group of pupils learned how to produce a picture in the style of a famous artist by manipulating images, using the Photoshop facility. Pupils gasped with surprise and pleasure when their image was reformatted into dots – a style known as pointillism that was used successfully and extensively by the artist Seurat. For this group, it amounted to a brief spiritual experience.
- 197 A common weakness in all lessons is a failure to assess and inform pupils about the quality of their work, other than through superficial praise and encouragement, however well meant. As a result, teachers' planning, although suitably detailed in terms of intended outcomes and criteria, does not address the differing needs of pupils of different abilities. In most lessons, all pupils are set the same tasks without due consideration of their prior attainment. This fails to challenge the higher attainers and places a limit on their best progress. Although lower attainers are often supported well by the teacher or classroom support assistants, their most important needs are not always met in the most appropriate way.
- 198 Very little use was seen during the period of the inspection of ICT skills being developed or applied across a wide range of subjects of the curriculum. Pupils do not have sufficient access to computers other than in the computer suite. While these are of high quality, they are not sufficient in quantity at present. The ratio of pupils to computers across the school is about average at 12 to 1, but there is much less use than is normally seen of ICT facilities and programs used to enhance the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
- 199 The leadership and management of ICT is good. It is beginning to impact positively on standards of teaching and learning and on the rate of pupils' progress. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been undertaken by the headteacher but, at present, the co-ordinator does not have the same opportunity to extend his influence on standards by direct monitoring. He readily gives of his time to pupils through the computer club, and is available and in a strong position to advise other teachers.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- 200 Pupils are introduced to French as a first modern foreign language at the beginning of Year 6. By the age of eleven, standards achieved in French are satisfactory and a small minority achieve good standards for their age in speaking, listening and responding. This provides a secure platform for the work in Year 7. By the age of twelve, standards are broadly in line with expectations for pupils of this age, and sometimes above expectation in listening and responding. Overall standards in reading and writing are satisfactory in both years. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in either of the two year groups. Pupils with special educational needs make sound and occasionally good progress; they receive good assistance and encouragement from teachers and support staff. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good and sometimes very good progress in relation to their prior attainment, and contribute significantly to the speaking, listening and responding components of lessons.
- 201 Pupils learn at a satisfactory rate. Most pupils develop increasingly good listening

skills during Year 6, and these support their emerging speaking skills. They make steady gains in assembling and actively using key phrases and new vocabulary in classwork, particularly through paired work and games. Their pronunciation is usually sound. Pupils' written language skills are broadly satisfactory in Year 6, where they copy accurately and gain confidence in their own early writing in French. Almost all pupils are keen to take part in speaking, listening and role-play activities and show increasing confidence in using newly-learned phrases.

- 202 Pupils' listening and responding, reading and responding, and writing skills are further improved in Year 7 through the selective use of video material, with additional focused work on these skills in smaller groups to extend the range of vocabulary which they understand and reproduce in simple conversations. A lack of reading resources, however, hampers the further development of all pupils, and especially the oldest, higher-attaining pupils, some of whom underachieve in reading as a result.
- 203 Pupils develop good attitudes in their first two years of learning a modern foreign language. They concentrate well. They work effectively in pairs and small groups when practising new phrases and using the simple sentences which they construct together in role-play situations.
- 204 Classes are taught through a combination of specialist teaching and support from other teachers and adults. This enables the specialist teachers to gain a good overview of pupils' progress across the each year and to report this to the subject co-ordinator who currently does not teach French. As a result, the teachers and subject co-ordinator do not have a detailed view of the progress each pupil makes in the key areas of listening and responding, speaking, reading and responding, and writing. Good teaching, and the very good relationships between teachers and pupils, help to ensure that teachers are sensitive to strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance in speaking and listening. However, much of the monitoring and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is informal and lacks rigour.
- 205 The quality of teaching is sound. There are examples of good practice in both year groups. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, particularly in Year 6, with high levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Pupils' behaviour is managed well in both years, and often very well in Year 6 where the pace of learning is, on balance, quicker and the range of methods used is slightly more varied. The use of video extracts, which present pupils with French spoken at standard speed, provides pupils with short but well-focused examples for the development of their listening, reading and responding skills. Good teaching of key phrases and vocabulary allied to the video material also provides them with frequently-repeated models upon which they can construct their own attempts at speaking. There is insufficient use made by teachers and pupils of the target language to support the video tasks in Year 7. A majority of teaching by the specialist teachers is conducted in the target language. Where this occurs, it encourages pupils to make more effective links between the spoken language and the tasks set for them.
- 206 Teachers' knowledge of French is usually sound. There is some inconsistent use of written and, very occasionally, spoken language, but such errors are minimal and very good teaching techniques ensure high quality lessons, especially where direct teaching is involved. The specialist teachers successfully convey their enthusiasm for the subject to classes and, as a result, pupils usually maintain high levels of concentration throughout the lessons. The good pace of learning is also supported by a broad range of teaching methods, including paired work, role-play and short written tasks.

- 207 Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. New words and phrases are systematically introduced, and pupils are successfully encouraged to construct simple dialogues. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils working in pairs and small groups readily constructed simple dialogues in which they asked questions about family members and gave answers. In Year 7, this was extended to the production of more complex sentences about their likes and dislikes in sports and pastimes. This challenged all pupils to draw on and consolidate their speaking, listening and responding skills and resulted in some good exchanges.
- 208 The subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership but does not have a sufficiently detailed overview of pupils' progress within and across the two years. Assessment is under developed and does not sufficiently inform the next stages in teaching and learning. There is a suitable scheme of work, based on locally agreed guidelines and nationally available guidance, which supports teachers' planning. Some effective monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place, but more needs to be done to ensure the sound progression from Year 6 to Year 7 is maintained and further improved.
- 209 The school arranges a residential visit to France on an annual basis for pupils in Year 7, supported by a French week at the school for those who do not take part in the visit. These activities provide further support for the pupils' understanding of French culture and daily life in France. There are some weaknesses in the development of pupils' reading skills, due to shortcomings in the provision of reading materials. The provision would benefit from a wider, more challenging range of games, visual aids and reading resources. Other than the use of video, ICT is not sufficiently used in support of the subject.
- 210 At the time of the previous inspection, standards were identified as being above average by the age of eleven and well above by the age of twelve. Since then, the amount of time dedicated to the teaching of French has fluctuated, with insufficient time allocated in Year 7. Nevertheless, pupils' and teachers' enthusiasm for French remains high, and extra taught time has recently been added for Year 7 pupils. This is having a positive impact on the development of pupils' skills in the language but has not yet had an impact on the overall standards achieved by ages eleven and twelve. Assessment and marking still lack rigour, despite some improvements in the overall approach to assessment and the good efforts of individual teachers who know pupils well. Resources for French are not as good as those reported previously.

MUSIC

- 211 By Year 6, standards in music are at least satisfactory and in Year 7 they are good. All pupils receive a weekly lesson of at least 45 minutes, taught by class teachers in Year 4 and by specialist teachers in Years 5, 6 and 7.
- 212 Progress is steady in Years 4, 5 and 6. By the age of eleven, pupils play pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments, controlling several sounds to achieve rhythmic accuracy. They create a melody to fit a rhythm and use symbols to record musical ideas. They develop appraising skills through listening to the compositions of others, analysing and evaluating them against given criteria. Year 5 pupils sing rounds in two parts with clear diction, maintaining their own part whilst showing awareness of other performers.
- 213 Pupils make good progress in Year 7. By the age of twelve, pupils listen with

discrimination to music of different genre. They identify the instruments played and how rhythm, tempo and dynamics are organised to communicate different moods and effects. They use technical vocabulary competently when expressing their ideas about elements of the music.

- 214 Overall, the teaching of music is good and is one of the strengths of the school. All teaching is at least satisfactory and in a quarter of lessons teaching is very good. Most teachers are knowledgeable and structure lessons well. Many include performing, composing, listening and appraising. When teaching pupils to compose and perform, teachers identify the elements to be taught separately before they are combined. A variety of teaching styles is used to engage all pupils and encourage them to offer their best. Pupils collaborate well to develop their ideas in paired and group situations.
- 215 Extra-curricular activities augment the music curriculum. Fifty-six pupils receive individual tuition from peripatetic teachers in brass and woodwind instruments, flute, violin, cello, guitar and piano. There is a recorder group, a recital group for instrumentalists and a choir open to pupils in all years. Milton Keynes Gala Festival and Music Festival provide pupils with the opportunity to perform before an audience.
- 216 The music co-ordinator checks planning to ensure lesson objectives are appropriately pitched for pupils in different years, and activities are matched to them. There is insufficient checking and reviewing of teaching and learning. The present co-ordinator has not yet observed music lessons within the planned three-year cycle. Assessment is poor. Pupils' written work has not been retained and monitored and there are no written assessments for individual pupils. New assessment procedures have been introduced and these will include a brief subject record for each pupil.
- 217 The music co-ordinator has been in post since September 2000. She has developed the scheme of work for music, basing it upon national guidelines. This provides the progression and continuity required to implement the National Curriculum and to support non-specialist music teachers. She successfully manages the peripatetic teachers supporting instrumentalists. The co-ordinator prepares an action plan to inform the school development plan and identifies the resources required to support this. Budget requests are considered alongside submissions from other subject co-ordinators.
- 218 The range and quality of music resources is satisfactory, although the range of tuned percussion and taped music requires further development. Resources are in good condition and many are stored on trolleys to give ready access to teachers and pupils.
- 219 Since the last inspection, when emphasis was placed upon performance, the subject has been strengthened through developing all aspects of the music curriculum in music lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 220 Attainment at the ages of eleven and twelve is judged to be in line with standards expected nationally. Pupils in all years make satisfactory progress. They explore a broad range of team games and have sufficient opportunities to practise their skills. They control the movement of their bodies satisfactorily during gymnastic activity. No

dance lessons were observed during the week of the inspection, although this aspect is taught at different times throughout the school. Pupils perform well in athletic activities. The availability of adventurous activity is limited to pupils who opt for the after-school sailing club. When the opportunity is given, pupils demonstrate an ability to evaluate each other's performance and to correctly explain some of the body's responses to strenuous activity. Although no swimming sessions were taught during the period of inspection, the vast majority of pupils have already attained the standards expected for eleven-year-olds. Opportunities for swimming are sufficiently concentrated in the Year 5 programme to enable nearly all pupils to reach, and often exceed, the expected national benchmarks.

- 221 Pupils are enthusiastic participants in lessons. They show an interest in developing their skills and, when appropriate, engage in tasks with a competitive spirit. The ability to evaluate the performance of both themselves and others is not always as well developed as it could be. This element is encouraged routinely in Year 7, and this is where the most progress is made. Pupils' genuine interest in physical education is evident through their high level of involvement in after-school clubs.
- 222 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory with one in every four lessons being of a good standard. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers work hard to make the lessons active and engaging for all pupils. One particularly successful lesson linked physical activity with work carried out in other subjects. In a few lessons, standards are not as high as they could be through insufficient attention to the objectives for learning. Where this arises, the emphasis is on general involvement at the expense of clear guidance that would enable pupils to identify the progress they are making. In Years 6 and 7, they are beginning to record their performance during lessons. Throughout the school, however, assessment practices are inconsistent, and are too infrequent to enable pupils to identify their developing capabilities. Throughout the school, the policy on appropriate clothing and footwear is rigorously and consistently applied. This has resulted in high levels of compliance, thus enabling all pupils to benefit from their lessons. Teachers' awareness of the importance of appropriate footwear during high impact activity is evident in the lessons for the oldest pupils.
- 223 The subject co-ordinator takes an active role in local initiatives and is enthusiastic about the promotion of the subject as a whole. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Some checking of teaching has taken place, although this has not yet made a significant impact on raising standards. This does not give the co-ordinator a sufficiently detailed view of the quality of teaching in the subject, or of where teachers may need further help and guidance. A particularly good feature is the support afforded by a colleague with a personal interest in dance. This serves to ensure that the programme of physical activity remains broad in nature. In recent months, the school has made effective use of local support to enrich the quality of the curriculum. During the week of the inspection, a teacher was observed working alongside a former badminton international. Not only did this raise the standard of performance, it also provides pupils with a positive role model. The use of external agents is a valuable characteristic of the school's provision.
- 224 Resources are satisfactory. Most resources are stored centrally, and the subject leader ensures that due regard is taken of health and safety issues. Although the stock of equipment is broadly satisfactory, some items are in need of renewal. There is recognition that some additional equipment to improve pupils' throwing skills would further enhance the quality of provision. The range and quality of gymnastic apparatus is satisfactory.

- 225 The school grounds are extensive and offer scope for a wide range of outdoor activities. Whilst the provision for summer sports is good for the purposes of running and rounders, opportunities have been reduced since a decision was made to decommission the long jump pit. Whilst there are good reasons for this action, there has been no significant move to compensate this loss with equipment such as that required for hurdling.
- 226 At present, the school's programme of external visits, including those with a residential element, do not enable significant opportunities for pupils to take part in adventurous activities. The subject leader is aware of this shortcoming and is reviewing provision in this respect.
- 227 The range of extra-curricular provision is very good. Within practical constraints there is a diverse range of opportunities available regardless of gender or ability. At different times of the school year, clubs operate in activities that include cross-country running, dancing, athletics, hockey and badminton. The inclusion of a sailing club represents good use of a local facility.
- 228 Standards have been sustained since the last inspection. The checking of teaching has been introduced as this issue was identified in the previous report. The inclusive nature of extra-curricular activity continues to be a strength of the school. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance and to record their progress, have diminished.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 229 By the ages of eleven and twelve, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. However, standards vary across classes in Years 4 to 6 from unsatisfactory to good. Judgements are based on lesson observations, assemblies and the analysis of recorded work. Standards are in line with those identified in the previous inspection report.
- 230 Pupils throughout the school study aspects of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Assemblies offer the pupils time for reflection, but the opportunities for spirituality are not sufficiently well-developed.
- 231 In Years 4 to 6, pupils develop and extend their understanding of festivals, places of worship and religious texts related to the world's major religions, and extend their understanding of the Christian religion. Pupils in Year 4 identify and name different Christian denominations, such as the Church of England, Roman Catholicism, the Baptist movement and Methodism. In Year 5, pupils display a more limited understanding of Islam, but they know that Muslims pray five times a day and worship in a mosque. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a wide knowledge of celebrations and ceremonies associated with the major religions, such as Bar Mitzvah, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, and Hanukah.
- 232 In Year 7, pupils begin to develop a deeper understanding of the symbolism involved in religious education by studying music, clothing and art associated with the world's major religions. Pupils identify religious symbols, such as a crown of thorns in a religious painting of Jesus by Holman Hunt, and explain that it shows that he is a great king without having great wealth.

- 233 On balance, the quality of teaching in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory, but varies between unsatisfactory and good in lessons in all years. The quality of teaching in Year 7 is good overall. Where teaching is good or better, teachers have a good subject knowledge, keep a brisk pace to the lesson by structuring their lessons well, use a wide-range of teaching and learning strategies and make good use of limited resources. In unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' knowledge of the subject is poor. This results in slow-paced lessons where pupils lose interest and concentration. Teachers make little use of assessment in this subject and, particularly in lessons that are unsatisfactory, work is not properly matched to pupils' abilities.
- 234 Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. There are examples of good progress in some lessons as, for example, when pupils in Year 7 studying religious art use religious paintings as a basis for their research. Year 6 pupils collaborated in groups to produce lists of religious celebrations. After receiving support and ideas from the teacher and discussion between themselves, pupils drew clear distinctions between celebrations and ceremonies. In Year 5, pupils were learning about different religious leaders; however, due to the teacher's poor subject knowledge, a lack of pace in the lesson and a lack of challenge for the more able, pupils became restless and lost concentration. In one lesson where pupils in Year 4 were learning about different religions in their communities, they were studying the multi-denominational church in Central Milton Keynes. In this lesson, progress was satisfactory because the class teacher's subject knowledge was good. In another Year 4 lesson, pupils studying different religions communities made unsatisfactory progress due to the teacher's use of poor resources which were badly organised.
- 235 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good. They demonstrate a real interest in the work provided for them, and show good concentration and perseverance, except in those lessons where the pace of learning is too slow.
- 236 There is a lack of resources for the subject; in particular there is a shortage of religious artefacts. The resources that are available are not easily accessible nor do they match the different units in the scheme of work.
- 237 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and of the role she is expected to take. She has produced a scheme of work and is aware that this needs further development, but is waiting for the new locally Agreed Syllabus to be introduced before she makes changes to it. The co-ordinator has been involved in checking and reviewing this subject area. She monitors teachers' planning, observes lessons, examines pupils' work, and then feeds back her findings to the teaching staff. However, the process has, as yet, had little impact on the practice of some teachers. There is a satisfactory link between religious education and pupils' social, moral and personal development. The school plans for a balance of opportunities to promote spirituality through the assembly programme. However, the school does not develop pupils' spirituality well through planned opportunities in religious education or the wider curriculum.
- 238 There has been satisfactory progress in the subject since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator and staff have reviewed and updated the subject policy and produced a new scheme of work based on the locally Agreed Syllabus. The issue identified in the last report of a lack of religious artefacts is still to be resolved.