

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **LODDON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Loddon

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121192

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Wright

Reporting inspector: John Messer  
15477

Dates of inspection: 8 -12 July 2002

Inspection number: 198655

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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 8 – 12 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kittens Lane  
Loddon  
Norfolk

Postcode: NR14 6JX

Telephone number: 01508 520392

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Andy Woodman

Date of previous inspection: 17 - 20 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Registered inspector	French German History English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13395	Joanna Illingworth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27242	Enid Rice	Team inspector	English Geography Music	
31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious Education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18638	Chris Shaw	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Art and design	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This foundation middle school has 293 boys and girls on roll and is smaller than most other middle schools. Pupils are aged between eight and 12 years old and are taught in 12 classes. Most pupils live within walking distance of the school although nearly one third travel to and from the school on buses because they live farther afield. Nearly all pupils are from white European backgrounds and only a very small number speak English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, but the full range of ability is represented. Around ten per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. An average proportion of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs although the total number of pupils entered on the register of special educational needs, because they need some extra support in their learning, is below average. The school is subject to reorganisation proposals; it will become a junior school in the near future and in consequence will have fewer pupils.

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

This is an effective school. The teaching is good and helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils attain standards that are above average in most subjects. All pupils are fully included in every aspect of school life. The management of the school by the headteacher and senior staff is good and their leadership is satisfactory. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring the curriculum. The headteacher and his deputy are forging a good partnership, but the deputy headteacher is newly in post and the new management team has not as yet had sufficient time to have a major impact on improving the quality of provision. The governors and senior managers are beginning to focus their efforts on managing the school's transition to junior school status. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, science, music, French, German, geography and religious education are above average.
- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and work hard to provide good learning opportunities in lessons and activities outside lessons.
- Teachers manage pupils very well and encourage very good relationships that help to promote very good behaviour.
- Pupils are very interested and involved in school activities and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are very well prepared with the required knowledge and understanding to continue their education successfully at the high school.
- A good range of educational visits contributes to the good standards that pupils attain.
- Many pupils learn to play musical instruments well and the school has a good orchestra.

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

- The impact of senior managers in developing a whole-school approach to teaching and learning.
- A shared, common understanding of what constitutes excellent teaching.
- The process of setting short-term targets for pupils based on regular assessments of their progress.
- Pupils' and parents' understanding of how well pupils are doing.
- The use of computers to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1997, there has been a good level of improvement. Standards have improved in English, science, geography and religious education. On average over the past five years the improvement in the school's performance, as measured by the national tests for pupils in Year 6, has been broadly in line with the improving trend nationally. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who attain the national target of Level 4 in the national tests has improved appreciably since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved, but several of the weaknesses that were identified in 1997 remain. Although the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils has improved, there are still instances where the whole class is provided with the same tasks regardless of pupils' prior attainment. Assessment systems have improved, but there is scope for further development. The headteacher has introduced good systems to enable year group leaders to monitor provision in each of the four year groups. The key issues for improvement described in the last inspection report have been tackled successfully. With the construction of two new classrooms, accommodation has improved.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Across the school most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well and attain standards that are above average. Their achievement in reading, writing, speaking and listening is good and by the end of Years 6 and 7 and most pupils attain standards in English that are above average. Pupils discuss their work sensibly and in many subjects the knowledge they demonstrate in discussions indicates a greater depth of understanding than is revealed in written work. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory and by the end of Years 6 and 7, they attain standards that are broadly average, but there are too few opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in practical situations. Pupils achieve well in science and by the end of Years 6 and 7, they attain standards that are above average. The standards that pupils attained in last year's national test results largely concur with inspection findings, although the school's performance last year declined in mathematics and science because there was a lower proportion of higher attaining pupils in the group who took the tests in 2001 than in previous years. The as yet unpublished national test results for 2002 indicate a decline in the school's performance in 2002 in English, but are much the same as the results in 2001 in mathematics and science. A lower proportion of pupils than last year attained the higher Level 5 standard in English, mathematics and science because again, there was an even lower proportion of higher attaining pupils than in Year 2000 and 2001. Several higher attaining pupils in Year 6 moved away from the area before they took the tests and this adversely affected the school's results. The school exceeded its statutory target in English last year and narrowly missed it this year. In mathematics the school's performance fell well short of its target last year as it did again this year. This is because several higher attaining pupils left the school before the tests were taken. Generally pupils attain standards in their work that are as high as might reasonably be expected.

By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils attain standards that exceed national expectations in French, German, geography and music and in Year 7 in art and design. Standards in the other subjects meet national expectations, except for physical education where there was insufficient evidence to form judgements about all strands of the subject, and in religious education pupils attain standards that

exceed the expectations described in the locally agreed syllabus. Examples of particularly good work were seen in music.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are willing to work and concentrate well in lessons. They greatly enjoy school excursions and residential visits, and are keen to participate in school clubs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. The school is an orderly community in which pupils are polite and co-operative.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good overall, but they have limited opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Relationships are very good and enhance the quality of lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. It is well above the national average and promotes pupils' learning and progress well.

Pupils are keen to learn and willing to please. In lessons a productive working environment is established. Boisterous and oppressive behaviour is rare.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 4-6	Years 7
Quality of teaching	good	good

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

Overall teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and around one tenth of teaching is very good. The teaching of English and science is good. Literacy skills are taught well so that pupils' achievement in reading and writing is good. The teaching of mathematics is sound, and, consequently, pupils' achievement, is satisfactory. Numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily, but pupils have too few opportunities to practise their skills in purposeful ways. The teaching of all other subjects is at least satisfactory and in French, German, geography, music and religious education it is good. The teaching of art and design is good in Year 7. In design and technology and physical education there was insufficient evidence available to form judgements about the quality of teaching. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Where teaching is less effective it is mainly because the activities provided lack purpose and fail to capture pupils' imagination. Teachers are aware of the widely differing learning needs of pupils and most lesson plans indicate how the needs of all will be met, but activities provided for pupils are occasionally the same regardless of pupils' prior attainment. Teachers help pupils with special educational needs to learn satisfactorily. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated and learn successfully. Across the school, pupils' positive attitudes help them to learn effectively in most lessons.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A broad and balanced curriculum is taught. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. In several lessons tasks are not modified sufficiently to meet the learning needs of these pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language are given satisfactory support. They achieve as well as their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for pupils' moral and social development through school activities and visits. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory although there is insufficient emphasis on preparing pupils for the rich diversity of our multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe environment for its pupils. It gives them good personal support and guidance. Procedures for assessing and monitoring their academic performance are satisfactory.

Partnership with parents is good and enhances standards of attainment. Most parents are supportive of the school and many are actively involved in their children's learning. The school values the contribution that they make and seeks to develop good links with them. Information for parents is satisfactory overall, but the annual reports on pupils' progress do not always include sufficiently clear information about their attainment or targets for improvement.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides sound, determined leadership. Key staff and governors help to ensure that the school is managed well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors work well as a team and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school analyses its performance carefully to identify areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Staff are deployed efficiently. Computers are not used enough to support teaching and learning.

The accommodation is adequate although several classrooms are rather small. There is a good sized field that is used well as a learning resource. Staffing levels are adequate. The governing body has injected a surplus from last year's budget into this year's allocations in order to maintain staffing levels and keep class sizes relatively small. The school is aware of the principles of best value and applies them well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality of teaching.</li><li>• The school's expectation that children will work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• Attitudes to school - children like school.</li><li>• The progress that pupils make.</li><li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching members of staff with questions or a problem.</li><li>• The quality of behaviour.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of work that pupils are required to do at home.</li><li>• Co-operation between the school and parents.</li><li>• Information on pupils' progress.</li></ul>

The inspection team agree with parents' positive views. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are set a reasonable amount of homework. Although the inspection team have formed the view that information for parents is satisfactory overall, they acknowledge that the minority who are unhappy with information on progress have grounds for their concerns.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

*'Standards', the judgement of how well pupils are doing compared to others of the same age nationally, may be judged from national test results, or against the levels defined in the National Curriculum. The other judgement, 'achievement', is a judgement made against pupils' starting points. The achievement judgement shows whether, in the longer term, enough progress is being made.*

1. Pupils enter the school in Year 4 with widely varying stages of development, but overall attainment on entry is broadly average. From Years 4 to 7, pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6, and again by the end of Year 7, nearly all attain standards that are above average in most subjects. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Since the last inspection the school has maintained, and in many subjects improved, the standards that pupils attain.
2. Inspection findings indicate that standards are currently somewhat better than indicated by the most recent test results. Pupils in the current Year 6 are well on course to attain standards that are above average in English and science, although average in mathematics, by the end of this school year. The school does not target individual pupils closely enough in order to create a teaching programme to ensure that the performance of each pupil in the tests is maximised. It does not spend time coaching pupils in strategies to maximise their test results. As a result, national test results tend to underrate pupils' actual attainment. Also it is evident in discussions with pupils that their knowledge and understanding are often much better than is suggested by scrutinising the work in their exercise books. The great volume of work that pupils produce in exercise books is not always a good indication of the extent of their knowledge. This is mainly because much of the work in books comprises exercises in preparation for completing more purposeful or meaningful work, such as writing books or producing a comprehensive mathematical survey. However, there is little evidence of such purposeful work. Where there is evidence of meaningful work, such as the diaries and folders produced as a result of educational visits, it is clear that pupils have well developed literacy and numeracy skills and are capable of producing work of high quality. There are, however, too few opportunities for the application of such skills.
3. The school set challenging targets for its performance in national tests in 2001. It exceeded its statutory target in English, but fell well short of its target in mathematics. Early indications derived from the as yet unpublished national test results for 2002, show that the school came very close to meeting its target in English, but again fell short of its target in mathematics. The relatively low performance in mathematics is partly because several higher attaining pupils left the school before the tests were taken and partly because the new co-ordinator for mathematics has not as yet had sufficient time to have a major influence on improving standards across the school. The school's performance in English is not as high as last year's because a lower proportion of pupils than last year attained the higher Level 5 standard. On average over the past five years the school's performance in the national tests has been broadly in line with the improving trend nationally. The school's emphasis on environmental studies makes a good contribution to pupils' learning in science.
4. Pupils achieve well in French, German, geography and music and by the end of Years 6 and 7, they attain standards that exceed national expectations in these subjects. Pupils' achievement in French is enhanced by the well-planned annual visit to France. In geography the school's good programme of field study visits helps pupils to learn purposefully. Standards exceed national expectations in art and design in Year 7. Pupils' achievement in the other subjects is satisfactory and they attain average standards. In physical education there was insufficient evidence to form judgements about standards in each strand of the subject, but standards in swimming exceed national expectations. In religious education pupils' achievement is good and they attain standards by the end of Years 6 and 7 that exceed the expectations described in the

locally agreed syllabus. This is a marked improvement since the time of the last inspection when the standards pupils attained were unsatisfactory. Particularly good work was seen in music where pupils in Year 7 formed groups to compose and perform pieces of original music in the popular style. There was added purpose as the winning entry, which was of a high standard, was played on the local radio during the week of the inspection. The school has a good orchestra that plays well at performances and during assemblies. Although there are equal opportunities for all to participate in playing musical instruments, there are significantly more girls than boys in the orchestra.

5. Many pupils are keen to read because an interest in literature and in finding information from books is stimulated well in Year 4. In Year 4 pupils take an interest in comparing the work of different poets from different eras; they note the language used by Shakespeare and how it contrasts with that of modern rap poets. Many pupils read widely and like the works of Roald Dahl and Betsy Byers. This interest is fostered and sustained in Years 5 and 6. Pupils expressed a liking for horror stories, such as R L Stine's 'Goosebumps' series as well as the works of Anne Fine and Jacqueline Wilson. By Year 7 pupils' interest has broadened and the works of Tolkien as well as Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' and 'The Tempest', capture their imagination. Most attain standards that are above average. The library supports learning effectively and pupils are adept at finding information from books and the Internet although opportunities for independent research are limited. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing basic skills in literacy and pupils use their reading and writing skills well in other subjects such as history and religious education.
6. Throughout the school pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Their understanding of number is sound, but there are too few opportunities to use their skills to conduct purposeful investigations. In science achievement is good and pupils' have a good understanding of the various strands of the subject. Pupils in Year 4, for example, explained the links in food chains confidently and pupils in Year 6 explained the process of photosynthesis clearly. In Year 7 pupils continue to demonstrate good knowledge and they have a good understanding of how to conduct investigations, but opportunities to do so are limited.
7. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are identified quickly and given satisfactory support. Pupils with special educational needs are set clear and appropriate targets and make steady progress towards meeting them. Their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Generally their achievement is satisfactory in most lessons, but in lessons where tasks are not sufficiently modified to meet their learning needs they do not progress as well as they might.
8. Although the highest attaining pupils, including a significant number of gifted and talented pupils, achieve satisfactorily they do not always achieve as well as they should. There are a number of reasons for this. Where they are placed in sets this helps to ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging, but pupils are rarely grouped according to their varying stages of development within sets so work does not closely match the learning needs of all. There is a register of pupils who have been identified as gifted and talented and, although the school has improved its curricular planning for these pupils, teaching for their particular needs is not yet having a full impact on the progressive development of their knowledge and skills. Their homework is not always modified to challenge them enough. The school is aware of the need to extend provision for these pupils and is taking steps to monitor, evaluate and improve provision. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates.

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

9. Pupils have good attitudes to school and their personal development is good. Their behaviour is very good and they have very good relationships with adults and with one another. Attendance is very good. These positive features promote pupils' progress well and enhance standards of attainment. The inspection team's judgements support those of parents. In the questionnaire

approximately nine out of ten parents said that their child liked school and that behaviour was good.

10. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are punctual and attentive in lessons. They settle down quickly to their work and sustain their concentration well. These qualities were evident in a lesson in which a Year 5 class learned about safety in hill walking. Pupils were very interested in the subject, listened carefully to their teacher and were keen to answer questions. In discussions involving the whole class they expressed their views with confidence, making serious and relevant points. They made good progress during this lesson because of their willingness to concentrate and work hard. Although pupils display good, and often very good, attitudes in class, they are not wholly enthusiastic about everyday lessons. When asked what they like best about school, the majority name trips, residential visits and clubs rather than the ordinary subjects of the curriculum. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these extra-curricular activities, are keen to participate in them and produce good quality work as a result. This was the case with a Year 7 residential visit to the Isle of Arran in May. The pupils who took part wrote in detail about their experiences when they returned to school. Their well-presented folders show that they took great interest and pride in their work, and their writing conveys excitement and enthusiasm for knowledge. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on what they have done and what they have learned.
11. Attitudes are consistently good across the school. There are no significant differences in the attitudes of different age groups. At times girls are more positive about their work than boys. During the inspection, the most marked difference occurred in a Year 4 English lesson where two-thirds of the boys had poor attitudes to learning. However, these pupils are untypical of the majority of boys, who want to learn and make good progress.
12. Behaviour is very good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and have good sense of fair play and consideration for others. They apply these principles well in practice. Behaviour was never less than satisfactory in all the lessons observed during the inspection. The majority of pupils are polite, co-operative and follow instructions, even where the teaching is unexciting. They behave very well in lessons where teachers have high expectations and set tasks that engage their interest and challenge their abilities. There are times when pupils become restless and noisy, but these occasions are uncommon. Disruptive behaviour is very rare, as is oppressive behaviour such as bullying. Pupils are very well behaved outside the classroom. They are orderly and self-disciplined when moving around the school, playing with their friends, or eating lunch in the dining hall.
13. There have been two fixed period exclusions in the past school year, involving one pupil. The low rate of exclusion reflects the high standard of behaviour that prevails in the school, and the absence of bullying and aggression.
14. Relationships are very good. Pupils get on well with adults and each other, and the atmosphere in class and around the school is friendly and co-operative. There is no friction between different groups of pupils in the school. Relationships with members of staff are based on trust and mutual respect. This enhances the quality of lessons and promotes good learning. Pupils are attentive and willing to work hard in order to win the good opinion of their teachers.
15. Pupils' personal development is good. They have genuine concern for other people's needs, as their fund-raising for charity shows. They are thoughtful, considerate and respect one another's feelings. They demonstrated this during the inspection in a leaving ceremony for a student teacher. Her class gave her 'three cheers' to thank her and said how much that they would miss her. Pupils respond well to opportunities to use their initiative and exercise responsibility. Members of the school council take their role seriously and are proud of what they have achieved for the school. All pupils are given good opportunities to take part in raising funds for charity or the school. The recycling project, that Year 7 organise, is an excellent example. It enhances their awareness of environmental issues, forges links with the local community and effectively promotes their social and moral development. By contrast, pupils are given relatively few chances to use their initiative in lessons and take responsibility for their learning, and this

restricts their personal development. They are not given enough encouragement to carry out research in lessons, by reference to original sources, or to think for themselves. Other than those pupils who are members of the school council, there are too few opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. For example, although the orchestra is actively involved in assemblies, participation by other pupils is very limited. There are no year assemblies organised and presented by classes in the year. There are no prefects or monitors assigned to take responsibility for specific tasks. Hence, opportunities to encourage greater responsibility are missed.

16. Pupils' attendance is very good, and the rate of unauthorised absence is very low. The school's performance in the recent past has been well above the national average, and the latest statistics show that these high standards have been maintained. High levels of attendance promote pupils' attainment and progress well.
17. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection by maintaining good attitudes to learning and successfully promoting high standards of behaviour

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

18. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In just over one tenth of lessons it is very good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is now a higher proportion of very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching, whereas in 1997 nearly one tenth of the teaching was unsatisfactory.
19. Teaching across the school in English, science, French, German, geography, music and religious education is good. Teaching is good in art and design in Year 7 and satisfactory in Years 4 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory in mathematics, history and information and communication technology and design and technology. Too few lessons were seen and there was insufficient evidence available to form judgements about the quality of teaching in design and technology and physical education. There were isolated examples of very good teaching in most subjects. There was a much higher proportion of very good teaching in Year 4 than in the other year groups.
20. Much of the teaching is formal and relies heavily on teachers imparting information, often with the support of exercises in textbooks, and results in pupils spending much of their time demonstrating how much they have learned by completing exercises in their exercise books. This style of teaching was noted at the time of the last inspection. The methods used are effective in helping to develop pupils' knowledge, but they represent a narrow approach that restricts opportunities for more active involvement in learning and the development of a broader range of learning skills. The curricular planning frameworks refer largely to which textbook exercises could be used to develop skills systematically and to cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although much of this teaching is effective, there is little creative flair to fire pupils' imaginations. In the lessons seen, teaching was often dominated by the teacher's input and, in consequence, there were too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take greater responsibility for their own learning. There is insufficient use of pictures, artefacts and other visual aids, such as computer programs, videos and photographs to help to develop pupils' understanding. In one lesson for pupils in Year 4, for example, the concept of division of numbers was explained numerically on the blackboard with no use of pictures, diagrams or materials, such as a set number of sweets to be placed in equal numbers into paper bags. In consequence, the concept was not well understood by the pupils. A great deal of work is produced. It is neatly presented and indicates good levels of achievement in developing basic skills, knowledge and understanding. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in producing finished products of high quality. There are examples of high quality pieces of work, such as the booklets pupils wrote after their visit to France. Much of this work demonstrates the good use of computer skills, but these were written and assembled at home rather than in school.

21. There were several examples of lively, imaginative teaching. In one history lesson on the Ancient Greeks for pupils in Year 5, for example, the mood was set by playing an appropriate piece of music, the teacher donned a laurel wreath as a symbol of success and showed the class an amphora of olive oil that was to be presented to the winning athlete. The teacher told the pupils about her experiences of visiting Olympia and running through the tunnel into the stadium. Her enthusiasm was infectious. A good display of pictures and artefacts helped to set the scene. Previous learning was reviewed before the class divided into groups of spectators and competitors to enact short dramatic pieces to illustrate their feelings. During the discussions they were required to freeze like a still photograph and one by one to explain their thoughts, 'Do you remember the games four years ago when the charioteer broke his arm so badly that the surgeon could do nothing for him?'. During a good discussion towards the end of the lesson, pupils concluded that there were many similarities between the feelings and emotions of the Ancient Greeks and their own feelings as they looked forward to the school's sports day due to take place the next day.
22. In the most successful lessons good links were made between different areas of the curriculum. In a music lesson in Year 4, for example, links with history were made as pupils sang songs from World War II. In this lesson, one pupil's talent was used effectively as he accompanied the songs on the piano. Good links were made with literacy as the pupils composed their own songs along the lines of 'What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor?'. Here, humour was used well as the class enjoyed composing 'What shall we do with the Grumpy Teacher?'.
23. The school has a very well established teaching force and a high proportion of the teachers have been teaching in the school for many years. This helps to maintain a continuity of teaching styles, but it also has implications for ensuring that teachers' professional development is fostered by; for example, providing opportunities for teachers to observe excellent practice in other schools. Little has been achieved in this direction although there has been a good programme of in-service training to improve teachers' skills in information and communication technology, for example. There is no up-to-date teaching and learning policy that offers guidance to teachers on the most effective methods to use in order to maximise pupils' learning opportunities. In consequence, teaching is not as effective as it could be and there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
24. Teachers are hard working and give generously of their time to school activities by running lunch time clubs and taking pupils on residential educational visits. They work together in year groups to plan lessons. Lesson planning is thorough and detailed. Teachers' particular specialist expertise is used well. A teacher of a Year 5 class, for example, has specialist expertise in teaching modern foreign languages and uses these skills to teach Year 7 whilst the Year 7 teacher uses her particular strengths to teach physical education to Year 5. Teaching time is carefully timetabled and teachers move rapidly from one 40-minute session in one classroom to the next in another room. In this way time, teachers' particular strengths and resources, such as specialist rooms, are used well. One exception is in the teaching of modern foreign languages where there is no language teaching centre or classroom base. In consequence, resources are not organised in a particular room and teachers have to teach in different rooms where there are often no computers or specialist facilities for teaching languages.
25. Where teachers' plans described precisely what they expected pupils to learn in each session, such as 'To develop a deeper understanding of speech and writing in 'Macbeth'' or 'To understand the value of meditation', and where these learning intentions were shared with pupils, then learning was more focused and pupils achieved well. Where the learning intentions were less precise, such as 'To solve problems involving numbers and quantities', then learning was less purposeful. On several occasions teachers described in their planning what pupils were going to do rather than what the pupils were expected to learn as a result of the activity. In several lessons there seemed to be no particular reason for the activity. In one lesson: for example, pupils were required to work out how to make sums of money in a world that only used coins that had a value of 7p and 10p. Pupils enjoyed the challenge, but there was no explanation of how the activity might have been useful in everyday life.

26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. When supported in class by learning support assistants and when withdrawn for individual support provided by the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs, teaching was good and focused well on the targets outlined in individual education plans. In mathematics pupils are placed into sets according to ability from Year 4 onwards and this helps to ensure that tasks are matched to pupils' particular learning needs. However, in other subjects activities are not always matched closely to pupils' widely varying stages of development so they do not always learn as effectively as they could. Pupils are well integrated into the life and work of their class groups.
27. The skills of literacy are taught well and teachers have a good knowledge of this areas of learning. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to practise their literacy skills when reading and writing in geography or religious education, for example. The skills of numeracy are taught satisfactorily, but pupils have too few opportunities to use their skills in purposeful ways.
28. Resources are generally used satisfactorily, but computers in classrooms are not often used to best effect and visual aids are not used enough. In several classes small white boards and overhead projectors were used well. Where classroom assistants and voluntary helpers are available they make a good contribution to the quality of teaching provided. There are, however, fewer assistants in this school than in most primary schools of a similar size.
29. Most teachers mark pupils' work carefully and discuss work with pupils. They offer good advice on how pupils might improve the standards that they attain. In several classes pupils have specific targets for which to aim in their learning, but this good practice is not used throughout the school. As a result, pupils are not always sure about the stages they have reached and what the next steps in their learning should be. Homework is used well to consolidate and extend pupils' learning, and in most classes a reasonable amount is set, although there are inconsistencies and homework is not always modified to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.
30. The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers manage pupils very well and the very good relationships that are developed between pupils and their teachers help to promote effective learning.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good, and have been maintained well since the previous inspection. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education is now covered satisfactorily.
32. The school provides a good curriculum that successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Significant strengths of the curriculum are the opportunities for Years 6 and 7 to learn two foreign languages, a rich music curriculum and opportunities for swimming in each year throughout the school.
33. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use numeracy skills in other subjects. Although information and communication skills are being taught, there are few planned opportunities for their use in other subject areas. The school has comprehensive planning frameworks that help to ensure that pupils learn in a methodical, step-by-step approach. All pupils are fully included in lessons regardless of background, gender and ability.
34. The curricular opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Pupils' individual education plans relate to their particular needs and are assessed and reviewed regularly. In most lessons teachers provide suitable support for pupils with special educational needs, and work closely with learning support staff to ensure that pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum. However, in several lessons teachers did not always plan specific activities for these pupils and this resulted in a slowing of progress.



35. The school makes satisfactory provision for personal, social and health education and the development of an understanding of citizenship. Lessons are timetabled and include relevant activities in Years 6 and 7, where a good planning framework is followed. In other year groups, although there are suggestions as to where aspects of personal, social and health education can be covered in different curriculum areas, there is not yet a planning framework to give teachers guidance and to ensure that all areas are covered systematically. The school is reviewing this part of its provision. There are policies for sex education and drugs awareness. Good use is made of a local nurse and the local police to support pupils' understanding.
36. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors, to enhance and enrich the curriculum. Pupils are keen to attend the range of sporting and musical activities. These include cricket, football, cross-country running, choir, orchestra and recorder playing. There are also gardening, chess and design and technology clubs. A range of visits; for example, to a sea life centre and to Norwich, and visitors, such as theatre groups and people to talk of their World War II experiences, add to the provision. Residential visits by Year 7 to Arran, Year 6 to Normandy and Year 5 going on a youth hostelling excursion, provide useful and memorable experiences for pupils.
37. The contribution made by the community to pupils' learning is good. There are strong links with the local church. Pupils take part in local events such as the Norfolk and Norwich Festival. They have been invited to make an animated film to be shown at the Cambridge Film Festival, and have performed musical compositions on local radio.
38. Good relationships with partner institutions help significantly when pupils transfer from one stage of education to another. Years 4 and 7 group leaders visit the first school and the high school to discuss curricular matters, such as the topics being studied, in order to avoid repetition and to help to ensure continuity and progression in learning. Good links are maintained with teacher training institutions with which the school has reciprocal training arrangements.
39. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are now satisfactory. Some improvement has been made since the previous inspection when this aspect was unsatisfactory. Within religious education pupils explore different religious beliefs, but insufficient account is taken of how these actually affect the lives of people, including the pupils themselves. However, the very good relationships between staff and pupils do help pupils to recognise and value their own worth. This is emphasised through the school's own system of rewards, which are recognised daily in classes, and where achievements are celebrated in assemblies. Assemblies are held for the whole school; they tend to be routine and lack that sense of being a special occasion. They are, quite rightly, predominantly based on Christian principles, but opportunities are missed to recognise festivals and celebrations from other world faiths. Singing is well supported by the school orchestra, but no recorded music is played as pupils enter the hall for them to listen to and appreciate. In the assemblies observed, apart from singing hymns, there was little opportunity for pupils and other staff to be actively involved; for example, through questioning, discussion and class assemblies.
40. Good provision is made for pupils' moral development. Assemblies, personal, social and health education in Years 6 and 7, and some religious education lessons contain moral themes. Basic classroom rules are discussed and agreed although these are only displayed in a few classrooms. The strongest influence on pupils is the day-to-day dealings between themselves and staff. Very good relationships generate very good behaviour. Good work, behaviour and attitudes are celebrated weekly in achievement assemblies; for example, the best behaved class at lunch-time is recognised by a special award.
41. The provision for social development is good. Pupils have some opportunities to work together; for example, in literacy, physical education and art and design lessons. They are given responsibilities within the class such as giving out materials and tidying up. The school council has members from each class who discuss concerns raised by pupils. This has resulted in the

toilets being redecorated and new water fountains being installed. Pupils are taught to be aware of the natural environment and of the need to care for and conserve it. To this end pupils in Year 7 organise and run a waste paper collection in the town. However, within the school there are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility both within classrooms and around the school. Very good extra-curricular provision, including visits and residential trips, give opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills in different situations. Pupils support different children's charities, such as 'Save the Children' and 'National Children's Homes', and arrange fund-raising activities themselves. Pupils in Year 4 support a child in India and this gives them an understanding of their responsibilities towards those less fortunate than they are.

42. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. At the last inspection it was good. However, the need to raise pupils' awareness of the rich cultural diversity within Britain today is not sufficiently recognised at the present time. Pupils have opportunities to become aware of their own and other world cultures through their studies in literacy, music, art and design, history and geography; through participation in local festivals, their visits to museums, visiting speakers from the local community and through local university links with Egyptian educationalists.

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

43. The school is a safe and friendly place in which pupils receive good personal support and guidance. Procedures for assessing, monitoring and supporting academic progress are satisfactory. Overall, the school provides good pastoral care, and this enhances pupils' well-being and promotes good achievement.
44. Procedures for child protection are good. Members of staff are well briefed on child protection issues. They are well aware of the need to be vigilant, and know what they must do if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. Although there is still no medical room, the school has good arrangements for promoting health and safety. There is a comprehensive written policy that gives staff good guidance on their responsibilities. The governing body is appropriately involved in health and safety issues and has appointed one of its members as 'health and safety governor'. Formal policies and procedures are effective in practice. The school has carried out risk assessments and has arranged for regular checks of its premises and equipment. It has very thorough arrangements for ensuring that pupils get home safely at the end of the day. Pupils wait in the school hall until their bus comes, and members of staff see that they get on it. This is a good illustration of the school's concern for health and safety.
45. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are effective. Class teachers mark the registers at the beginning of morning and afternoon school in accordance with legal requirements, and office staff enter the information on to the school's computer. The system produces good and readily accessible analysis of attendance, which teachers use to monitor the attendance records of pupils in their class. The office makes first day contact with the homes of pupils who are absent without explanation. This encourages good attendance, although children's safety is the school's prime concern. The school reports absence rates in the school prospectus and annual report of the governing body, as required by law. The prospectus also outlines the school's procedures and expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. It seeks to dissuade parents from taking family holidays in term time, but erroneously states that they are legally entitled to take their children out of school for ten days. Most parents respect the school's wishes regarding holiday leave, as the very good rate of attendance shows.
46. The school has good procedures for improving behaviour and discipline. Teachers encourage pupils to be hard working, polite and co-operative. They also encourage all pupils to become fully involved in all that the school offers and successfully ensure that all have equal access to all areas of the curriculum. The school works hard to remove any barriers that might restrict learning. The school has good systems for identifying pupils with behaviour problems, and for recording and monitoring their progress. It gives them good support, and works with their parents in an effort to find a solution to their difficulties. Excluding pupils from school is very

rarely used as a sanction. When the school excludes a pupil it does so as a last resort, and in accordance with proper procedures. General issues of inclusion are appropriately covered by whole-school policies, such as the policy on preventing racism.

47. As a result of its good arrangements, the school is an orderly place in which pupils feel secure. Good teaching is at the heart of the school's success. Teachers set high standards and act as good role models. The majority are very skilled in managing behaviour in lessons, and they cope successfully with some difficult individuals. The school's system of rewards and sanctions is effective in encouraging pupils to behave well. For example, pupils prize the weekly 'rosette' for the class with the best behaviour in the lunch hour. They try very hard to behave well in the playground and dining hall in the hope that their class will win the trophy. There are good arrangements for eliminating boisterous and aggressive behaviour. The school's midday supervisors are well trained and highly experienced, and the good service that they provide restricts opportunities for rough play, fighting and bullying to a minimum. Parents are pleased with the way that the school handles instances of poor behaviour. They say that any bullying is quickly nipped in the bud.
48. Most pupils are happy with the system of discipline. They understand and try to comply with what is expected of them, even though the behaviour codes of conduct are not on display in all classrooms. There is scope for greater consultation with pupils to consider their views about the school's codes of conduct.
49. The school monitors and supports pupils' personal development well. Members of staff are caring, approachable and accessible. They are always on hand to give pupils help with their problems. There are no formal procedures for recording and tracking pupils' personal progress, but there are effective informal arrangements. Staff know children well as individuals. They identify those who are not thriving and give them the support they need. There is good whole-school provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils in Year 7 receive good preparation for the next stage of their education. A good programme of visits to the neighbouring high school helps them to understand the school's routines prior to transfer. Pupils of all ages benefit from a wide range of day visits to places of interest, residential visits and a good programme of extra-curricular activities. These very successfully widen their horizons and contribute to the development of their social skills. Parents are very satisfied with this aspect of the school's work. In response to the questionnaire to parents distributed prior to the inspection, nearly nine out of ten said that the school helps children to become mature and responsible.
50. The school has made sound progress since the previous inspection with regard to the provision of pastoral care. It continues to provide its pupils with sound levels of personal support and guidance. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. There are good procedures in English and mathematics for tracking progress and recording attainment. National testing in Year 6, as well as a battery of other tests, provide useful assessment information. In several other subjects assessments are made at the end of units of study, but this is still a developing area. There are no consistently applied procedures for using assessment information to set individual targets for pupils. As a result, pupils and their parents are not always sure about what stages they have reached and what direction their future learning should be taking. There is no formal assessment in art and design, and procedures in information and communication technology are inadequate. In French and German assessment procedures are good.
51. The results of national and other optional testing are analysed to identify general strengths and weaknesses. The information that is gathered is used to ensure that pupils are placed in appropriate sets in mathematics, and is used to inform planning in literacy, where work is planned for different abilities within classes. Test results are carefully recorded and enable pupils' progress in English and mathematics to be monitored throughout the school. Pupils are satisfactorily supported through setting and grouping arrangements in lessons, and through further initiatives such as booster groups and a programme of additional literacy support. Assessment in French and German are used effectively to plan work for different groups of pupils and to place pupils in sets in Year 7.

52. Pupils with special educational needs are initially identified from the first school records. In most lessons staff are sufficiently alert to the needs of pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties and take appropriate action to support such pupils. Teachers consult with the special educational needs co-ordinator who offers good advice and support. Clear individual education plans with specific targets for each pupil are drawn up and specific strategies to help pupils to reach their targets are implemented. Targets are regularly assessed and reviewed. Pupils with special educational needs are now sharing in this target setting process; the co-ordinator carefully explains and discusses the proposed targets. Pupils then write these out in their own words and sign them as their own personal record. The plans include behavioural issues for a small number of pupils, and these are handled sensitively. Links with outside agencies are well maintained. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs receive their full entitlement of provision.

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

53. The school values the support of parents and seeks to develop close links with them. As at the time of the previous inspection, there is a good partnership between home and school, and this has a positive effect on pupils' achievement. However, there is scope for improving communications so that parents' understanding of how well their children are doing is made clearer.
54. There was a good response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and the answers show that parents have favourable views of the school. They are happy with the quality of teaching and are pleased that children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. They say that pupils like school, behave well and make good progress. Although nearly all parents say that they would feel comfortable about approaching members of staff over problems, a significant minority feels dissatisfied with other aspects of the home/school partnership. Nearly one in four says that children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. One fifth of parents are unhappy with information on progress. A similar proportion feels that the school does not co-operate closely with parents.
55. The inspection team agrees with the parents who have positive views of the school. On the matter of homework, inspectors do not support the minority view. Their findings indicate that pupils are set a reasonable amount of work to do at home. On the other hand, inspectors accept that the parents who are dissatisfied with information on progress have some grounds for concern. There are weaknesses in the end-of-year reports to parents, although the reporting system as a whole is adequate. Reports do not always give a clear picture of each pupils' attainment and progress in each subject.
56. The school has established good links with parents. The quality of information for them is satisfactory overall, and encourages them to support their children's education. The school prospectus is 'user friendly' and informative on school routines and what it requires of parents; for example, regarding explanations for pupils' absence. It emphasises the value of a good home/school partnership. Information in the prospectus encourages parents to act as voluntary helpers in school, and gives guidance on the amount of homework that children should be expected to do. It includes the home/school agreement. The quality of day-to-day information is good. Parents receive regular newsletters and notices that keep them in touch with events in school. However, they do not get the chance to attend assemblies and see their children receive merit certificates. Provision of information about the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Parents now receive notice of the topics that their children will be studying during the term. Both the prospectus and letters from teachers state that the school follows the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but they do not explain what this means in practice. Parents are adequately informed about the school's progress and plans for the future. The governors' annual report to parents is clear and detailed, and explains the governing body's priorities for the school. Parents have little involvement in decision making although the school sends out annual questionnaires to find out their views and consult them on policies.

57. Overall parents receive satisfactory information on their child's progress. Reading and homework diaries act as an on-going line of communication between home and school. Pupils use them well, and parents regularly read and sign them. They are, therefore, an effective means of updating parents on what their children are learning. There is good communication between school and home over specific concerns and problems. Members of staff contact parents promptly if they have concerns about a pupil's attendance, behaviour or work. There are also report books that provide information on pupils who are experiencing problems. The formal system for reporting on progress is satisfactory. The school holds consultation evenings twice a year, and these give parents adequate opportunities to discuss their child's work with teachers. End-of-year reports contain a good amount of comment on personal development and attitudes towards learning. There are also informative self-assessments by children on what they have achieved and can do well. The sections on the subjects of the curriculum give variable amounts of information on what has been studied during the year. They rarely give a clear picture of the pupil's level of attainment. For example, there are hardly any references to National Curriculum Levels. The reports give parents very little guidance on how their child can improve his or her attainment and do not include targets for improvement. Consequently, they do little to help parents to become partners in their children's learning.
58. Parents are actively involved in the general life of the school. They attend consultation evenings in large numbers and give very good support to school performances. This was evident during the inspection, when many families came to watch the school sports day. Parents give good support to extra-curricular activities by providing transport to matches and acting as supervisors on trips. They make voluntary financial contributions, such as paying for their children to have instrumental music tuition. Help is available to families who cannot afford the cost of educational excursions and residential visits, so that no pupils are denied access to these learning opportunities for financial reasons. The 'Friends of the School' parents' association is active and successful in organising fund-raising and social events. The amount of money that families raise each year is considerable and significantly enhances the school's resources. Parental support for the school has a positive impact on pupils' personal development and their achievement. They are prepared to work closely with members of staff in an effort to find solutions to problems, such as poor behaviour and unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. A good number of parents regularly help in lessons as voluntary classroom assistants. Some families have a long association with the local area, and whenever possible the school makes use of their knowledge. For example, grandparents have enriched history lessons by talking to pupils about their personal experiences of World War II.
59. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. It has increased the amount of information on topics to be studied, and has successfully maintained a good level of parental involvement in pupils' learning.

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

60. The management of the school is good. At the time of the last inspection the school was undergoing a period of change and transition and was seeking a new educational direction. This is still the case. The school has managed the introduction of new national initiatives well. It is currently subject to reorganisation and the management of the school is becoming increasingly focused on how best to manage this change. Within the next few years it will cease to be a middle school and instead will become a junior school. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and performance management systems have been implemented effectively. The new nationally agreed Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs has been introduced successfully as has the revised National Curriculum. The headteacher has established a good system whereby managerial responsibilities are delegated appropriately to year group leaders. Each of the four year group leaders has responsibility for overseeing provision in the three classes for which they are responsible. They organise weekly planning meetings and assist with monitoring plans. Within their year groups, they maintain a good overview of pupils' pastoral needs and the provision for pupils with special educational needs. They help to monitor standards and, as part of the senior management team, they report regularly to the headteacher. They liaise with subject co-

ordinators who have a clear understanding of their accountability for the standards that pupils attain across the school. In this way full coverage of the National Curriculum is secured and information about provision and the standards pupils attain is shared.

61. The effectiveness of the leadership of the school has been constrained because there has not been a common understanding of the need for change and development or a common agreement about the direction in which the school ought to move. Under the sound and determined leadership of the headteacher, all associated with the school have developed a somewhat clearer understanding of the direction that the school needs to take in order to make further progress. Performance management procedures have been introduced successfully and are having a positive impact on improving standards. The school has been providing a distinctive middle school form of education that is different from that which is generally considered to represent good primary school practice. It is now re-focusing and is engaged in developing a curriculum that is more in tune with the learning needs of primary school pupils. There is still a great deal of work to do, however, to formulate a shared perception of how the school can fulfil its aims and aspirations and raise the standards that pupils attain. The appointment of a new deputy headteacher was planned to coincide with proposals to reorganise the school into a junior school that will cater for the needs of pupils from Years 3 to 6. The school will lose its Year 7 classes and gain classes for pupils in Year 3. It is an opportune time in the school's development to reassess its educational provision, redefine its aims and prepare for its new status.
62. The governing body is successful in ensuring that the school meets its legal obligations. Governors bring a wealth of talent and expertise, and governors are increasingly involved with helping to shape the direction of the school. Each governor has produced their own individual action plan outlining how they intend to improve their individual contribution to the school's success. The Chair of Governors offers strong and able support. At the time of the last inspection governors were not involved sufficiently in making decisions and setting priorities. Almost all governors who were on the board at the time of the last inspection are no longer members. Governors are increasingly involved in the decision making process and in monitoring provision, but they are still not as closely involved as they should be. Each governor is linked to a particular area of the curriculum, for example, and each is supposed to liaise with the subject co-ordinator for each subject to gain an insight into standards and areas for development. In practice several co-ordinators have not met with their governor and do not know which governor is supposed to be monitoring their areas of responsibility. Governors work collaboratively to produce their annual report for parents, and parents are asked to give their views on the school's provision. Parents are invited to the governors' annual meeting for parents so that they have an opportunity to hear about the work of the school and to raise any concerns they may have. In practice very few parents attend this meeting. The governing body have worked towards ensuring that the key issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The school's aims are clearly defined and described in the school prospectus and the school is largely successful in achieving its aims.
63. The quality and effectiveness of the school improvement plan has developed well since the time of the last inspection. It focuses appropriately on the main priorities that the school needs to address in order to improve standards. One element, for example, is explicit about raising standards in English, 'Task – To raise standards in English to meet/exceed set targets'. The action required is equally explicit, 'Analyse previous year's performance to identify areas of underachievement'. This section continues with details of how the analysis will inform teachers' planning and how booster classes will be provided for pupils identified as requiring extra help. The school did in fact exceed its target in English in 2001 and this indicates the effectiveness of such strategic planning. The action plan for mathematics, written by the co-ordinator who left the school last year, has not been so successful in helping to improve standards and it does not focus on appropriate areas for development. It describes the introduction of more sets of textbooks and the measure of success is that the textbooks are being used. Improving the quality of teaching by monitoring and evaluating lessons also features in the plan as does improving teaching and learning in information and communication technology. The plan also seeks to 'engage the school in an open and rigorous self-evaluation and review process', and

present, 'an honest appraisal and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and formulate agreed actions to raise standards in all areas of school life'. This demonstrates the school's commitment to raising standards. Governors are involved in the evaluation of the school's successes in meeting its aims. The plan covers a four-year period up to July 2003, although it is reviewed each year to assess progress. It also details how the opinions of parents about the school's provision will be canvassed through annual questionnaires and the opinions of pupils through the school council. The results of such surveys are not, however, readily accessible and do not feature in the governors' annual report to parents. The school improvement plan is underpinned by clear action plans developed by each subject co-ordinator. Resource implications and the costs of improvements are clearly defined. Most of the subject action plans refer to the need to use computers to support teaching and learning, but the school has not been able to make much progress on this front.

64. The governing body monitors finances carefully. The chair of the finance committee has a very good understanding of the school's financial position and offers expert advice. Governors consider alternative means of acquiring goods and services and invite tenders for large items of expenditure such as the recent construction of two new classrooms. The headteacher managed this building project and helped to ensure that the school obtained good value for money. When making decisions the governing body applies the principles of best value well. All allocations of money, such as the money to support pupils with special educational needs, are spent on the areas for which they are designated. The governing body has been committed to retaining 12 relatively small classes even though this means allocating a substantial proportion of the school's budget to teaching costs. By using the surplus from last year's budget, governors have been able to maintain this position even though numbers have been falling and, consequently, income has been reduced. This commitment has been maintained because the governing body perceives that small classes, that do not contain mixed year groups, lead to more effective teaching and learning. Parents strongly support this view and the school's steadily improving performance indicates that they are justified in their belief. The school's financial position indicates that it will not be able to sustain current staffing levels next year, but the school has good plans for managing provision to enable any adverse impact on pupils' learning to be minimised. The governing body is good at developing long-term strategic plans.
65. The headteacher, year group leaders and subject co-ordinators monitor teaching by examining curricular planning, studying the work that pupils produce and observing lessons. In this way the school is beginning to develop a picture of teachers' strengths as well as areas for development. There is scope for developing procedures to promote more effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching. The school has no up-to-date teaching and learning policy that defines the criteria against which teaching will be evaluated. Although teachers receive oral feedback on their performance, they are not provided with written feedback about their strengths and areas for development. At present there is a lack of clarity about exactly what is expected of teachers. This has contributed to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and classroom management. Inconsistencies in approach result in variations in the patterns of pupils' learning between classes. This is evident in inspection findings that showed variations in the quality of work produced by pupils in different classes in the same year group, and the quality of teaching, which varied from very good to satisfactory. The headteacher and the teaching staff are keen to taking further steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
66. The co-ordinator who organises provision for pupils special educational needs manages provision well. She has a clear understanding of her area of responsibility and is keen to ensure that staff are well-prepared and trained in the implementation of early intervention strategies as well as supporting pupils already on the special educational needs register. She monitors pupils' individual education plans, which are now stored in a computerised system. She meets with learning support assistants each week to discuss their work and the progress that pupils are making.
67. The day-to-day running of the school's administrative procedures are organised efficiently by the school secretary and the finance assistant. They work in close liaison and are committed to ensuring that the headteacher is not burdened with any unnecessary administrative tasks. This

enables him to concentrate on curricular matters such as teaching and learning. School accounts are kept meticulously and audited regularly.

68. The governing body ensures that there are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. Staffing and accommodation are adequate. Accommodation since the time of the last inspection has improved with the provision of two new classrooms. However, as was identified in the last inspection report, there are problems regarding the small size of several classrooms and there is still no medical room. In view of the good teaching and improving standards, the school provides good value for money.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to improve standards further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- 1 develop, through the leadership of the senior management team, a whole-school approach to teaching and learning by:
  - entering into a dialogue where the implications of the school's reorganisation are debated openly by all associated with the school;
  - helping to formulate a clear and detailed vision of what the new school should be like;
  - articulating the vision to all associated with the school;
  - developing a whole-school approach to teaching and learning that helps the school to move closer towards attaining its aspirations.

(See paragraphs 20, 23, 61, 65 and 92)\*

- 2 develop a shared, common understanding of what constitutes excellent teaching by:
  - adopting an agreed teaching and learning policy, which details the criteria that promote high quality teaching;
  - monitoring and evaluating teaching against these criteria;
  - providing teachers with clear guidance about how they can improve the quality of their teaching.

(See paragraphs 20, 23, 61 and 65)\*

- 3 develop target-setting procedures that help teachers, pupils and parents to understand clearly the stages of development that pupils have reached, the targets that pupils have achieved and details of targets for further development.

(See paragraphs 29, 50, 77, 89, 92, 94, 95 and 126)

- 4 communicate clearly to parents details of pupils' attainment and progress together with targets for future learning.

(See paragraphs 50, 53, 55 and 57)

- 5 ensure that computers are used effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.

(See paragraphs 28, 63, 79, 91, 95, 111, 121, 125, 131 and 138)\*

### Other less significant areas for development:

- pupils' understanding of our diverse, multicultural society; (See paragraph 42)
- pupils' opportunities to exercise responsibility and use their initiative in lessons and around the school; (See paragraphs 15, 20 and 41)
- pupils' opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in meaningful situations. (See paragraphs 2, 6, 20, 27 and 82)

\* The school has already identified these as areas for improvement and they feature in the school's development planning.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	45	23	0	0	0
Percentage	0	11	59	30	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	293
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	38

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	6.3
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National comparative data	0.4
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	40	42	82

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	28	32
	Girls	38	29	39
	Total	65	57	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (85)	70 (77)	87(94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	31	32
	Girls	37	30	37
	Total	65	61	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (81)	74 (79)	85 (83)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	292
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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



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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	24.4

**Education support staff: Y4– Y7**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	697,999
Total expenditure	733,129
Expenditure per pupil	2,503
Balance brought forward from previous year	78,934
Balance carried forward to next year	43,804

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

293

Number of questionnaires returned

184

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	57	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	60	7	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	62	8	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	57	19	3	1
The teaching is good.	32	62	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	56	16	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	42	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	55	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	23	55	17	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	29	54	6	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	58	8	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	48	11	2	7

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

A significant number of parents who returned questionnaires felt that there was insufficient liaison between the first school and the teachers in Year 4, which meant that pupils marked time during their first year in the school. The inspection team could find no evidence for this as pupils achieve particularly well in Year 4. The amount of homework is an issue for a significant minority of parents, but inspection findings show that the amount set is about right. A large proportion do not feel that the school works closely enough with parents and a significant number of parents do not feel well informed about how their children are getting on. The inspection team found that there was some justification for these views.

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

### **ENGLISH**

70. By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils attain standards that are above average. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be average. Results of national tests over time indicate that girls' attainment is higher than boys', but during the inspection there was no evidence of any significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The school has been working with Homerton College Cambridge on the performance of boys in literacy and the college's study confirms that, in this school, boys perform as well as girls. Pupils' achievement from Years 4 to 7 is good. Pupils with special educational needs, and the very small number who speak English as an additional language, are supported satisfactorily and achieve as well as all the others.
71. Most pupils enter school with speaking and listening skills that are broadly in line with national averages, but by the end of Years 6 and 7, they have developed skills that are above average. This is mainly because pupils have good opportunities to express opinions. It is also because relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and this helps to boost pupils' confidence. A good example was seen in a poetry lesson in Year 4 where a lively discussion about poems was taking place. One pupil said, 'I don't think the poem should end there', and explained clearly why an alternative ending would be preferable. Pupils in Year 5 were working on a newspaper report where they used imaginative language in role play, adapting the way they spoke to suit the characters. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils had good opportunities to study how emotions and feelings are expressed in work linked to the text 'Kensuke's Kingdom', where the emotions of the main characters are explored successfully. By the end of Year 7, many pupils express their ideas forcefully and substantiate their arguments well. They cite evidence from the text of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', to support their ideas. Pupils are enthusiastic and contribute fully to lessons, sustaining conversations well. Pupils listen attentively. Attitudes towards the subject are positive and pupils behave well in most lessons. They only become distracted when tasks are too difficult or too long. Pupils work well together in pairs or small groups, discussing how they can improve their work. The subject co-ordinator has identified the need to monitor standards in speaking and listening throughout the school in order to evaluate achievement and pinpoint areas for further development.
72. Pupils achieve well in reading and by the end of Years 6 and 7, they attain standards that are above average. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. The regular study of different types of literature in the daily literacy hour contributes to the improved standards in reading and pupils' developing interest. More advanced pupils read with good expression and understanding, especially when speech or punctuation is indicated in the text. Most pupils read fluently and accurately. Older pupils keep a record of the books they have read. They are able to achieve a 'gold standard in reading' if they read at least seven books each term. This strategy encourages pupils to retain their enjoyment of reading as they progress through the school. Most pupils read with enthusiasm and good understanding. They enjoy discussing their favourite authors. Jacqueline Wilson, J K Rowling and J R Tolkien are especially popular with older pupils. They borrow books from the library regularly and choose their own reading material as they follow their individual interests. Pupils take a good range of fiction and non-fiction books home and keep individual reading records. Lower attaining pupils have graded books that are colour coded to make sure that they are matched accurately to pupils' varying stages of development. Across the school pupils talk with interest about books as they discuss the plot and the main characters of their favourite stories.
73. Library skills are well developed. Pupils understand the classification system and locate information in non-fiction books quickly, using the index and contents pages accurately. The library is located in the middle of the school and can, therefore, be reached easily from most classes. Occasionally pupils slip out of their classes to use the library for research in English and other areas of the curriculum. Some pupils borrow from outside libraries and buy books from book fairs. The library is well stocked and some books of a multicultural flavour can be found,



but there are a large number of older books that lack appeal even though they are in good condition.

74. Pupils' work demonstrates that achievement in writing is good. The work produced in exercise books indicates that most pupils attain average standards. They complete exercises in spelling and grammar and handwriting is taught regularly. However, there is clear evidence that when pupils write for a purpose and have more freedom to express themselves, they attain standards that are above average. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils are capable of producing work of quality and most have attained standards that are above average. The group of pupils who visited the Isle of Arran wrote particularly clear pieces when recording their experiences. One lower attaining pupil wrote a very good diary recording his visit. He was so inspired by the experience and the beauty of the island that he was able to express himself clearly and produce good quality writing. The writing of this group of pupils demonstrated clearly that the experience made a major contribution to their spiritual awareness. The group of pupils who wrote diaries of their visit to France also produced writing of high quality as did those who wrote about their visit to Thetford Forest. Accounts of the visit to France are interesting and many pupils laced their prose with French words and phrases.
75. The progressive development of writing skills can be seen clearly as pupils move through the school. Pupils in Year 4 understand different verse forms, the setting of a story or poem and how to describe the pattern of rhyming lines. When studying a poem by Shakespeare; for example, they used their prior knowledge of poetry to identify rhyming couplets. They recognised imagery and gave clear explanations for the meaning of lines. Pupils often choose poems to read for enjoyment and give clear reasons for their choices. They write in a range of forms. An example of was seen in a lesson in Year 5 on newspaper headlines where pupils devised their own stories containing rich, imaginative vocabulary. In Year 6, pupils continue to write imaginative pieces with mostly accurate spelling and correct punctuation. They use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary and their writing style reflects the purpose of the work and the audience for whom they are writing. They write character descriptions, book and film reviews, letters and interviews, most of which are well presented. Much of the work shows an individual approach, where pupils express their personal feelings such as excitement and trepidation when leaving home for residential visits, for example. Pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy skills in work in many lessons, such as geography, history and science. In Year 7, pupils have completed their own poetry anthologies and in their writing they demonstrate the use of a richer vocabulary and write complex sentences. When they studied the witches' scene from 'Macbeth', they used language that had a dramatic effect in creating their own spells, such as, 'adder's fork and blind worms' sting, legs and toes from crippled dogs'.
76. Punctuation and grammar are developed systematically in each year group with the result that by the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils organise their own writing in paragraphs with accurate punctuation, often including speech marks, commas, semicolons and colons. The work of most pupils is neatly written and well presented. The use of illustrations, which often accompany writing, enhances the appearance of the finished pieces.
77. Satisfactory use is made of assessment in reading and writing throughout the school. Samples of writing are kept and levels of attainment are noted. Assessment procedures have recently been revised, using a grid system developed by the local education authority to record progress. At present, in some exercise books, a statement about the level at which a pupil is working is attached to the book and this helps pupils to understand how well they are achieving. Evidence in pupils' workbooks shows that work is marked regularly, sometimes with helpful advice on how to improve. A number of exercise books belonging to pupils in Year 4 include a page of targets for each pupil, highlighting areas that require attention, and showing the progress that individuals are making. The target settings system is being trailed this year and is not yet used consistently across the school. The school recognises that this is an area for further development.

78. The standard of teaching is good. Teachers throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The best lessons move at a brisk pace and the use of questions that challenge pupils' thinking help them to think for themselves. In lessons where the work is well matched to pupils' widely varying stages of development, pupils concentrate well and work willingly. Lessons are generally well planned with clear objectives. When the content of lessons is stimulating, pupils show an enthusiastic response. Higher attaining pupils are generally challenged appropriately. In a particularly good lesson for pupils in Year 4, pupils studied poetry enthusiastically. They enjoyed modern poetry, such as John Agard's, 'Don't call Alligator Long Mouth 'Till You Cross River', and the black rap poet, Benjamin Zephaniah's, 'Dis Poetry', although here opportunities were missed to explore the influences that different cultural backgrounds have on the language used. In this lesson pupils then studied Shakespeare's, 'Crabbed Age and Youth'. They showed remarkable insight and understanding and were clearly well versed in studying different texts, noting the alliteration in 'winter weather' and imagery used to emphasise the contrast between youth and age, and the rhyme scheme. The teacher had high expectations of all and generated great enthusiasm. The class divided into three groups and each was well supported. The lower attaining group was encouraged to write a group poem with the help of the teacher who also kept an eye on the higher attaining pupils who worked collaboratively on creating their poems whilst another group withdrew to the library where they were well supported by a mother who was providing voluntary classroom assistance. As a result, all pupils experienced the pleasure of success as they created good poems using the theme of contrast between old and new. Higher attaining pupils used words such as 'aerodynamic' as they compared old and new cars whilst the lower attaining group composed a good poem about old and new aeroplanes. Each group worked eagerly and were keen to share their poems with the rest of the class. There were no pictures available to help them to build images. They went into the library to find spellings for homework, giving them the opportunity to use their own initiative.
79. Teachers do not always use the review session at the end of lessons to move pupils' learning forwards. The conclusion is often used to report what they have done, without highlighting areas for improvement. Pupils are frequently praised, however, for good work or attentive listening. Resources in English are good overall, but there is no evidence during the inspection of the use of computers being used to promote pupils' learning.
80. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is very clear about the priorities for development within the subject. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively and provides a good framework to guide teachers' planning. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning to identify ways in which standards can be improved. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make satisfactory progress. Attendance at literacy meetings outside school, give the co-ordinator a wide view of the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils attain average standards. Standards have been maintained satisfactorily since the previous inspection, although the improving trend that was noted at that time has not been sustained. The achievement of the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. There were no significant differences noted between the attainment of boys and girls.
82. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding that the value of a digit is dependent on its place in a number. They multiply and divide numbers accurately, including decimals, by ten and one hundred. They work satisfactorily within the 'four rules' of number, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, and use efficient methods for setting out sums. However, some lower attaining pupils are taught formal methods too soon, and do not fully understand what they are doing. Pupils work through word problems using the guidance and examples given by the teacher. Higher attaining pupils start to develop their own strategies for using mathematics in practical circumstances. However, there are insufficient opportunities to apply skills in this way both in mathematics and other subjects. Pupils have a sound understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages, and start to relate these to each other;

for example, knowing that 0.07 is seven hundredths and that 75 per cent is three-quarters. Higher attaining pupils work out percentage increases and decreases; lower attaining pupils only work to one place of decimals and are unsure about placing fractions in order according to their numerical value. Most have a satisfactory understanding of area and perimeter and higher attaining pupils use formulae to calculate the areas of rectangles and triangles. Most pupils measure angles accurately, recognise acute and obtuse angles and calculate the sum of the angles in different types of triangle. Pupils conduct surveys; for example, looking at how they travel to school, and display and compare their results in bar charts. There is an element of particularly purposeful, meaningful work as when pupils construct line graphs to illustrate how to convert euros to pence, for example.

83. Pupils in Year 7 build on their prior knowledge, carrying out harder operations in number, such as dividing by tens and units. Higher attaining pupils solve simple algebraic problems and understand how brackets are used. Pupils calculate volume and form hypotheses based on an interpretation of data. They conduct surveys to find out which is the most popular pop group and the most popular television programmes, before creating block graphs to illustrate their findings. One interesting piece of work involved studying how many words a pupil could read each minute for a continuous period of ten minutes. The line graph created as a result formed a parabola and showed that the rate peaked after 12 minutes before falling away again.
84. In several classes pupils are not sufficiently confident in discussing what they are doing. Although pupils are generally articulate, good opportunities to talk about their work, so developing their understanding and reasoning skills, are not always evident in lessons. There were several good examples of pupils being encouraged to explore their thinking processes, but such good practice is not common or consistent through the school. A general lack of group work within sets restricts the opportunities for pupils to talk among themselves and to work co-operatively.
85. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During the inspection just over one half of the lessons seen were judged to be good or better. However, elements from pupils' past work, for example, the overuse of published texts and worksheets, indicates a lower quality of teaching and learning.
86. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared, with clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of the lesson. Work is planned within year groups for the range of prior attainment within sets. However, within each set pupils generally have the same task, and insufficient account is taken, particularly within lower ability sets, of what pupils could be expected to know and understand. For example, in a Year 4 set, pupils were practising multiplication tables and the related division facts, without fully understanding the operations involved. Weekly planning is often unaltered to take account of ongoing assessments, in order to challenge pupils further or to support their learning more precisely.
87. A mental arithmetic session at the start of most lessons gets pupils thinking straightaway, and helps to capture their interest and concentration. Pupils use individual white boards to record the results of their mental calculations and this ensures that all are involved and that when they hold up their answers the teacher can quickly assess pupils' understanding. The methods that teachers use, particularly in the lower attaining sets, indicate that they expect a great deal of time to be spent in recording answers to problems that are unrelated to real life situations. This is sometimes at the expense of a more practical approach that would help to develop a greater understanding of the mathematical concepts being taught. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrate good questioning strategies that help pupils to develop a greater understanding. In one very good lesson the teacher's questioning was selectively targeted towards those who did not respond, in order to check on their understanding and to help to ensure that all were fully included in the lesson. In a lesson for pupils in Year 5, that was not taken by the usual teacher, the teacher taking the lesson demonstrated highly skilled questioning strategies designed to challenge pupils' thinking. Despite the teacher's best efforts, pupils' responses showed that they were not used to this approach to learning.

88. Satisfactory support is given during the main part of lessons. However, there is often no group work within sets that both encourages pupils to work independently and enables teachers to focus their support more effectively on a particular group. Learning support staff provide sound support for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make satisfactory progress within lessons.
89. The review sessions that take place towards the end of each lesson do not give sufficient time for pupils to discuss and evaluate the learning that has taken place, although teachers inform them in general terms about how well they have done. Opportunities to reflect on what they have learned are missed. Teachers have high expectations of how work should be presented, but the quality of marking is variable. In many instances there are few comments that refer to learning objectives, or that inform pupils about how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. Homework is set regularly and helps pupils to develop and practise skills that have been taught in class.
90. The management of pupils is good, and is based on the good relationships that teachers have with pupils. This helps to promote good attitudes and encourages pupils to do their best in lessons.
91. There are instances where numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other subject areas. For example, in history pupils looked at rationing in World War II and prepared a budget to determine, for example, how long it would take them to accumulate enough 'points' to purchase the clothes in their wardrobes at home. Pupils were astonished when they realised that if they lived in wartime England it would take them 12 years to buy the clothing that they currently wear even if they could afford the items. In science, when working on forces and friction, pupils measure, record and compare the results of experiments, such as the distance that cars travel over different surfaces. There is scope to develop the use of mathematics further in this way. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in meaningful situations. The use of information and communication technology is developing, but computers are not used systematically to support teaching and learning. Computer programs are occasionally used to enter and compare data and to practise basic skills. In one lesson, where pupils were using different programs to practise basic number skills, insufficient care was taken to ensure that the programs and levels within programs were appropriate to individual learning needs.
92. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed. She has reviewed and rewritten the policy. This clearly recognises the areas for development; 'We are working for understanding, not teaching a sequence of seemingly abstract rules and techniques. Practical work is an effective means whereby understanding of mathematics can develop as pupils handle materials and real data'. This fine aspiration indicates that the school is intent on introducing good practice, but in reality few lessons enable pupils to handle real data. Lessons are largely concerned with teaching seemingly abstract rules and techniques. The school also recognises the need to plan work and set short-term targets, to meet the range of learning needs within sets as much as between them. Monitoring of lessons has been carried out, but no written feedback has been given to teachers with points for development. The co-ordinator sees planning, and has worked with some teachers on this aspect. End-of-unit testing is carried out across year groups, which tends only to show that higher attaining pupils perform better than those who are slower learners, rather than providing an appropriate assessment of individual progress based on prior attainment. The school has begun to analyse the results of national tests, together with a range of optional tests, to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and to inform future planning. Pupils' progress is carefully plotted as they move through the school. Support is provided through setting arrangements, booster classes and special support for particular groups. Several pupils with special educational needs have numeracy targets on their individual education plans and they make good progress towards meeting their targets. The target setting process is not, however, used consistently throughout the school for other pupils. As a result, pupils are not closely involved in evaluating their learning. They do not have a clear understanding of the progress that they have made or what the next steps in learning will be.

## SCIENCE

93. In national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2001, the school's performance was in line with the national average. Talking to pupils and observing lessons during the inspection indicates, however, that by the end of Year 6, pupils reach an above average standard in their knowledge and understanding. They are able to relate what they have learned to new discoveries or experiments and higher attaining pupils can make reasoned predictions when confronted with new observations or data. For example, when they are taught how scientists classify animals into different types, they quickly find sets of characteristics that might fit an animal they know into a particular category. Lower attaining pupils know how to conduct experiments to find things out, and have a particularly good understanding of food chains and feeding relationships when they look at flora and fauna in their local environment. Scrutiny of books revealed that pupils are generally less secure in describing what they know in written form and in interpreting graphs and data. They are also less practised in finding out information from books and similar sources. Pupils' achievement is sound in Year 7 and by the end of the year most maintain an above average standard of attainment. Pupils in Year 7 conduct very good experiments to measure the PH value of various types of soil using universal indicator paper. They are able to control the variables in experiments and suggest reasons for their predictions. As in Years 4 to 6, their written work shows that they are less secure in finding evidence from other sources; the teacher often provides them with ready-made information sheets or information contained in writing on the board. This means that they are very dependent on the teacher as a source of knowledge. In their writing, the teacher often has to point out the pupils' tendency to explain the results of experiments in a muddled way; this tendency is not always followed up by planning lessons so that pupils are required to record their findings systematically in a step-by-step manner.
94. Teaching in science is good overall and learning in most lessons is good. Teachers have a good understanding of science and convey their interest and enthusiasm to the pupils through well-planned lessons. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are taught by a specialist teacher and teachers make good use of practical experiments and demonstrations. Overall achievement is good; pupils enter the school with average standards in science and leave with above average attainment in knowledge and understanding. However, teachers do not always provide work that matches pupils' varying stages of development because the regular assessment of pupils' progress does not provide teachers with sufficiently precise information to enable the setting of short-term targets for learning. In discussions with pupils few were clear about how well they were doing or what stage of learning they had reached. In several lessons, lower attaining pupils struggled to keep up. In one lesson for pupils in Year 6, pupils were brainstorming evidence for classifying plants and animals, but the teacher tended to rely on obtaining answers from the more knowledgeable and vociferous pupils, who were mostly boys, whilst the lower attaining pupils listened with interest, but with somewhat less involvement. From the pupils' books it is clear that the higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 have insufficient opportunities to devise and test their own theories. Teachers organise and manage pupils' learning well and they usually respond with enthusiasm and willingness to work hard. This also applies to the pupils with special educational needs. Where appropriate, a support assistant works alongside the pupils to help with writing and understanding. However, teachers do not always provide work that is carefully matched to the widely varying range of abilities in each class; extra help is often merely an extra worksheet or an adapted recording sheet. As a consequence, despite their enthusiasm, pupils with special educational needs sometimes find it difficult to keep up. Teachers use homework to consolidate and extend work in class, but again this is rarely modified to match the learning needs of all. Pupils are well behaved and respectful to each other and the teacher. They co-operate and collaborate well in practical work.
95. The curriculum is good. It is broad and varied and pupils enjoy learning. There is a strong emphasis on studying the local environment, visits, conservation and recycling. The school is interested in renewable energy sources and provides opportunities for pupils to see this in action on a daily basis. As a result, the curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are keen to learn because there is a strong practical foundation to their understanding. However, they have limited opportunities to find things out for themselves, from books, CD-ROMs or the Internet. Computers are not used systematically to

support learning. Teachers have begun to give pupils opportunities to use computers to draw graphs of their findings. The curriculum is adjusted annually by the co-ordinator after analysing the results of the national tests. In the medium and short-term the curriculum is less flexible and is not responsive to individual needs. Assessment of pupils' attainment through tests and assignments is sound, but teachers in Years 4 and 5 are not always aware of the National Curriculum Levels within which pupils are working and this impedes the development of procedures geared to setting individual targets.

96. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and knowledgeable. He makes very good use of his local knowledge, the environment and links with the local secondary school and the university to provide additional experiences for the pupils. Gifted pupils are able to take part in a scientifically based competition called, 'The Great Egg Race', and during the inspection a school team were awarded a winners' trophy in this event in recognition of their ability to apply science and technology to challenging problems. The co-ordinator supports teachers well. He uses his good knowledge of national tests and National Curriculum requirements to monitor pupils' work in their exercise books and organise resources. He has devoted less time to: exploring and developing good practice in teaching, especially in Years 4 and 5; the use of ongoing assessment and the use of national and local assessment data to help in the short and medium-term planning. Overall there has been a good improvement since the last inspection. Both standards and pupils' achievement have improved. Given the enthusiasm, commitment and hard work of the teachers, the school has a good measure of capacity to improve even further.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. Pupils' achievement from Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory and by the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are similar to those attained by pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils explore painting in a range of styles and produce particularly expressive portraits based on studies of other artists as well as abstract paintings and simple block prints based on natural forms. The work of a whole class is often displayed in prominent places such as the school dining hall and pupils are keen to point out their achievements to visitors.
98. Achievement in Year 7 is good, with effective use made of the sketchbook for planning and trying out ideas. During the inspection a display showed the recent work based on Maori body-art designs. Photographs showed that pupils collaborated in painting each other's faces with the designs, to powerful effect. Both boys and girls attain above average standards by the end of Year 7 largely due to the more consistently good teaching.
99. Teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory, but not as consistent as in Year 7 where it is good. Lessons are carefully prepared and most are taught in the specialist art room where the accessibility of resources is good. The well-designed planning framework provides good guidance and makes a big contribution to the successful teaching, but not all teachers are able to interpret this imaginatively or give pupils the benefit of expert knowledge. In a very good drawing lesson for pupils in Year 5, the teacher moved the class from the rather cramped art room to the dining hall, enabling a better view for each pupil. With a still life made from simple box shapes, he then proceeded to isolate and demonstrate several of the skills that pupils needed to learn. Pupils were surprised at the success they achieved in a short time. Later in the afternoon, pupils moved to the computer room where they learned to use similar skills in computer-drawing. Lessons are less successful when they lack a visual stimulus. In another lesson for pupils in Year 5, where pupils were 'finishing off' clay models by painting them, the teacher did not demonstrate any painting skills or provide any models or images on which pupils could base their design. They had not, for instance, collected colour information in their sketchbooks, which would have helped. In fact, the teacher was more concerned that they did not make any mess. Because of this, pupils were not developing painting skills and were making only limited use of skills learned earlier. Pupils of all ages enjoy the subject and the teaching usually enables all to achieve a degree of success.

100. Pupils' social skills are well developed by opportunities to work together, share resources and collaborate on projects. They get on well with each other and their behaviour is very good. Culturally, the main artistic influence comes through twentieth-century artists and, importantly, through the school's interest in the local environment and conservation issues, which provide a strong focus for much of the work. Links with other aspects of the school's curriculum, such as history and science, also help pupils see the connections between various strands of their learning. The support for lower attaining pupils is sound and work is usually adapted to meet their needs, whilst retaining appropriate challenge. The best teaching also gives higher attaining pupils room to experiment. Much of the teaching, however, is rigid and lacks sufficient visual stimulus. The ceramic 'fish' tiles produced by pupils in Year 6 were a case in point where a more varied and interesting initial stimulus, such as studying some real fish, might have produced more exciting variations.
101. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator and the subject specialist teacher in Year 7 provide good examples in the way they approach the teaching. However, this knowledge and practice is not effectively shared through the monitoring and support of non-specialist teachers. Teachers do not have simple assessment procedures so that they can determine how well pupils are progressing in relation to the national expectations. However, the subject co-ordinator has recognised the need to provide examples of work at different levels. He has organised the resources and scheduling of specialist areas and equipment effectively. His examples of work in information and communication technology are beginning to have a positive impact on the way that the school uses computers. For instance, in their work in the computer suite, pupils show an above average interest and critical awareness in their understanding of images and design. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress, for instance, in developing the use of sketchbooks and introducing three-dimensional work. The co-ordinator's good plans for developing the subject, which include the sharing of best practices, indicate that the school has a sound capacity to improve pupils' attainment in Years 4 to 6.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Standards at the end of Years 6 and 7 are in line with national expectations. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils learn to use their above average mechanical and scientific knowledge to make gear-driven fairground models or machines operated by pneumatics. Pupils in Year 6 work out their designs in a sketchbook and the higher attaining pupils adapt and refine their designs as they go along. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. The pupils learn to work with a range of materials, including food and textiles, although electrical and technological work associated with controlling devices is less well developed. The sketchbooks are not used in Years 4 and 5 and this limits learning opportunities.
103. There was insufficient evidence available to form judgements about the quality of teaching. Most of the judgements have been made through scrutiny of work, displays and discussion with pupils and teachers, as it was possible to see only one lesson being taught during the inspection. This was a good example of teaching by the co-ordinator who works mainly with the older pupils. In this lesson pupils from Year 6 were working keenly and with enthusiasm to complete their models by the end of term. Higher attaining pupils had invented variations on the basic design, which showed that they had understood the mechanical principles well. They were able to make suggestions for further improvements. Pupils with special educational needs were supported effectively by the teacher. Pupils consulted and advised each other in a relaxed and busy atmosphere.
104. A broad and interesting curriculum enables pupils to develop skills progressively, but scrutiny shows that achievement is inconsistent in Years 4 to 5 although more secure in Years 6 and 7. The teachers' knowledge and practice, evident in the work of the older pupils, is not effectively shared through the monitoring and support of non-specialist teachers lower down the school. Teachers do not have an appropriate assessment scheme so that they can determine how well pupils are progressing in relation to the national expectations. This means that although work is

marked regularly, with guidance and praise given to pupils, pupils do not know at what level they are working.

105. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the standards that pupils attain. The good range of resources continues to enrich pupils' experiences as do the links with other areas of the curriculum such as science and geography. The school's solar and wind generators are linked to the design and technology room and pupils can see these power sources being used to make lights or motors work. Articles created with textiles are designed and developed in the art room and pupils learn about historical developments in technology. The co-ordinator has good plans to share the good practice that has been developed with all teachers and to develop a more useful system of assessment. This indicates that there is sound potential for raising attainment.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. In the previous inspection, attainment was in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. A similar standard of attainment was found at the end of Year 7. Observation of lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work and a study of displays of work in classrooms and shared areas of the school, shows that pupils are now attaining standards that exceed national expectations, both at the end of Years 6 and 7. Pupils' achievement is good. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection.
107. Fieldwork is developing well and pupils of all ages are given opportunities to undertake studies and benefit from first-hand experience. Pupils in Year 4 make studies of Norfolk and compare their lives to life in India. They understand coordinates and use them to plan a route to the swimming pool. Pupils in Year 5 are developing their skills well. They study climates, rivers, scales and how to read maps. Educational visits enhance their learning and pupils produce detailed written work resulting from the visits and the first-hand experiences and direct observations that they make. In a lesson on safety when climbing, a pupil showed a keen sense of enquiry and commented, 'Tell us what it's like in the mist at the top of a mountain'. Pupils wish to acquire new knowledge and also these are often related well to other areas of the curriculum. An example could be seen in links with science, where pupils discussed heat loss from the body and the effect of glucose used in emergency rations.
108. Skills are developing well throughout the school. In Year 6 pupils study settlements, population growth and farming. They know how to use a compass and use six-figure grid references.
109. Across the school teaching is generally good. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of the subject and lessons are well planned. Questioning is appropriate, objectives are clear and most lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers show enthusiasm and pupils respond with interest. Pupils settle readily to tasks in their lessons, they discuss geographical features and make keen observations. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils studied aerial photographs. They worked with enthusiasm, fascinated by the pictures of the local area. Pupils discovered that houses now occupy an area that was a cornfield ten years ago. They deduced the time of year and the time of day from their observations. Pupils expressed disappointment when the bell signalled the end of the lesson because they were so interested in their work and wanted to continue. In other lessons seen the content did not always stimulate such active learning.
110. Educational visits make a major contribution to pupils' learning, their achievement and the standards they attain. Pupils have the opportunity to make residential visits to Arran and France. Field study visits are made to fenland areas and to the coast. Pupils take notes on these visits, which they use as a basis for more extended writing back at school, such as diaries and folders. The journals that are produced following these visits contain high quality work and show a good depth of interest. They also demonstrate how pupils develop a good range of skills and a breadth of knowledge that they have acquired through first-hand experiences in practical situations. Pupils in Year 4 visited Dunwich and were amazed at the power of the sea to erode and destroy the old Roman and medieval port that now lies beneath



the waves. Pupils visit the bird sanctuary at Minsmere and many develop an interest in ornithology, which extends to noting patterns of bird migration from one country to another. Across the school pupils have good opportunities for such first-hand experiences, especially during the school's 'environmental week' when everybody concentrates on issues concerning the way we live and our treatment, or mistreatment, of our planet.

111. Pupils behave well in lessons. Their attitudes are positive and most show a keen interest. Pupils concentrate well and contribute fully during class discussions. They present their work neatly with good illustrations to explain geographical features. Although computers are used effectively in the production of diaries following residential visits, they were not used as a resource in the lessons observed during the inspection. There is little evidence of computers being used systematically to support teaching and learning.
112. The management of the subject is at least satisfactory, but the co-ordinator has only been in post for a short time and has not yet been able to have a major impact on improving standards across the school. Resources have been reviewed and a list has been compiled that describes the skills that must be taught if each of the topics that are tackled by each year group are to be completed successfully. Areas of weakness have been highlighted, such as the lack of computer software and the need to purchase more books relating to specific topics.

## **HISTORY**

113. Across the school standards are in line with national expectations and have been maintained at similar levels to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Through a planned series of topics in each year group, pupils learn about particular people and events, as well as studying particular periods. They begin to appreciate the value of evidence and how that evidence can be interpreted to help them to find out about the past.
114. From Years 4 to 7 pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding.
115. In Year 4, pupils study the growth of towns in the Victorian era. They have written good accounts of how social problems were identified, inventions were made to cure the problems and about the consequent effect on the populace. They explain, for example, how people threw waste into rivers, drank river water and contracted diseases such as cholera and typhoid. They explain how Joseph Bazalegette built sewers under London to solve the problem. They study the lives of rich and poor Victorian families and their sense of the injustices suffered by the poor promotes their moral development well. They study the census of 1881 and how their village has changed since that time. Good links are made with geography as they visit the Roman and medieval port of Dunwich and develop an understanding of how geographical changes affect settlement and social change. Drama is used well to consolidate an understanding of how Britain was affected by the Blitz in World War II, although the drama sequences that pupils developed contained over-long episodes where boys droned across the classroom in Heinkels to drop bombs on unsuspecting Londoners. The balance was restored when two wartime evacuees from Yarmouth visited the class to recount their experiences. Visits to Norwich Castle help to broaden their understanding of times past.
116. Pupils in Year 5 have carried out a substantial study of Ancient Greece in which they learned about everyday life at that time. Discussions with pupils indicated that they had a sound understanding of Olympians, Greek theatre and architecture as well as Greek myths and the importance of olive oil. Good links are made with mathematics as pupils learn about Pythagoras and Euclid, and with science as pupils contemplate water displacement and Archimedes' experiences in the bath. Good links are made with literacy as pupils use their writing skills well to recount imagined experiences of their visit to a Roman town. They wrote in the first person and used both their knowledge of the Roman period and their imaginations to concoct colourful accounts. Much of the writing places undue emphasis on being eaten by lions, however.

117. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a lively interest and are able to recall and describe their understanding of a number of events and periods from the past. They develop an awareness of chronology and put events into an accurate order. For example, they identified that the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings invaded England sometime between the departure of the Romans and the start of the Tudor period.
118. Discussions with pupils in Year 7 showed that they remember a great deal about the topics they have studied since Year 4. They talked confidently about the work they had completed on the Victorians, Romans, Ancient Greece and Ancient Egypt, the Tudors and, more recently, characters from the Renaissance. They shared their ideas about how they gathered evidence from books, pictures and artefacts. Several pupils explained how they use the Internet effectively to gather information for their projects; for example, when researching aspects of Ancient Egypt.
119. Pupils in Year 7 have produced a substantial volume of work, which indicates that they have a broad knowledge of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. They have produced good booklets based on their researches into the lives of influential characters such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Gallileo and Michelangelo. Good links are made with science and design as pupils explore the origins of scientific discoveries and developments in architecture. Good links are also made with literacy as pupils read Rosemary Sutcliffe's 'Eagle of the Ninth' and the 'Horrible History' series with such titles as 'The Vile Victorians' and 'The Terrible Tudors'.
120. Evidence derived from lessons, an analysis of work and discussions with pupils indicates that teaching across the school is at least satisfactory with many strong features. In a lesson for pupils in Year 7, a good demonstration of the development of printing provided good links with technology as the teacher used a flower press to demonstrate early printing techniques. Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and the best marking encourages reflection. A piece of work on the clothes worn by Vikings, for example, was marked carefully and included such comments as, 'I wonder if the wool was itchy?'. Good assessments of pupils' understanding are conducted at the end of each unit of study. Again these assessments encourage reflection and are designed to reveal the depth of pupils' understanding with such questions as, 'Give two reasons why a person in medieval times might have been reluctant to visit a doctor'.
121. The co-ordinator maintains a good overview of provision and gives regular reminders to teachers that the knowledge pupils develop should be supplemented and balanced by a developing ability to deduce information about times past through analysing evidence from artefacts, pictures and visits to places of interest. Resources available to teachers are adequate. There is limited evidence that pupils use the Internet to research for information at home, but computers are not used systematically in school to support teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. Standards at the end of Years 6 and 7 are in line with national expectations. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils learn to express their ideas and discoveries using word-processing, incorporating pictures, and the higher attaining pupils can refine and modify the style and content of their work to suit different forms and audiences. Pupils also explore simple models using a spreadsheet, search a database and create a sequence of instructions to make geometric patterns on the computer screen. Pupils are particularly good at searching the Internet to locate images or information. Higher attaining pupils employ a range of strategies and scan potential lists of web sites for likely sources. Lower attaining pupils use a simple keyword approach. Pupils enter Year 4 with average attainment and, during specialist lessons, as well as the occasional use of computers in other subject areas, their achievement is satisfactory.
123. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and is sometimes good or very good. Lessons are well-planned and managed and pupils are eager to learn. All pupils have the opportunity to concentrate on developing their computer skills at least once a week; the older pupils with the co-ordinator. The best lessons have clear objectives so that pupils learn new computer or information processing skills as well as enhancing their learning in another subject. In a very good Year 4 art lesson, the teacher's very good knowledge of computer programs enabled her to demonstrate

techniques clearly. This helped pupils to use their knowledge of colour to make computer paintings. Pupils quickly learned to exploit the features of the program to make lively designs. The higher attaining pupils developed and refined alternative colour schemes. Pupils also learn well when the teacher provides support for the lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and opportunities for the higher attaining pupils to progress further. However, few teachers set different levels of work because they are unsure of the appropriate National Curriculum Levels at which pupils should be working. In some lessons, the pupils' progress is limited by the teacher's lack of understanding of the computer network or software. In addition, most lessons are held up by software failure of some sort.

124. The improvement since the last inspection has been largely satisfactory, due to the sound leadership and management of the co-ordinator. Whilst overall standards remain the same, the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have broadened to the point where pupils and teachers alike are keen to exploit the advantages of information and communication technology. The school follows a commercial scheme for the weekly lessons, but across the rest of the curriculum the use of computers is still very patchy. Useful work in English, art and design and geography exploits a range of software. A limited amount of work is also produced in science, history and mathematics. However, the co-ordinator has not instigated a progressive development of skills across the curriculum and relies on the enthusiasm of individual teachers. The school has sensing and control equipment, but this has yet to make an impact on the curriculum. In science, for instance, pupils do not use computer data-logging to measure temperature changes. The school's system for assessing pupils' progress and attainment in the subject is based on modules in the planning framework, but is not providing teachers with an opportunity to set appropriate targets for pupils in their medium and short-term planning.
125. The development of resources has not kept pace with the demands of the curriculum. In one lesson, pupils in Year 7 used a powerful multimedia presentation program as a simple desktop publishing program, in the absence of more suitable software. The school's use of CD-ROMs is limited. The number of computers is below average for a school of this type and size. The networked suite is very small and cramped, and although class sizes are small there are few opportunities for pupils to have a computer each, despite using the computers in the adjoining library area. Teachers do ensure that pupils who share a computer take turns, and the level of co-operation and collaboration is good. In one lesson, pupils who were waiting their turn had an alternative task and were very well behaved. Opportunities were missed, however, to exploit the adjoining library area, for instance, to compare research methods. Most rooms have one stand-alone computer, but these are rarely used and teachers do not often let pupils use the library during lesson time. During the inspection, the computer room and adjoining library area became extremely hot and stuffy, to the point where it affected learning. Learning is also interrupted due to breakdowns. Without a thorough investigation it would be difficult to get to the bottom of these problems, but the following factors undoubtedly play their part. Maintenance is not regular, the school has no network manager and there is a lack of network expertise. Pupils do not use the system consistently to save software, but usually use floppy disks with no back-up. All pupils log on to a class folder and the passwords are not secret. Pupils are instructed to shut down each computer at the end of each 45-minute session and a teacher will simply switch a computer off and on again if it 'hangs up'. On the plus side, the Internet connection works well and, during the inspection when whole classes logged on, the only hiccups came from the local education authority's content filtering system, which occasionally refused access to promising sites.
126. Systems to make assessments of pupils' attainment and to evaluate progress are under developed. Target setting procedures have not been implemented consistently and resource problems persist. Improvements in pupils' attainment in the subject are dependent on these issues being resolved.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

127. Although there is no statutory requirement to teach modern foreign languages in Years 4 to 6, pupils are taught French and German from Year 6 onwards. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain

standards that exceed the standards normally expected of this age group in primary schools where foreign languages are taught. By the end of Year 7 pupils attain standards in French and German that exceed national expectations. Boys and girls do equally well. As at the time of the last inspection, the pupils' success in speaking these languages well represents a strength of the school.

128. Pupils' achievement in Years 6 and 7 is good in both French and German mainly because the three teachers who teach the subject have a good command of these languages and because the teaching is systematic with a good balance between speaking, listening, reading and writing. Also discussions with pupils indicated that they gain a deeper understanding of the structure of different languages as a result of studying two rather than just one, modern foreign language. The school also grasps opportunities to involve any native speaking French or Germans who live locally in supporting the teaching programme.
129. By the end of Year 6 pupils understand instructions, know how to ask questions and have a good general vocabulary. They also have a growing cultural awareness and experience of comparing French and German names for everyday items such as school equipment and vocabulary associated with sports. They understand instructions and requests when the teacher speaks at a near normal speed. They spell many everyday words accurately and write short phrases and sentences confidently. They greet visitors confidently with phrases such as 'Guten Tag' or 'Bonjour'. Good links are made with geography as pupils explore the countries where French and German are spoken. The accents of most pupils are generally good. They speak an anglicised version of words seen in exercises, such as 'aller', for example, but after much repeated prompting soon begin to pronounce it correctly. Pupils are confident in their abilities and are keen to attempt new words and phrases.
130. The quality of teaching in Years 6 and 7 is consistently good. A purposeful, business-like approach is adopted. Lessons start promptly and progress at a brisk pace. Teachers present good role models as they all have good accents and use inflection accurately. Lessons are conducted almost exclusively in the language being taught. Planning is clear and precise. Pupils are helped to feel comfortable in responding to the teachers' prompts. They are invited to accept varying grades of challenge when responding to questions or interpreting a series of pictures. The lower attaining pupils were surprisingly ambitious in accepting the higher level challenges during several lessons. They were mostly successful and were praised appropriately. In one French lesson a voluntary, French speaking assistant provided very good support by conversing with small groups.
131. Resources are very limited. There is a good supply of textbooks, but real items, such as newspapers, comics and other realia are in short supply. Computers are not used to support teaching and learning. There are strong links with the high school to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 7. The co-ordinator manages the subjects well. Liaison with the high school is good. The school has agreed to follow the same published schemes as the high school and takes pupils up to specific pages in the textbooks so that the high school can take pupils on from that page when they continue their studies in Year 8. Teachers' professional development has been neglected as they have had no opportunities to observe best practice in other schools so that they can improve their performance and improve standards further.

## **MUSIC**

132. At the last inspection, by the end of Year 6 attainment was above national expectations and in line with national expectations by the end of Year 7. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils achieve well and by the end of Years 6 and 7, most attain standards that exceed national expectations. This standard has been maintained largely by the influence and enthusiasm of the music specialist. Pupils perform frequently to a wide audience in lessons, assemblies, concerts for parents, music festivals and on the local radio.
133. Teaching is good overall, but there are inconsistencies in the quality of provision. Teaching is good where teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and give clear explanations with a

variety of examples to illustrate particular aspects of performing or composing. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives, and most proceed at a brisk pace. In lessons where the pace was not so brisk, insufficient time was left to complete the work that had been planned. As a result, some pupils could not perform their work to the class. The main elements of the music curriculum are covered effectively in lessons. Pupils in Year 4 develop their own verses to the 'What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor' and show confidence in performing their songs to the class. A link with literacy is formed when poetry is used to help to compose individual verses. Pupils comment on their own work, giving plausible reasons for their opinions. Evidence of good analysis was seen in a Year 5 lesson when class discussion about group involvement, dramatisation and humour in performances took place.

134. Pupils generally work efficiently and with confidence. In Year 6, pupils learn to appreciate different types of music, listening intently to the extracts. They enjoy this work and respond accordingly. After hearing 'Jupiter' by Holst, one pupil remarked, 'It was like a sunny morning'. Pupils' understanding of the beauty of music makes a good contribution to their spiritual development. These experiences also make a contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils in Year 6 learn about anthems and understand musical terms such as 'crescendo'. They use their voices to sing in four parts, maintaining rhythms appropriately, and understand the effects of major and minor chords on the mood of a piece of music.
135. Pupils in Year 7 compose words and music to perform at the end of term concert. Pupils use keyboards effectively to develop their music with a rhythmic backing. They work in groups and work with good concentration. In one group, a lower achieving pupil took the lead, working with enthusiasm on a theme that interested him. Completed work was performed for the class with all pupils joining in to maintain a strict tempo. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand improvisation, dynamics, and the musical structures that they have used in their composition. A group of higher attaining pupils were given the opportunity to perform to a wider audience by taking their finished song on tape to the local radio station. The broadcast included their composition and an interview about their work.
136. Pupils generally have a positive response to music and enjoy their lessons. They take part readily in class discussion and have good opportunities to develop their talents when listening and performing. They sing clearly with a sweet tone during lessons, but in whole-school situations, such as assemblies, singing is not so lively. Hymns during assembly are accompanied by the talented school orchestra.
137. A number of pupils take advantage of the opportunity to study an instrument with a specialist teacher in woodwind, brass, or keyboard, for example. Several pupils gain recognition of their talents by passing examinations. Timetables are rotated so that pupils do not miss the same areas of the curriculum too regularly. All pupils have the opportunity to make music and a number of pupils choose to join the orchestra.
138. The subject is led by an experienced co-ordinator. The planning framework for music has been revised and termly forecasts of work to be covered are made. Weekly planning includes assessment and evaluation of work to monitor standards. Resources in music are generally good, but no evidence of the use of computers was seen in lessons. The library contains a good range of books on composers and information about instruments. A mobile classroom is used as a music room. Percussion and tuned electronic instruments are stored there, but the learning environment in this room is uninteresting and does not reflect the standard of work achieved. Music continues to be strength of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. Due to timetabling arrangements it was only possible to observe lessons in games and athletics. Therefore, no overall judgement could be made on standards in each strand of the subject, the quality of teaching or on the degree of improvement since the last inspection. Every year group has blocks of time for swimming, and, as a result, standards in swimming at the end of Years 6 and 7 are above average. Nearly all pupils learn to swim at least 25 metres by the

end of Year 6 and so meet the national target, and many exceed this. Most develop a good range of different strokes as well as learning personal survival skills.

140. In the lessons seen pupils were fully aware of breathing techniques. They understood how to pace themselves and how to improve stamina and performance. They understood the importance of warming up and cooling down activities, and several explained clearly the physical effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils showed a good knowledge of techniques, which they often applied effectively. In Year 6, for example, pupils learnt how to change the baton in a relay race and used this skill well on sports day. In several of the lessons seen, although teachers told pupils how well they had done, there were missed opportunities for pupils to observe each other's performances, with a view to improving their own.
141. The quality of teaching and learning in the limited number of lessons seen was good. Lessons were thoroughly planned, carefully prepared and well organised. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge. When outdoor lessons were rained off teachers quickly adapted their plans to enable successful indoor lessons to take place. Lessons proceeded at a good pace and this helped to ensure that pupils' full concentration was sustained and that a good work rate was maintained. Skills were taught well so that pupils made good progress in developing their expertise. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and contribute well to pupils' positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils are keen to do their best. They behave very well, and follow instructions carefully.
142. The leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a good planning framework in place that promotes good coverage of all the statutory aspects of the subject. Lessons are taught in six-week blocks to ensure full coverage of every aspect at different times during the year. The headteacher and co-ordinator have observed lessons, but no formal written feedback has been given showing points for development. Monitoring indicates that lessons are properly planned and conducted according to an agreed format, that skills are taught clearly and good opportunities are provided for practising and developing skills systematically. The co-ordinator has started to introduce assessment procedures that are designed to record pupils' competencies in basic skills. Encouragement is given to talented pupils to develop their skills further; for example, through links with local football and swimming clubs and a local dance school. Extra-curricular cricket, football and netball, for both boys and girls, and opportunities for competitive sport against other schools, add to the good curricular provision. Effective use is made of specialist teachers on the staff of the school. The subject is well resourced, the parents' association have recently refurbished the gymnastics' equipment. All equipment is regularly checked for safety, and there is a rolling programme to replace items.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

143. By the end of Years 6 and 7, standards in religious education exceed the expectations described by the locally agreed syllabus. This shows very good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory and the weaknesses identified were a key issue for improvement. Good improvement has been brought about by the careful implementation of a planning framework based on the new locally agreed syllabus, introduced at the time of the last inspection. A good level of resources has been built up, particularly with the provision of appropriate models and artefacts, and teachers' subject knowledge has improved. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

144. Pupils study Christianity and other world religions. Aspects of these are well-developed year by year. For example, in Year 4 pupils learn about the birth of Jesus, in Year 5 about his life and teaching, in Year 6 about his character and his significance for Christians, and in Year 7 about his place in the Trinity. Pupils recall in detail what they have learnt about different world religions, places of worship, festivals, beliefs, sacred texts, leaders and symbols. In a Year 5 lesson on symbolism, pupils were shown pictures of the inside of a synagogue and a gurdwara and they recalled what they had learnt about the Torah scrolls and the guru, Granth Sahib, as well as how religious texts are treated with reverence. Some links are made with pupils' own experiences. They write about their own special places, for example, and their rules for life and ideas about heaven. However, beyond factual knowledge, their understanding that religion can be an important part of the lives of individuals, families and communities is not so strong. Pupils in Year 7 compare the teachings of different religions and discuss issues linked to these differences such as intolerance and racism.
145. The quality of teaching and learning are good. One lesson was very good. In this lesson for pupils in Year 4, the very good relationships between the teacher and class helped pupils to discuss sensibly their ideas about heaven. A well-chosen video clip challenged pupils to think and give free reign to their imaginations. One pupil wrote, 'There is a computer in heaven; you type in what you want; if it is appropriate you get it'. Another wrote, 'I don't believe in heaven; you live on in the minds of people who love you'. Other lessons were well planned, but the use of pictures and other visual stimulus, such as appropriate videos, films or computer programs were not in evidence. In one lesson on religious symbolism, for example, the discussion was largely dominated by the teacher and actual examples of symbolism from everyday life were not used to help to put across the idea of symbolism. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, which are reflected in their behaviour, the progress made in lessons and the work recorded in their books.
146. The use of computers is a developing area. Some web sites have been visited to find out information on different religions. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills, although at times writing activities set for the whole class are not appropriate for lower attaining pupils, who often need different activities to help them to achieve the learning objectives.
147. The time allocated to religious education is used efficiently and effectively, as demonstrated by the quantity and quality of work produced. However, much of this work is on the factual knowledge of religions, indicating that there is insufficient time to consider more fully how religion affects the way in which people live. As a result, opportunities to enhance pupils' cultural and spiritual development are missed. Assessment procedures are developing and records are kept that show pupils' attainment and progress against key learning objectives. Boxes of appropriate material to support teaching and learning have been collected and are organised to illustrate details of the different religions studied. These contain goods, artefacts, pictures and subject information. However, the books in the library, particularly on different world faiths, are insufficient. There is little on display around the school that raises the profile of the subject and celebrates pupils' achievements.