

INSPECTION REPORT

DAUBENEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Kempston

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109679

Headteacher: Mr D L Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr D Cox
10297

Dates of inspection: 30 April – 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 213390

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed Secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Orchard Street
Kempston
Bedford

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Cleave

Date of previous inspection: May 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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10297	David Cox	Registered inspector	Design and technology	What sort of school is it?
				How high are standards?
				How well are pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				Staffing
				Accommodation
9086	Rosalie Watkins	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?
22411	Ann Axon	Team inspector	Mathematics	Assessment
11933	David Driscoll	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22590	Robert Castle	Team Inspector	Physical education Geography	Resources
30427	Felicity Shuffle-Botham	Team inspector	Religious education. History	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education
12499	Marie Durkin	Team inspector	English	
2940	Deborah Zachary	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
27523	Graham Jones	Team inspector		
11720	Philip Winch	Team inspector	French. Dyslexia Unit Special educational needs	
16548	Don Gwinnett	Team inspector	Art and design. Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Daubeney Middle School is a part of the Bedfordshire three-tier school system and takes pupils aged 9 to 13. It was last inspected in May 1999. The school serves the housing estates in Kempston, a large village close to the south-western part of Bedford. The school has 539 pupils, which makes it larger than the average for its type. The number of pupils on roll has fallen since the previous inspection because of demographic reasons. The Local Education Authority has placed at the school a special unit for pupils with dyslexia. These pupils come from a wide area of northern Bedfordshire.

Socio-economic factors in the area are below average, but the proportion of children entitled to free school meals is broadly average, being 13.5 per cent.

The school has a higher than average number of pupils from ethnic minorities and there are 136 pupils with English as an additional language, which is high. Whilst the school attracts pupils from a wide spread of abilities the ability of pupils on entry is below average. There are 147 pupils on the register of special educational needs; this is 27.2 per cent of the school population and is broadly in line with the national average. There are 24 pupils with statements of special educational need, which is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good, effective school that is continuing to improve. The good leadership and management provided since the previous inspection report has been successful in bringing about a commitment to ensuring that pupils achieve well. The good quality teaching ensures that pupils' levels of attainment are improved whilst they are at the school. The school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Most pupils' achieve well at the school.
- Very good provision is made for pupils attending the Dyslexia Unit and these pupils achieve exceedingly well.
- There is a good curriculum in place. It meets the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment and promotes pupils' personal development well.
- The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good.
- The school is well managed and the quality of leadership is good.

What could be improved

- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use the key skill of information and communication technology (ICT) within subjects.
- The quality of teaching in Year 5, although satisfactory overall, is not as good as it is in Years 6 to 8.
- The teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE).

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in May 1999. Results in the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds have improved, particularly in science. Standards in history, geography and religious education have improved. The overall quality of teaching has improved. During the previous inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in only 78 per cent of lessons, it is now at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons. The school's management systems have been restructured and there is now a much more coherent line-management system. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are much improved. Recent changes to the systems for assessing pupils are now resulting in a

more accurate picture of an individual pupil's performance. The school's response to the key issues identified in the previous report has been very good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	E	C	C
Mathematics	D	E	D	D
Science	E	E	C	C
All three subjects	D	E	C	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The majority of pupils entered the school with levels of attainment that, overall, were below the national average. By the ages of 11 and 13, the standards that pupils attain are close to the national average and this represents a good level of achievement. Pupils achieve well in Years 6 to 8 and satisfactorily in Year 5.

Results in the national tests for 11 years olds in 2000 were close to the national average in English and science but below average in mathematics when compared with all schools. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, results were close to the average in English and science but below average in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In 2000 results were an improvement on those noted in the previous report. Of particular note is the significant improvement in the science results, as a result of the emphasis that has been placed on preparing pupils for the tests and the improved quality of teaching. There has been an improvement in the teaching of mathematics which was having a positive effect on the standards observed during the inspection. However, since 1996 the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all 'core' subjects was below the national trend.

Since the previous report, the school has set demanding targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above and has been successful in meeting these targets. The targets for the current year are even more demanding.

Standards of literacy and numeracy are close to the level expected nationally.

Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well at the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as do gifted and talented pupils. Those pupils with statements of special educational need for dyslexia achieve exceedingly well over time. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes and most want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is satisfactory overall. Around the site pupils are good-natured. Younger pupils are occasionally inattentive.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils take responsibility for their learning. Older pupils recognise the benefits of living in an orderly community. For the most part pupils are polite and respectful both to each other and to staff.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory, though slightly below that usually seen in similar middle schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 9-11 years	aged 11-13 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching, and of the learning that such teaching promotes, is good in Years 6, 7 and 8 and satisfactory in Year 5. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons; good or better in 56 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 17 per cent of lessons. Teaching of the very highest standard was seen in 4 per cent of lessons. However, teaching was less than satisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons; it was poor in just 1 per cent of lessons. Overall, these figures represent a significant improvement on those noted in the previous inspection report. During the previous inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in just 78 per cent of lessons.

The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science. Across the school, the main strength in the teaching is the teachers' good knowledge of their subject. Good attention is paid to developing literacy and numeracy skills. The planning of lessons is good. Lessons include a variety of activities to sustain pupils' interest. The main difference between the teaching in Year 5 and the other years is the degree of challenge that pupils experience. Teachers expect more of their pupils in Years 6 to 8 and, as a result, more work is covered and greater gains in knowledge and understanding are made. In Years 6 to 8, teachers engage pupils in a wide range of activities and this helps to sustain pupils' concentration. However, some teachers have difficulty in managing a small number of pupils in the current Year 5. These pupils can be inattentive and easily distracted if they are not engaged fully for every minute of the lesson. Support staff are used well to support and guide pupils. There is too much variation in the amount of homework set for different groups.

Teachers of pupils with special educational needs have very good knowledge and understanding of how pupils with special educational needs learn. Subject teachers cater well for pupils with learning difficulties. Teaching and learning in the Dyslexia Unit are excellent. The teaching of the majority of the English as an additional language learners, those who have already acquired basic English competence, is good overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good, relevant and broad curriculum. There is a good literacy strategy in Years 5 and 6. Pupils do not have their full National Curriculum entitlement for ICT. Pupils do not have access to lessons in swimming in Years 5 and 6.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The needs of pupils are well catered for. Provision in the Dyslexia Unit is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language have their needs met well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and is having a particularly significant impact on pupils' personal development. Cultural provision is very good. The school is rightly proud of its multi-cultural heritage and enables pupils to share in the experiences of their peers.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The use made of assessment data is satisfactory.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school provides good information for parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher is providing good leadership and is supported very well by other members of the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have a very good knowledge and understanding of the work of the school, although they do not meet all of their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The senior management team along with the governing body has set challenging targets for improvement. Systems for monitoring the work of the school are good.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are carefully deployed to those areas where they will provide the greatest benefit. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

There is adequate accommodation and a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There are insufficient ICT resources and this has an adverse impact on pupils' standards in ICT.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educational needs and the Dyslexia Unit are good. • Pupils have positive attitudes. • How much the school has improved since the previous inspection. • Good attention is given to raising standards of literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school setting a more appropriate amount of work to be done at home. • The school working more closely with parents. • Being better informed about how their child is getting on.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the Dyslexia Unit is very good. Pupils generally have positive attitudes. The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection. Pupils' literacy skills are improved significantly during their time at school.

The inspection team found that the annual reports give parents a good picture of the pupils' learning and of targets for further progress. Homework is not used enough to support and extend pupils. The school does work closely with parents; it is approachable and welcoming.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The majority of pupils entered the school with levels of attainment that, overall, were below the national average. By the age of 11, the standards that pupils attain are close to the national average and this represents a good level of achievement. By the age of 13, the standards that pupils attain are again close to the national average. This also represents a good level of achievement given that these pupils were judged to be just below average in the previous report.
2. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the age of 11, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above was close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above was close to the national average in English and science but below average in mathematics. The average National Curriculum points score was close to the national average for all schools in English and science but below average in mathematics. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' average National Curriculum points score was close to the average in English and science but below average in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. In 2000 results were an improvement on those noted in the previous report. Of particular note is the significant improvement in the science results, as a result of the emphasis that has been placed on preparing pupils for the tests and the improved quality of teaching.
3. Since the previous inspection, the school has set challenging targets for the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in all three core subjects. In 2000 the school was successful in achieving its targets. Targets for 2001 are even more challenging.
4. Evidence gathered during the inspection in English indicates that the standards that pupils attain at the ages of 11 and 13 are average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. Levels of reading and speaking and listening are a little higher than those in writing, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where presentation of work by the younger, lower attaining children lacks accuracy. Almost all pupils have at least satisfactory knowledge and understanding of basic skills. The presentation of written work is good overall and most pupils write carefully and take pride in their work. Some pupils' work, especially lower attaining pupils, is less well presented and sometimes incomplete.
5. Pupils enter the school with low literacy levels, particularly in writing. The introduction of the literacy hour and whole school initiatives to improve basic skills have contributed to raising literacy standards to close to average by the time the pupils are 11. Overall, literacy levels adversely affect pupils' learning particularly in the pupils' first years and their improvement to average represents good achievement. A good range of fiction and non-fiction is studied and high attaining pupils, in particular, study a range of texts with authority and ease. Most pupils keenly undertake reading aloud although some pupils are hesitant and lack fluency. Some narrative writing is seen in most subjects as well as writing in different contexts, science for example. There are some weaknesses in presentation, particularly in the work of lower attaining pupils.
6. Evidence gathered during the inspection in mathematics indicates that the standards that pupils attain at the ages of 11 and 13 are average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. High attaining pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of place value and by the time that they reach age 11, they convert fractions to percentages and solve simple equations. Low attaining pupils recognise and name three-dimensional shapes and calculate the perimeter of shapes. By the age of 13 pupils present information in an organised way and show an understanding of the pattern generated by describing it mathematically.

7. Levels of numeracy across the curriculum are broadly average. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place in Years 5 and 6 and is successfully raising the standard of numeracy of those pupils in numeracy and mathematics lessons. However, there are no strategies in place for improving standards and co-ordinating numeracy across the whole school curriculum and practice varies between subjects.
8. Evidence gathered during the inspection in science indicates that the standards that pupils attain at the ages of 11 and 13 are average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. Most pupils have secure basic knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied recently. Their skills in investigations are similar to those in other aspects of their work in science. There are, however, differences in the relative levels of attainment in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 5, but weaknesses in presentation mar the work of even the highest attainers. Pupils are particularly weak in systematically recording the results of experiments or their observations.
9. Standards that pupils attain at the age of 11 are above average in geography, and average in all other subjects with the exception of design and technology, history, ICT and religious education, where they are below average.
10. Standards that pupils attain at the age of 13 are above average in geography and French, and average in all other subjects with the exception of history and ICT, where they are below average.
11. A key issue identified by the previous report was to improve standards in history, geography and religious education. Evidence gathered from the inspection indicates that standards have improved in these three subjects and particularly so in geography where they are now above average.
12. The majority of pupils achieve well overall at the school. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils achieve well in Years 6 to 8 and satisfactorily in Year 5. The good quality of teaching in Years 6 to 8 has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils achieve better in Years 6 to 8 because teachers use more effective teaching methods and successfully manage pupils. The main difference between the achievement of Year 5 pupils and the other years is the degree of challenge that pupils experience. Teachers expect more of their pupils in Years 6 to 8 and, as a result, more work is covered and greater gains in knowledge and understanding are made.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall because of the good quality of support that they receive. Those pupils with statements of special educational need for dyslexia enter the school with reading ages well below their real ages and with well below average skills in spelling and comprehension, and with low self-esteem. For some, handwriting, too, is difficult. Over time, pupils achieve exceedingly well. Reading ages rise significantly and handwriting becomes more consistent. Pupils learn to remember spellings from week to week, and to improve their comprehension skills.
14. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress in the acquisition of English. They make very good progress at the earliest stages of learning the language. They achieve well primarily because of the good support they receive. Learning assistants provide direct, high quality support teaching to individuals and small groups, both in lessons across the curriculum and in sessions in the library.
15. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress. These pupils are provided with many extra-curricular opportunities, particularly in music and sport. In music for instance the teaching of extra-curricular groups is very skilled. The teacher inspires pupils to achieve very high standards in their singing and playing, combining ambitious challenge with a sense of fun and musical adventure.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes and personal development are good. They mostly come to school promptly, and willingly settle down to learning in lessons. Relationships are also good and the harmonious interactions between pupils drawn from a broad range of racial and cultural traditions are a particular feature. Behaviour and attendance are satisfactory.
17. Attitudes in lessons are overall good, as at the previous inspection. In the Dyslexia Unit they are excellent; the pupils want to do well and work very hard. They appreciate the help they get and respond very well to the staff. In the majority of lessons throughout the rest of the school most pupils of all abilities and backgrounds take a good interest in their learning. They generally listen well and are ready to answer questions. The best attitudes are generally seen when teaching is really good. For instance, when Year 8 were learning about corrosion of metals in science, the teacher generated a high level of interest, so that pupils all worked hard to complete the tasks and their eagerness helped them to make rapid gains in understanding. Even when teaching is more mundane most pupils are still usually willing to attend to their work. On occasion though their attention drifts and chatter tends to interrupt the lesson, as happened when the teacher's explanation lacked pace and lasted too long in a personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson. A few boys tend to be disinterested in learning and at times the teacher fails to grasp their attention and silly behaviour results. The pupils involved in the various extra-curricular opportunities in physical education and music speak enthusiastically about them and take them seriously, for instance arriving before school for an early choir rehearsal. Similarly a good number of pupils of all ages regularly attend the voluntary homework club.
18. Helped by teachers' expectations and their own willingness to learn, most pupils behave well. They understand the need to have rules to govern their behaviour, to make the school a safe and pleasant environment. However, a few individuals find it hard to exercise self-control. For instance in one Year 5 class, the behaviour of a few boys at times becomes unacceptable, despite the teacher's efforts to remind them about what is required. The school's efforts have brought about some improvements in this group since the start of the school year but occasionally misbehaviour still slows the rate of learning. When support staff are present to concentrate on these individuals this does help to improve standards of behaviour. Other concerns about behaviour are centred in Year 8. Here, despite improvements in behaviour of the year group since the previous inspection, a few boys are still notably immature in their behaviour. Especially in the few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, their behaviour deteriorates, slowing their progress. Around the school pupils are generally considerate towards each other and to adults. Incidents of really poor behaviour arise from time to time, resulting in pupils being excluded from school. Most exclusions involve white boys, often ones who have already experienced difficulties with their behaviour before they join the school. During the current school year up to the time of the inspection eight boys, including four in Year 5, have been excluded, usually for one or more short periods but with one permanent exclusion. This represents an increase in exclusions since the low number in the previous school year and since the previous inspection.
19. Relationships are good. The happy integration of pupils from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds is a particular feature of the school. Racial harassment, like bullying, seldom arises. Pupils generally work and play amicably together and are ready to help each other, though a few less mature ones sometimes find it hard to take turns. A further good feature is the way that, helped by the expectations and example of staff, pupils willingly give good care and support to those in the school community with disabilities.
20. Personal development is good. Helped by their teachers, pupils become more sensible and responsible during their time at the school. They cope well with the various duties they are given, for instance to assist in the orderly running of the dining hall at lunchtime. They speak with enthusiasm of their contributions to the planning of the memorial garden that is currently under construction to commemorate teachers who recently died. Encouraged by the school, they are beginning to make suggestions to benefit its organisation. However, so far the impact of this is limited because a school council, to provide a formal structure for their pursuing their ideas, is at present only in the early stages of development.

21. Attendance is satisfactory, though slightly below that usually seen in similar middle schools. It has fallen slightly since the previous inspection. A particularly severe viral infection in the local area has contributed to absence levels during the current year. Most pupils come to school regularly, and do not stay away without good reason. Any occasional absences do not cause undue interruption to learning because generally teachers bring pupils up to date on work they have missed. A small but significant minority of pupils is more often absent. A few of these have genuine medical reasons for absence. Others miss longer periods of school because of extended family holidays, for instance to India. A few others are often away from school without sufficient reason, and to the extent that their progress is slowed. Such problems usually relate to individual home circumstances rather than to pupils' ethnic background. There are instances where the efforts of the school, together with good support from the education welfare service, bring about good improvements in individual attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching, and of the learning that such teaching promotes, is good in Years 6, 7 and 8 and satisfactory in Year 5. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons; good or better in 56 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 17 per cent of lessons. Teaching of the very highest standard was seen in 4 per cent of lessons. However, teaching was less than satisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons; it was poor in just 1 per cent of lessons. Overall, these figures represent a significant improvement on those noted in the previous inspection report. During the previous inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in just 78 per cent of lessons.
23. The quality of teaching has improved because of the high priority it has been given by the senior management team and the governing body. In particular, there has been extensive in-service training provided for teachers and much improved systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching have been implemented.
24. In Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching is good in all subjects with the exception of design and technology, ICT, art, history, religious education and physical education where teaching is satisfactory. In science, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Year 5 and good in Year 6.
25. In Years 7 and 8, the quality of teaching is good in all subjects with the exception of ICT, history, art and physical education where teaching is satisfactory.
26. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject. For example, in a Year 8 food technology lesson, the teacher used her extensive knowledge of food production techniques to ensure pupils understood the need to measure ingredients accurately when producing bread. In geography, the teachers' good geographical knowledge and understanding of volcanoes enabled pupils' own knowledge and understanding to be challenged and this extends pupils' horizons. However, in religious education, non-specialist teachers in Years 7 and 8 have little experience in the delivery of religious education and their conscientious efforts to deliver the content of the lesson reduce the opportunities for the pupils to explore the meaning behind the content. Lack of background knowledge reduces the confidence of delivery, and the quality of the responses to pupils' queries.
27. Good attention is paid to developing literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have one lesson each day devoted to improving their literacy skills and one to improving numeracy. Specific literacy lessons are supplemented by the good emphasis that all teachers place on the development of literacy skills through approaches such as identifying new vocabulary or key words, in lessons. Spelling out loud or writing them on the board then reinforces these words.
28. The planning of lessons is good. In all years, lessons normally start with a recap of the previous lesson. Teachers use this opportunity to question pupils and to search for gaps in their understanding. If weaknesses are found, teachers are quick to adapt their lessons and address them. This leads to pupils developing a solid knowledge of their work. Lessons include a variety of activities to sustain pupils' interest, as in a very good Year 8 French lesson on accepting or refusing invitations, where key skills were practised. Good progress is also helped by the way that the

teacher summarises what pupils have done at the end of each lesson. In a Year 8 lesson on music, for instance, the teacher stopped the class five minutes before the end in order to chat to the pupils about what they had learnt and what they would need to do next time to improve further. The teacher asked the pupils for their own suggestions and ideas so that they developed a greater sense of responsibility for their own learning.

29. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in Years 6 to 8 and satisfactory expectations of Year 5 pupils. In a Year 6 English lesson pupils were reminded of previous high standards and how they would continue to improve; the feeling of value and climate of success was heartening and resulted from teachers' determination to achieve the very best from the pupils. The main difference between the teaching in Year 5 and the other years is the degree of challenge that pupils experience. Teachers expect more of their pupils in Years 6 to 8 and, as a result, more work is covered and greater gains in knowledge and understanding are made.
30. The effectiveness of teaching methods and the management of pupils is satisfactory in Year 5 and good in Years 6, 7 and 8. In Years 6 to 8, teachers engage pupils in a wide range of activities and this helps to sustain pupils' concentration throughout the 60-minute lesson. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson on number sequences, the teacher changed activities every 15 minutes, sustaining pupils' interest in the task and this resulted in good learning. However, some teachers have difficulty in managing a small number of pupils in the current Year 5. These pupils can be inattentive and easily distracted if they are not engaged fully for every minute of the lesson, as a result, less work is covered in lessons than in other years. For example, in a Year 5 design and technology lesson, pupils had difficulty using a coping saw appropriately and many failed to understand the need for accuracy. In this lesson, pupils were inattentive and it needed all the skills of an experienced teacher to keep them on task.
31. Teachers generally make good use of the 60-minute lessons. Support staff are used well to support and guide pupils. Teachers make good use of the available resources. However, because of insufficient ICT facilities, teachers do not make use of ICT. This results in most pupils making little use of their ICT skills and this has a significant impact on the standards that they attain in ICT. Most teachers have planned and wish to use ICT in the future but are currently restricted because of the lack of facilities.
32. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory although it does vary across the curriculum. For example, assessment during French lessons is frequent so that pupils know how they are getting on. Teachers mark books well, commenting in French where appropriate, and indicating what pupils need to do to improve. In history, targets are set in many books, however day-to-day marking tends to be brief and on occasion overlooks errors.
33. The use of homework is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 but unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8. There is too much variation in the amount of homework set for different groups. Some teachers set homework each week and pupils know exactly when it is to be completed. Other teachers, however, set homework infrequently with little clear guidance on when it is to be handed in. Homework is not used rigorously enough to extend the learning process for all pupils.
34. The arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education are unsatisfactory. The teaching of these aspects is unsatisfactory as they are taught by a selection of teachers whose knowledge of the pupils' personal development is not sufficient to allow them to build upon the pupils' previous experiences.
35. Teachers of pupils with special educational needs have very good knowledge and understanding of how these pupils learn. They are firm but kind and work hard to help pupils progress. During the inspection, good support was seen in many lessons, for example, in a Year 5 maths lesson on multiplication and division, in a Year 5 literary hour partly on matching vowel sounds, and in a Year 7 physical education lesson, where a wheelchair-bound pupil achieved well in catching and throwing. In all these lessons, the support assistants played a crucial role in encouraging good learning. Liaison with subject staff is good. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, assistants made notes on problems experienced and assessed progress well. Subject teachers cater well for pupils with

learning difficulties. For example, in French and English, worksheets help pupils organise their work. In most lessons, teachers vary their questioning to match pupils' prior attainment.

36. Teaching and learning in the Dyslexia Unit are excellent. Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of how pupils with dyslexia learn. This enables them to choose suitable resources and to plan for a variety of activities to keep pupils interested. As a result, relationships are excellent and pupils develop very good social skills. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are excellent. Because pupils feel valued, they take care with their work. Pupils say how much they enjoy lessons in the unit. All lessons observed were characterised by very good pace, frequent change of activity and a very clear focus on pupils' targets. For example, in a lesson for 12 and 13 year olds, each pupil had an individual learning programme, including the use of computers, word games, books and the whiteboard, to help raise literary skills. All made very significant gains in spelling and reading.
37. The teaching of the majority of the English as an additional language learners, those who have already acquired basic English competence, is good overall. Teachers in the various curriculum subjects are well aware of which pupils these are, and are clear on their individual needs. They usually give support through additional explanation in class. The quality of this support is dependent on the expertise of the individual teacher, as most subjects do not include EAL teaching or content guidance in schemes of work. However, subject teachers are supported by assessments and analyses carried out by EAL staff.

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

38. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. In all years pupils are provided with an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum which has several significant strengths and only two weaknesses.
39. The basic curriculum for all pupils is enhanced by good provision for improving both literacy and numeracy skills. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have one lesson each day devoted to improving their literacy skills and one to improving numeracy. Specific literacy lessons are supplemented by the good emphasis that all teachers place on the development of literacy skills. Such approaches are the result of several aspects of good planning. The school has carefully analysed the results of the national tests for 11-year-olds, question by question, to identify where there are weaknesses in pupils' attainment. The schemes of work for English, mathematics and science have been changed to make sure that any weaknesses identified are addressed and the results can be observed in the improved standards and test results since the last inspection. The school also carefully targets pupils who are in danger of just failing to reach the expected standard in national tests. These pupils are taught in special classes, called 'booster groups', in English and mathematics where their specific needs can be analysed and addressed. The teachers of science operate a similar approach, with special booklets devoted to such pupils and extra classes.
40. The planning of the curriculum is helped considerably by the good arrangements that the school makes for taking account of the work covered in the lower schools as a result of the good relationships that exist with other schools. Teachers from all subjects meet on a regular basis with colleagues from lower schools and plan their curricula together. This ensures that there is no repetition of work covered previously and that teachers can plan their lessons to build upon the work carried out in earlier years. Similar meetings are held with colleagues from upper schools so that the school can ensure that the National Curriculum is covered in full in all subjects, except physical education. There is no swimming taught, which is a statutory requirement in physical education for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and parents are rightly concerned about this omission. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 all study French, which means that they get a flying start in the subject and are attaining standards which are above average by the time they are 13.
41. The main weakness in the curriculum is the lack of practice that pupils have in using information and communication technology in their everyday lessons. The school does not have enough computers

to allow the teaching of specific lessons in information and communication technology as well as allowing teachers of other subjects to make use of them. The result is that pupils are not achieving standards that are high enough in information and communication technology because they forget skills they have previously learned when they do not practise them regularly.

42. There are good arrangements in place for ensuring that all pupils can enjoy equal access to the curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, are provided with a good level of support from experienced and well-organised support assistants. Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language have their needs identified well and teachers always ensure that they understand what the tasks require of them and how they should tackle them. The school maintains a comprehensive register of pupils that, for any reason, are at risk of not receiving their entitlement and ensure that all teachers are aware of such pupils.
43. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Schemes of work provide a suitable curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. Provision is largely through in-class support, but there are a few, regular withdrawal sessions for spelling and numeracy in Year 5. There are smaller groups in Year 8 English sets and in Year 6 literacy and numeracy classes so that lower attaining pupils can benefit from greater personal attention.
44. The provision for pupils in the Dyslexia Unit is very good. Pupils work in small groups, occasionally in one to one situations, but most of the learning is in mainstream classes with support from learning assistants. The work of the unit has a very significant effect on pupils' progress across the curriculum.
45. The arrangements for teaching personal, social and health education (PSHE) are unsatisfactory. The work that is planned includes all the required aspects of health education, sex education and drugs awareness and these plans provide an appropriate curriculum. However, the teaching of these aspects is unsatisfactory as they are taught by a selection of teachers whose knowledge of the pupils' personal development is not sufficient to allow them to build upon the pupils' previous experiences.
46. The school has satisfactory links with the local community, in particular in music. Many opportunities exist for pupils to take part in musical events in the community and the school makes appropriate use of groups, such as the local Morris Men, to enhance the pupils' experiences. Local businesses are involved in sponsorship of the school, such as helping with the production of the prospectus.
47. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. The most significant part of the extra-curricular provision is that made by the homework clubs, which are so popular that the school has now put aside specific evenings for particular groups of pupils. The clubs operate on four evenings each week and have made good use of the funds that have been provided for them. The title of "homework club" is something of a misnomer as the provision is much broader than just providing a place where homework can be completed. Pupils receive support of high quality from a team of non-teaching assistants that includes social as well as academic activities. There are several trips on offer to pupils, both in this country and other European countries, such as France. The range of other extra-curricular activities is wide with many clubs and activities, particularly in music and information and communication technology. Two members of staff provide sporting activities and these are attended on a regular basis by around one third of pupils.
48. The curriculum is of a better standard than at the time of the previous inspection. Those aspects that were praised in the previous report have been maintained, but the curriculum is now planned to become progressively more difficult within individual subjects.
49. The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils and very good provision for their cultural development.
50. Assemblies provide opportunities for uplifting messages to be presented and for real reflection. They do not always contain an act of worship, but where they do the pupils respond well. When not

attending an assembly, form groups have a class assembly theme to follow. The quality of the class assembly varies greatly however, and is dependent on the form teacher for its delivery. On some occasions the collective act of worship did not take place and where it did, it was sometimes delivered in a form that lacked spiritual input.

51. The school makes good provision for the spiritual development of the pupils. Since the last inspection, staff have received training in order to raise awareness of the opportunities that are present in all subjects for pupils to develop spiritually. Subjects are now expected to consider and identify opportunities in their schemes of work. Geography provides a good example of where this has taken place. The response of the school to the deaths of two staff earlier in the year has supported the understanding and development of the pupils, and the warmth and pride displayed by pupils when discussing their memorial garden is testament to this. During music lessons pupils listen to religious music that provides opportunity for reflection and emotion, as well as learning a song that was used during the Sikh and Hindu festival of Diwali. Pupils perform for the public during lunchtime concerts in St. Paul's in Bedford, and at Kempston Rural Church. The participation by pupils in the middle schools concert at the Albert Hall was an opportunity for inspiration and growth. The religious education department provides very good opportunities for pupils to consider questions about the purpose of life and creation, and to reflect on the effect of faith on the lives of believers from birth to their death. In other areas of the curriculum opportunities for spiritual development are missed by teachers, such as in a Year 5 class where pupils raised questions about life after death, but where the teacher decided not to follow the enquiry.
52. The school makes good provision for the moral development of the pupils. The school as a whole participated in drawing up a charter of 'Rights and Responsibilities' which has been accepted as the basis for the school's code of conduct. There is a well-known system of rewards and sanctions, and teachers are consistent in their expectations of behaviour. Assemblies provide good opportunities for the delivery of sound moral messages, and pupils are encouraged to support worthy causes such as 'Children in Need'. The personal, social and health education course includes modules that are aimed at developing responsibility and encourage pupils to make informed choices. Ethical issues are considered in geography where pupils investigate damage to the environment and the plight of less well developed countries. In history pupils compare their lives with children from the past, and ethical issues are raised when considering the conditions in factories in 19th century Britain.
53. The school makes good provision for the social development of its pupils. The school seeks to include all its pupils in the work of the school and the appointment of the inclusion support assistant enables pupils who need additional mentoring to be supported. Pupils with special needs are included in the activities of the school and as a result all pupils benefit from shared experiences and opportunities for mutual support and responsibility. There is no school council however pupils are involved with responsibilities around the school, for example in the library, as music monitors and as form monitors. Monitors supervise the dining room and run the lunchtime snack shop. Pupils are prepared to take direction from their peers, and do not seek to take advantage of the situation. Large numbers of pupils are involved in the various sports and music clubs, including a girls' football club of fifty pupils and a boys' choir of similar size. Musical performances take place for parents and for the public, building up pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The library is used as an independent learning centre during and after school, and pupils make very good use of it for social as well as academic interaction. The photographs around the school illustrate the involvement of pupils in a range of activities including drama productions and school projects. The visits to the school by a member of India's national hockey team and by the mayor of Kempston provided excellent role models for the black and Asian pupils within the school.
54. The school is rightly proud of its multi-cultural heritage and enables pupils to share in the experiences of their peers. Provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils share in the festivals of celebration such as Diwali and Christmas, and the music of different cultures is experienced, for example African, Indonesian, Egyptian and Asian music as well as classical and folk music. In art, pupils study the work of a range of European artists, and also aboriginal and Indian art. The celebration of 'May Day' with the help of the Bedfordshire Morris Men contrasted well with the workshop on Asian Dance that took place earlier in the year. In food technology pupils explore the diet of other cultures and in religious education the re-enactment of the celebration of a

Hindu Festival involved cooking and eating a form of special food. The school is concerned to celebrate the cultures of all its pupils. It is actively seeking opportunities to do so not only within lessons, such as in religious education where pupils study the rites of passage of different cultures, but in extra-curricular events such as the annual Asian disco that is attended and enjoyed by pupils from all cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

55. As at the previous inspection, there is overall good personal and educational support for pupils. Very caring attention is given to their welfare. Teachers follow good assessment procedures to measure pupils' attainment and make satisfactory use of assessment information to help in planning for their further progress.
56. Induction procedures are good, so that when pupils join Year 5 they settle readily into the routines. Similarly in Year 8 they are helped to look forward happily to the move to their next school. Pupils know that they can turn to staff if they need help, either with their work or with any personal problem. An appropriate range of relevant policies and procedures regarding their welfare and safety is followed effectively, for instance good care is taken of any pupil who becomes sick or injured. Child protection matters that arise are carefully followed up with, if necessary, energetic efforts to ensure a response from external agencies.
57. Management of behaviour is good, with expectations clearly upheld and careful investigation of any breakdown in behaviour. The caring climate ensures that there are few instances of bullying or other harassment, and that any instances of such problems are quickly resolved. A number of pupils who join the school find it particularly hard to exercise self-control and to behave sensibly. Staff make generally good and successful efforts to support such pupils, so that their behaviour gradually improves. There is good use of any appropriate assistance available from outside agencies, and where a pupil is in danger of exclusion staff ensure a suitable support programme is in place. Nevertheless incidents of really poor behaviour, leading to short term exclusion because of fears for the safety of other pupils or of staff, were more frequent during the two terms leading up to the inspection than in the previous year. These exclusions most often involve pupils who are in Year 5 or who have joined older classes during the course of the year, sometimes with pre-existing problems. Because the school perseveres with efforts to help such pupils, there has only been one permanent exclusion in recent months.
58. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are good. With the help of effective support from the education welfare service, the school carefully analyses patterns of absence and considers the reasons when any child shows poor attendance. This analysis helps to make sure that the efforts of the education welfare officer are carefully targeted to make best use of his time. For instance he has visited pupils' homes with the school nurse, to discuss with parents whether particular absences for medical reasons are really necessary and to emphasise the way that irregular attendance slows pupils' progress. The analysis includes consideration of the attendance of different ethnic groups of pupils, so that if any possible trends emerge, action can be focused appropriately. Under a recent initiative there is prompt phone call home on the first day of any absence, unless parents first supply the school with an explanation. As yet there is no clear impact on attendance figures, but parents are already more aware of the school's expectations.
59. Pupils are generally helped to cope confidently with their work and to know how to improve further. Their efforts are encouraged by the structured system of 'credits', with parents informed by a commendation letter of any particular success. The very good commitment of the headteacher and other staff to give the best possible support to each pupil has recently resulted in the compilation of an 'inclusion register' of pupils whose education may be impeded, for example by poor self esteem or by difficulties with their behaviour or attendance. An additional member of staff has been recruited to further increase the support for such pupils to overcome the problems that slow their progress with learning.

60. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Progress since the last inspection in these areas has been good. Significant improvements to the systems used by the school have been made in the last two years. It is most effective in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but is generally less well developed in the foundation subjects.
61. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school's assessment policy is both detailed and comprehensive. A substantial amount of data on pupils' attainment is collected and recorded when pupils enter the school. As pupils progress through the school, information gathered on their attainment is stored, updated during the year, and available to every class teacher. These systems support regular and effective assessment in curriculum areas and the monitoring and setting of targets for pupils. However, procedures for assessing pupils' attainments in subject areas vary across the curriculum. They are good in English, mathematics and science and satisfactory in most other subjects.
62. The school makes satisfactory use of assessment data to influence curriculum planning. Results of National Curriculum tests are analysed thoroughly. The school uses the analysis effectively to identify strategies for improving the achievement of all groups of pupils. Assessment is generally used consistently within subjects to inform teaching.
63. Individual education plans (IEPs) are good. They have realistic targets and are regularly reviewed. Subject staff have the opportunity to include a subject-specific target. Response to this is patchy. Assessment is regular and well recorded. It is very well used to feed into reviews of IEPs and annual reviews. Learning support assistants keep useful record sheets to track achievement. Weaknesses can be quickly identified and work set to rectify them. Special educational needs support staff offer good support to pupils' welfare. They give many opportunities for independent learning, by moving away from the supported pupil for part of the lesson, and providing wider support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. There are good effective links with parents. Parents generally think well of the school and make a satisfactory contribution to its work. They appreciate the way that teachers help pupils to work hard and to make good progress with their learning. As at the previous inspection, parents feel welcomed by the school and have a good level of confidence that they can discuss matters with teachers if they have any problems or concerns. However, despite the various good efforts made by teachers to build partnership, nearly a quarter of those parents who expressed a view still do not feel closely involved in the work of the school.
65. Good quality information is provided for parents. Teachers make good efforts to build links with all parents so as to help pupils' learning. Before their child starts in Year 5, parents are invited to an interview with the senior management team and most of them accept this opportunity for a discussion. The prospectus, criticised at the previous inspection for being out of date, has been improved and now gives parents a good range of relevant information. Once their child joins the school there is a good flow of news, including a helpful brief summary at the start of each year about the work to be tackled in each age group. Parents appreciated a recent informative meeting about the national tests for 11 year-olds. Through the year, teachers make good efforts to involve parents by telling them of any particular successes, by sending commendation letters home. Letters are translated into various languages to assist parents. Pastoral staff also try hard to involve parents if any difficulty arises, for instance to help prevent interruptions to learning that might arise from problems with a pupil's behaviour or attendance. Most parents come to the consultations offered every term, to talk to the class tutor about their child's work and progress. Annual reports are good, with information about pupils' progress and indications of how the child is performing in comparison with national expectations. There is some helpful use of illustrative detail to help parents understand what the individual pupil has achieved in particular subjects and to indicate the next steps in learning.
66. There are good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, for instance to ensure that parents' views are taken into account in the annual reviews of statements. The Dyslexia

Unit achieves very good partnership with parents, as when it involves parents in homework tasks. Elsewhere in the school partnership over homework is less well developed. Parents are ready to support their children with work at home, for instance many of them regularly sign homework diaries, but the way that homework often varies from the published timetable reduces the scope for their contribution.

67. As at the previous inspection there is an active Friends Association which organises fund raising and adds to the school's resources by purchasing extra equipment, as well as organising social events for the pupils. In addition a few parents support learning in school by helping in the library and with trips. These activities help to raise the profile of the school in the local community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The quality of leadership and management of the school is good overall.
69. Since the previous inspection report good leadership and management has enabled the school to make good progress. The school now provides a good, effective education for its pupils. The headteacher is providing good leadership and is supported very well by other members of the senior management team. The headteacher has made a number of significant staffing appointments since the previous inspection to support him in his quest to improve the school. The new deputy headteacher is having a positive impact on many aspects of the school's work. A clear direction for the future work of the school has been established. Central to the school's work is a commitment to continuous improvement and to ensuring that all pupils achieve well. The result of this approach can be seen in the improvements in the 2000 National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 11 and in the significant improvement in the quality of teaching, both of which were areas for concern in the previous report.
70. The headteacher has the confidence of the staff and is fully supported by a well-informed and experienced senior management team. The headteacher firmly believes in ensuring that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. The senior management team has been instrumental in supporting the headteacher in driving through many of the areas for development identified in the previous report. There is a shared commitment to improvement and a good capacity to succeed. The school has been successfully steered through a period of major change.
71. The school's aims are very relevant to the needs of the pupils and are embedded well in all aspects of the school's work.
72. At the previous inspection, there were concerns expressed about the quality of monitoring procedures. Many new systems and structures have been introduced and provide a good framework for the work of the school. Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the structure of management and this has resulted in good systems for monitoring the work of the school. In particular, there has been extensive in-service training provided for teachers; this has been a key factor in bringing about the significant improvement in teaching and learning.
73. The leadership and management provided by many middle managers is good. For example, the very good leadership provided by the co-ordinator for science has resulted in a significant improvement in the National Curriculum test results in 2000. Subject co-ordinators are now actively involved in monitoring the work of their subjects including the observation of teaching. The close monitoring of teaching and the support provided by the senior management team as a result of this monitoring has resulted in the improvement in teaching and in turn the improvement in the standards attained by pupils.
74. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The co-ordinator has ensured that effective IEPs are in place and are reviewed regularly. She monitors achievement and has built up a good team spirit amongst support assistants, whose expertise and hard work play a significant role in the good progress pupils make. The co-ordinator deploys her staff carefully and statutory requirements of statements are met.

75. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's work and have identified many of the strengths and weaknesses noted in this report. Since the previous inspection report the governing body has undergone significant change. A new chair of governors is working well with the senior management team in shaping the future direction of the school. The governing body sets challenging targets for improvement and are not complacent in their approach that focuses on providing a good standard of education for pupils.
76. The governing body does not fulfil its statutory duties in ensuring that the entitlement for all pupils in information and communication technology; physical education in Years 5 and 6 and the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils are fulfilled.
77. The system and cycle of school development planning has been changed and this has resulted in a school development plan which is of good quality, focuses on raising achievement and sets a clear agenda for improvement. All areas of the plan are linked to raising standards. Subject development plans are satisfactory but are not linked sufficiently to the school development plan. The school's priorities are appropriate and many of the issues noted in this report are highlighted in the school development plan.
78. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. The senior management team along with the governing body has set challenging targets for improvement. The school compares its performance with similar attaining schools in the authority and nationally.
79. The school makes good use of the available resources. Resources are carefully deployed to those areas where they will have the greatest benefit. For example, the school has received specific grants for the appointment of an inclusion officer, the result of which is the new 'inclusion register' and the good relationships that exist in the school. The school makes satisfactory use of new technology.
80. The financial planning in the school is good. The last auditor's report highlighted a few areas for improvement and the school has responded positively to the report's recommendations. The school receives a basic budget that is broadly in line with the national average. The school is running a small deficit budget that has been agreed with the local education authority. A tight rein is kept on spending by the administrative staff and the senior management team. Since the previous inspection a number of difficult decisions have needed to be taken, including the reduction in teaching staff; these have been managed well. The school is providing good value for money.
81. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection have resulted in a good specialist teaching provision. The arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are good with a well-planned programme of support that helps ensure that teachers settle quickly into the life of the school. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is very well-established and includes observation of lessons by senior staff with arrangements for the regular review of performance. The school has undertaken a carefully prepared programme of consultation with staff in preparation for the introduction of the performance management regulations, and is now well poised to implement this across the school. The in-service training of teachers is planned well and linked to the school development plan and this is having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and the morale of staff. The work of the education support staff is organised, monitored and supported well by the senior management team and this helps ensure that they are fully integrated into the life of the school.
82. There is adequate accommodation to teach the curriculum. New provision in science has greatly enhanced the learning opportunities for pupils and standards have risen as a consequence. Many areas are enhanced by good displays of work produced by pupils.
83. Overall, learning resources are unsatisfactory. Subjects such as English, mathematics and geography are adequately resourced and show that there have been some improvements since the last inspection. The level of provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, but there is still insufficient provision within subjects, which constrains the development of ICT in for example, science, design and technology, geography, history, religious education and art. Because of the

unsatisfactory provision for ICT, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements fully and the school does not have enough computers to allow pupils to practise their skills in other subjects. Plans and finance are well advanced to rectify the problem over the next two years. The Dyslexia Unit is very well resourced; the ratio of computers to pupils is very favourable at 3:1. Overall, the Unit is very well resourced to meet the needs of the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

- Ensure pupils make more use of ICT within subjects and that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to practise using ICT in their everyday lessons (para 9,10, 41, 83, 132, 123, 143, 138).
- Improve the quality of teaching in Year 5 by ensuring all teachers adapt their work and teaching methods to suit the changing pupil intake (para 18, 22, 29, 30 and 43).
- Improve the quality of teaching of PSHE by teachers taking more account of pupils' previous experiences (para 34 and 45).

Minor weaknesses

- Ensure that a more coherent system of setting homework is provided and that homework is appropriate to the needs of the pupils (para 33, 116 ,104,130).
- The governing body does not fulfil all its statutory duties (para 40, 76).
- Ensure that pupils are provided with swimming lessons in Years 5 and 6 (para 40).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	111
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	13	39	39	4	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	539
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	73

Special educational needs

	Y5– Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	147

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	136

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	69	70	139

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	49	53	66
	Girls	57	46	58
	Total	106	99	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (57)	71 (54)	89 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	47	51	51
	Girls	54	47	47
	Total	101	98	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (55)	71 (57)	71 (68)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	15
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	126
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	379
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 - Y8**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y5 -Y8

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	334

Deployment of teachers: Y5 -Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	81.6
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Average teaching group size: Y5 -Y8

Key Stage 2	26.6
Key Stage 3	25.4

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1106625
Total expenditure	1162929
Expenditure per pupil	2029
Balance brought forward from previous year	52335
Balance carried forward to next year	-3969

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	539
Number of questionnaires returned	121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	57	6	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	35	55	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	64	7	7	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	55	19	5	2
The teaching is good.	22	61	11	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	48	22	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	48	11	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	51	6	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	50	23	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	20	64	10	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	24	57	15	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	52	15	4	7

Other issues raised by parents

Homework is not set consistently and the timetable for homework is not adhered to.

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

ENGLISH

84. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at age 11, the proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 and above and Level 5 and above were close to the national average. The average National Curriculum points score in 2000 was close to the national average for all schools and for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Boys and girls gained similar results. There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils from ethnic minorities. Results in English were below those in science but better than those in mathematics. Results in 2000 were an improvement on those noted in the previous report.
85. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the standards that the pupils attain at the ages of 11 and 13 are average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. Levels of reading and speaking and listening are a little higher than those in writing, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where presentation of work by the younger, lower attaining children lacks accuracy. Almost all pupils have at least satisfactory knowledge and understanding of basic skills. Close liaison with, and support from, the special needs department increases mechanical accuracy, speaking and listening and reading standards of the special educational needs children. By the age of 11 higher attaining pupils display skills that are better than expected for their age. For example in a Year 6 lesson a group of pupils discussed tautology in a poetry lesson with flair and confidence. The majority of pupils are avid readers. Some middle and higher attaining pupils in Year 7 were reading sophisticated non-fiction texts for research. This is reflected in all pupils' knowledge and use of specialist vocabulary such as metaphor, simile and alliteration. A Year 6 class discussed onomatopoeia and, apart from giving appropriate examples, most pupils could also spell it. The pupils who were unsure used dictionaries indicating the encouragement of independent learning made by their teachers. A minority of pupils read for a purpose only and teachers are working hard to fire their imagination for reading. The presentation of written work is good overall and most pupils write carefully and take pride in their work. Some pupils' work, especially lower attaining pupils, is less well presented and sometimes incomplete. Qualities of speaking and listening are high and pupils show respect and interest in conversation with each other and their teacher. This is a reflection of the way they are spoken to and valued. A small proportion of pupils, particularly in the lower sets, find it difficult to give precise answers and can be easily distracted.
86. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive and achieve better results than might be expected at the age of 11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of good support and liaison with the special needs department and emphasis and rigour in the teaching of basic skills by the English department staff. Emphasis on literacy via the literacy hour improves the learning of pupils by developing their basic skills and preparing them for work in Years 7 and 8. This is most noticeable in the improvement in the pupils' writing. They enter Daubeney with a very low standard of writing yet emerge with average levels of attainment by the age of 11. This is achieved by a rigorous focus on handwriting, the development of a rich vocabulary and utilising these so that the pupils write creative and factual accounts with interest and enjoyment. Teachers also focus on pupils' individual interests so increasing motivation and relevance. The literacy hour has a good effect on pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing in Years 5 and 6 and this emphasis is continued in Years 7 and 8 so that pupils are ever aware of literacy requirements. The teaching of literacy in the English department is consolidated by the stress on pupils' acquisition of language skills and the teaching of basic skills in other subjects. This mirrors the school's commitment to improve basic skills in order to improve standards; it also provides cohesion in lessons and a unified approach, which means that pupils are secure.
87. The purchase of computers and software is a priority in the school's development plan. At the time of the inspection ICT was little used and mainly by children at home. Systematic use of ICT would improve the presentation of pupils' work, particularly that of the lower attainers.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. All teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject including non-specialist staff who have studied the subject and bring an additional enthusiasm and verve to the lessons. The majority of lessons are well planned for the pupils' needs with a fast pace and a variety of learning activities. This keeps the pupils on task and maximises their learning. Lesson objectives are clearly displayed and are the focus for every lesson. This gives the pupils a clear target for achievement. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were reminded of previous high standards and how they would continue to improve. Their pleasure was enormous and the children in this lower set worked with determination to succeed. In this, and a Year 6 lesson, the feeling of value and climate of success was heartening and resulted from teachers' determination to achieve the very best from the pupils. This was seen in many lessons and the clear zest for the subject consequently energised the pupils. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed although improvements could be made in some areas in order to enhance the pupils' learning. In a minority of lessons where some of the pupils' behaviour was more challenging lesson pace flagged and pupils became distracted. In a Year 6 lesson the learning objectives were not clear and therefore pupils were confused.
89. The subject is well managed and the quality of leadership is good. The subject co-ordinator encourages a team effort and a shared commitment to achieve the improvement of standards. Staff take an active role in the running of the subject and share responsibilities. Dedicated meetings of year staff, schemes of work co-ordinators and informal day-to-day management meetings supplement the regular timetabled meetings. Much work has been done on the use of assessment to target pupils more specifically so that all pupils are stretched to realise their capabilities. All pupils are therefore taught to achieve their potential. Ongoing assessment, however, is still inconsistent and written comments do not always draw attention to errors or set short term targets in order to aid pupils' learning. The curriculum is broad and balanced; a drama policy allows pupils to develop to develop their confidence and their understanding of text as seen in a role-play in a Year 5 lesson. Speaking and listening skills improve as a consequence. The subject offers a host of extra-curricular activities, which enhance the pupils' education as well as exciting their interest and imagination. This is true of the drama club and the many visiting speakers, poets, authors and theatre groups who come into school. Twilight homework and achievement classes after schools are well subscribed by pupils keen to learn.
90. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection and standards have improved slightly. The value of separate spelling lessons is seen in the pupils' work and evokes a positive response. Pupils count their marks enthusiastically and look forward to learning more spellings. The subject co-ordinator recognises the need to address lapses in concentration and effort of a minority of its pupils in order to enhance those pupils' progress.

English as an additional language

91. Pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress in the acquisition of English. They make very good progress at the earliest stages of learning the language. They achieve well in the subject, primarily because of the good support they receive. Learning assistants provide direct, high quality support teaching to individuals and small groups, both in lessons across the curriculum and in sessions in the library. This is mainly targeted at the minority of pupils who have only recently started to learn the language. It fulfils two functions. It enables pupils to gain access to the subject learning taking place, and also develops their English language skills. A feature of the support is the good balance between use of English and use of the pupil's home language. The assistants are also well aware of the need to encourage the pupils' independence, both in the use of English and in the way they learn. They encourage the pupils to use examples from their own experiences, and where appropriate help the pupils to build up their own dual language dictionaries. These pupils' learning is good.

Literacy across the school

92. Pupils enter the school with low literacy levels, particularly in writing. The introduction of the literacy hour and whole school initiatives to improve basic skills have contributed to raising literacy standards to close to average by the time the pupils are 11. The school recognises the need to further improve the literacy skills of its pupils and has made it a key feature in the school's development plan to lead the introduction of whole school policies to improve pupils' literacy. Some high order literacy skills were observed during the inspection, particularly in English. Overall, literacy levels adversely affect pupils' learning, particularly in the pupils' first years, and their improvement to average represents good achievement. Pupils are enthusiastic speakers with their peers. In English and physical education there is evidence of sophisticated and mature speech appropriate to the situation and the audience. Speech is not always appropriate and is undeveloped in formal situations as seen in some special educational needs, art and music lessons. Pupils are encouraged to talk and to respect each other's opinions. This was seen clearly in English lessons. The use of technical, specialist vocabulary is limited although some good examples were seen in mathematics. Listening skills require development for a minority of pupils, usually in lower sets, as this adversely affects their learning. A good range of fiction and non-fiction is studied in English and high attaining pupils, in particular, study a range of texts with authority and ease. Most pupils keenly undertake reading aloud although some pupils are hesitant and lack fluency. Some narrative writing is seen in most subjects as well as writing in different contexts; science for example. There are some weaknesses in presentation, particularly in the work of lower attaining pupils. The purchase of new computers and software will aid the presentation of pupils' work, particularly the lower attainers. High attaining pupils generally present their written work clearly. Word processing develops the presentation, of work especially that of pupils with special educational needs.

MATHEMATICS

93. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at age 11, the proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 and above were close to the national average and those attaining Level 5 and above were below the national average. The average National Curriculum points score in 2000 was below the national average for all schools and for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The attainment of girls was broadly in line with that of boys and the results in mathematics were below those in English and in science. Results in 2000 were an improvement on those noted in the previous report, and a greater proportion of pupils are now attaining Level 4 as a result of the emphasis that has been placed on preparing pupils for the tests and the improved quality of teaching.
94. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 is average. This represents a good level of achievement for all pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. This differs from the 2000 National Curriculum results. There is an improving trend greater than the national trend and there has been an improvement in teaching, which has had a positive effect on attainment. High attaining pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of place value and by the time that they reach age 11, they confidently convert fractions to percentages and can solve simple linear equations. Middle attaining pupils solve whole number problems involving all four types of operations. They learn how to read and interpret problems and apply the appropriate type of calculation. The higher attainers in the group progress to problems involving more than one operation. Whilst high attaining pupils calculate the circumference and areas of circles, the middle attaining pupils calculate areas of rectangles using formulae. They progress to calculating volume of cuboids. Low attaining pupils recognise and name three-dimensional shapes and calculate the perimeter of shapes. Good work is seen where high attaining pupils solve problems by converting from imperial to metric measurements. In data handling, competencies range from creating and labelling bar charts to the higher attaining pupils calculating all three averages of mode, mean and median and of the range of a distribution.
95. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the standards that pupils are attaining at age 13 are average. This represents good achievement for all groups of pupils given their prior levels of attainment. When investigating 'Towers', middle attaining pupils gather the information they need

to analyse the results of building a tower. They present the information in an organised way and show an understanding of the pattern generated by describing it mathematically. When exploring number sequences, high attaining pupils find and describe in words the rule for the next term but have not yet been able to generate a rule for the n^{th} term. Middle attaining pupils calculate ratios and are beginning to have a good understanding of ratio and direct proportion. Low attaining pupils accurately add and subtract decimals to two decimal places. Although they reflect shapes that are plotted in all four quadrants, they cannot always identify the negative co-ordinates. The higher attaining pupils in the group recognise and describe the pattern in the co-ordinates. When handling data, low attaining pupils create bar charts from frequency tables. Middle attaining pupils use the mode, mean, median, and range to compare two simple distributions. High attainers are developing a sound understanding of probability. They calculate the probability of a single event occurring and progress to working out the probability of two events happening.

96. The overall quality of teaching is good in all years and this leads to good learning. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there are examples of very good teaching. There are many good features of the teaching and teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics in Years 5 and 6, whilst it is secure in Years 7 and 8. Very clear explanation of tasks and confident and appropriate use of mathematical terms illustrate this. This proficient knowledge leads to confident teaching and promotes respect from the pupils. Teachers generally plan lessons well. There are clear learning objectives and effective structures to lessons. In the better lessons there is good effort and concentration by pupils and a good pace of working and amount of work achieved in lessons. This has a positive effect on their acquisition and consolidation of skills and understanding. In the better lessons, there are high expectations with challenging questions that extend pupils' understanding and knowledge. For example in a lesson where low attaining pupils were investigating factors. Management of pupils is good in all years and pupils respond accordingly. There is a generally a positive atmosphere for learning in the classrooms. Behaviour is good and pupils work well with each other. They listen attentively to their teachers and respond well to questions. However, in a minority of lessons the higher attainers are not always fully concentrating when working on individual tasks. In the majority of lessons teachers assess pupils' understanding effectively by careful questioning that encourages pupils to explain what they are doing and to monitor their understanding. Teaching methods are generally good and the more effective lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers use an effective combination of explanation, discussion, and individual work that maintains the interest and motivation of pupils. There are very good relationships in the classrooms both between pupils and pupils and teachers. Teachers enjoy teaching numeracy and make lessons enjoyable for pupils. Praise and support are very effective in raising attainment. This leads to an atmosphere of respect and a good understanding of the needs of pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils and take into account their individual needs in their approach to lessons. They work very well with learning assistants to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make the best progress. Day-to-day assessment in lessons is good. Marking is thorough and the majority of teachers write constructive comments that help pupils to see where they have made mistakes and how they can improve. Homework is set regularly and supports the work pupils do in class very well. Teachers plan it well so that it consolidates and extends learning.
97. The subject is well managed and the quality of leadership is good. National Curriculum test results are rising. The staff work very well together and they place a high emphasis on raising achievement in mathematics. They are a dedicated and committed team. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very good. It is well planned and has been a significant factor in raising attainment. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' performance as they progress through the school. The information from assessments is used effectively to set pupils according to ability and to influence the planning of the curriculum. Although the overall level of resources is satisfactory, there is insufficient access to computers that would allow information communications technology to be integrated effectively into pupils' work and enhance their learning.
98. The subject has made good progress since the previous inspection. Pupils' standards of achievement in Years 5 to 6 have improved. The quality of teaching and learning has improved in all years. It is now good and there is no unsatisfactory teaching whereas previously teaching was

unsatisfactory in one lesson in ten. This is the effect of better planning, very good monitoring of teaching and learning and very effective assessment procedures.

Numeracy across the curriculum

99. Levels of numeracy across the curriculum are broadly average. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place in Years 5 and 6 and is successfully raising the standard of numeracy of those pupils in numeracy and mathematics lessons. However, there are no strategies in place for improving standards and co-ordinating numeracy across the whole school curriculum and practice varies between subjects. In science there is good use of formulae in Years 7 and 8 but pupils demonstrate a lack of accuracy of measurements in Years 5 and 6. This lack of accuracy is repeated in design and technology when pupils are weighing and measuring. Good practice is seen in geography. Pupils successfully create rainfall and temperature graphs and then use the graphs to study trends. In geography the subject contributes to pupils' competence in numeracy by identifying areas where numeracy supports learning. In French lessons, there is frequent reference to numbers and counting. In Years 7 and 8, pupils produce bar charts using ICT in French as a result of a survey about popularity of subjects. In personal, social and health education, pupils use their numeracy skills to calculate total units of alcohol and its effects. In physical education lessons, pupils measure distance and time, but the opportunities for practising numeracy skills are limited.

SCIENCE

100. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at age 11, the proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 and above and Level 5 and above were close to the national average. The average National Curriculum points score in 2000 was close to the national average for all schools and for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Boys performed better than girls did in 2000, but this was the reverse of the situation in 1999 and, on average, there has been little difference in their relative performances over the past three years. Results in science in 2000 were better than those in English and mathematics. Results in 2000 were a significant improvement from well below average at the time of the last inspection, as a result of the emphasis that has been placed on preparing pupils for the tests and the improved quality of teaching.
101. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 is broadly average and confirms the results of the national tests for 11-year-olds. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. Most pupils have secure basic knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied recently. Their skills in investigations are similar to those in other aspects of their work in science. There are, however, differences in the relative levels of attainment in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 5, but weaknesses in presentation mar the work of even the highest attainers. Pupils are particularly weak in systematically recording the results of experiments or their observations. Pupils do not listen well enough in Year 5 and, as a result, less work is covered in lessons than in other years. In contrast, pupils achieve well in Year 6. The good emphasis that is placed on improving literacy skills leads to a significant improvement in spelling, punctuation and grammar that in turn leads to better standards of presentation and more accurate written work.
102. The pupils who are now in Year 8 attained standards in the national tests at the age of 11 that were well below average. Since that time, pupils have achieved well and are now attaining standards that are close to the national average. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied. Their skills in scientific investigation are also broadly average. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a particularly high level of logical thinking, allowing them to spot short cuts in experiments such as realising that all they require in a task is knowing whether a solution is acid or alkali rather than measuring a pH value. These pupils also demonstrate an impressive ability to analyse complex situations.

103. In all years, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. They receive a high level of support from support assistants who raise their levels of attainment by engaging them in conversation to a deeper extent than would otherwise occur. For example, in one lesson on corrosion, the assistant was able to follow up pupils' questions on density so that these pupils learnt about both corrosion and why different metals appear to be heavier than others. Pupils who have weak literacy skills, either because of special educational needs or because they are learning English, are regularly targeted by teachers to ensure they know exactly what they are supposed to be doing at the start of an activity and frequently questioned to make sure that they are making the same good progress as other pupils. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls.
104. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 6, 7 and 8 and satisfactory in Year 5. In all years, lessons start with a recap of the previous lesson. Teachers use this opportunity to question pupils and to search for gaps in their understanding. If weaknesses are found, teachers are quick to adapt their lessons and address them. This leads to pupils developing a solid knowledge of their work. All teachers plan their lessons well, particularly in terms of meeting the needs of pupils with weak literacy skills. Key words are spelt out and written on the board and the meaning of new vocabulary is discussed. Many opportunities are provided to read aloud and to produce extended pieces of written work, particularly in Years 6, 7 and 8. In this way, pupils learn to present their work in a neater way and to write comprehensive answers to questions. It also leads them to become more independent so that they develop better skills in activities such as research assignments. The main difference between the teaching in Year 5 and the other years is the degree of challenge that pupils experience. Teachers expect more of their pupils in Years 6 to 8 and, as a result, more work is covered and greater gains in knowledge and understanding are made. In Year 5, teachers do not insist that the scientific method of addressing problems is always employed. Pupils concentrate well in their lessons and teachers' excellent use of humour, and in some cases remarkable range of facial expressions, ensure that pupils will often hang upon their teacher's every word. The good relationships that exist mean that teachers rarely have to resort to overt ways of exerting discipline, preferring to maintain attention with a simple look or raised eyebrow. There is too much variation in the amount of homework set for different groups. Some teachers set homework each week and pupils know exactly when it is to be completed. Other teachers, however, set homework infrequently with little clear guidance on when it is to be handed in.
105. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject co-ordinator has shown very good vision in carefully plotting the future direction of the subject. The teaching has been very well monitored to identify areas of strength and weakness. All lesson plans have been shared so that the strengths have been promoted in all years, whilst the weaknesses have been addressed most successfully. The best example of this approach is the way that results in the National Curriculum tests have improved. Teachers carefully analysed the responses that pupils made to each question in the test and identified those areas of understanding that were weak. Teachers then changed their curriculum so that they revised these areas. The analysis also showed up those pupils who were in danger of missing the nationally expected standard by just a few marks and these pupils received extra lessons in order to bring them up to the national standard. The current development plan demonstrates a very good emphasis on improving standards still further. The one real weakness in the provision is the lack of computers, which means that pupils are not making enough use of information and communication technology, especially in terms of measuring and recording data.
106. The subject has made very good progress since the previous inspection and continues to improve. The quality of teaching has improved and, as a result, standards have improved significantly. Pupils now achieve well and results of the national tests for 11-year-olds have improved from well below average to broadly average.

ART AND DESIGN

107. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the ages of 11 and 13 is average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were average when they joined the school. This is the case for all pupils, irrespective of their prior

attainment. Special educational needs pupils achieve satisfactorily because they enjoy the subject and are encouraged by the teachers' positive comments and help. Higher attaining pupils also achieve satisfactorily, although not all the projects fully challenge or extend them. This is evident, for instance, in the work in their sketchbooks, which does not require them to research their chosen topics in sufficient depth. In Years 7 and 8, pupils' progress is helped by the smaller than average size of art classes. This ensures that pupils receive more individual support and have more room for practical work. There is no difference between the progress of boys and girls. Pupils who have English as an additional language cope satisfactorily with the subject as a result of projects that they enjoy. Pupils' ability to use computer art applications is very limited, as there are no computers in the main art room.

108. By the age of 11, pupils make accurate pencil and pastel drawings of leaves and fruit, paying attention to the tonal variation so that drawings have depth and visual interest. Pupils regularly complete successful three-dimensional artwork. In one Year 5 class, for instance, pupils were starting to make raised clay tiles transferring a fish design that they had drawn out in pastels in the previous lesson. They successfully learnt how to manipulate the clay, create the fish scales and shape a decorative background for the water and plants. Pupils successfully notice how different artists use different techniques to achieve particular effects. Another Year 5 class, for instance, noticed the striking use of colour and ornamental decoration in pictures of African masks, and imaginatively reproduced these characteristics in their own eye-catching clay masks. Whilst a lot of work is imaginative, with bold use of colour, pupils do not always explore themes in order to understand their subtleties. Their initial ideas provide the basis for their work and they do not attempt to interpret themes in more inventive and resourceful ways.
109. By the age of 13, pupils make drawings of coffee mugs in an abstract cubist style. They did this accurately in a lesson, producing segmented drawings that successfully incorporated several viewpoints simultaneously, in the style of the artists Picasso and Braque. However, this was done in a superficial way without understanding how this style communicates ideas and meanings in ways that more conventional forms of art cannot do. Pupils do not do enough individual research and are not sufficiently critical in appraising their own and others' work. As a result, some work is superficial and occasionally predictable, for instance when some pupils drew cartoon characters in response to the project on street-art style. Other pupils' work showed greater originality and ingenuity. For instance, some street art 'word painting' had letters imaginatively intertwined with the colour and shape of the letters effectively catching the mood of the chosen word. Some of these designs used contrasting colours to good effect, showing that pupils had a grasp of colour theory.
110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all years, as is the quality of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching in some lessons was good. For instance, in the Year 5 lesson mentioned above where the pupils made clay fish tiles, the teacher gave a good demonstration of how pupils could transfer their original two-dimensional designs to the new medium of clay. Pupils enthusiastically learnt about the new technique, successfully interpreting their designs using the new medium of clay. Teachers have a sound understanding of how to teach art and communicate this knowledge in interesting ways. As a result, pupils want to learn and make steady progress. Teachers plan interesting sessions that involve a lot of practical work. This motivates pupils to learn. However, sometimes, teachers do not require pupils to think hard enough about what they are doing. Consequently, there is a tendency for some pupils' work to lack subtlety or distinctiveness. Teachers make effective use of a range of materials. For instance, most pupils have used clay; Year 5 to make imaginative shell sculptures and the Year 6 to make the exotic African masks. Other resources are well used by teachers. Year 5 pupils were asked to use any materials they wished to create ornamental fish mobiles. They certainly came up with some strikingly original results, (that clearly had some parents busily involved as well!). This imaginative use of homework supports pupils' independent learning and is an important factor in helping them to think and learn more creatively. Teachers let pupils know what they have to do to improve, although some marking and verbal comments over praise pupils so that they are too easily pleased with results that are mediocre. Teachers have clear expectations of behaviour and so pupils learn in an atmosphere that is free from distracting interruptions.

111. The main art room is drab and badly needs brightening up. The walls have not been painted in recent times and the furniture is old and worn. This slightly dishevelled environment has an adverse affect on pupils' learning. The management of the subject is sound and improving. The co-ordinator, who started at the school in September 2000, has introduced helpful improvements to the way that work is planned and assessed. No time has yet been made available for her to monitor the art lessons of other colleagues, although she does provide them with helpful ideas and advice. As at the time of the last inspection, there are insufficient trips to places of artistic interest or visiting artists that could bring excitement to learning. However, some of the criticisms made at that time have been satisfactorily addressed. For instance, there is better planning of lessons and teachers use an agreed method for grading pupils' work so that there is a greater consistency of expectation from year to year. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 is below average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. At the age of 13, pupils' attainment is average and this represents good achievement given pupils' prior levels of attainment.

113. By the age of 11, pupils generate their own ideas drawing on a range of resources; many additional resources have been provided since the previous inspection and pupils make effective use of them. Pupils use magazines, ICT and the library to research given topics. In Year 6, pupils know and understand the concept of batch production techniques. Higher attainers realise the importance of quality control in manufacturing. In a Year 6 lesson on textiles, pupils marked out, cut and shaped materials accurately. Lower attainers have difficulty producing an outline shape from a given template. Most pupils produce sketches that illustrate their ideas well. Higher attainers use rendering techniques effectively whilst lower and middle attainers do not always annotate their sketches. The practical skills of Year 5 pupils are generally well below average. In a Year 5 lesson on resistant materials, pupils had difficulty using a coping saw appropriately and many failed to understand the need for accuracy. In this lesson, pupils were inattentive and it needed all the skills of an experienced teacher to keep them on task. Pupils do not listen well enough in Year 5 and, as a result, less work is covered in lessons than in other years.

114. By the age of 13, pupils know and understand the scientific principles that underpin the production of bread. This was well illustrated in a Year 8 food lesson when pupils knew what yeast was used for and the by-products produced by this process. Most pupils name basic electronic components such as resistors and light emitting diodes accurately. Higher attainers describe how basic electrical circuits function whilst middle and lower attainers struggle to understand the difference between series and parallel circuits. Pupils' graphical skills continue to develop and their designs become more detailed. Pupils' written work is well presented. However, pupils do not always make use of the technical vocabulary of the subject and answers, both verbal and written, sometimes lack precision. In Years 7 and 8, pupils' progress is helped by the smaller than average size of art classes. This ensures that pupils receive more individual support and have more room for practical work.

115. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers have modified many of the tasks to accommodate the needs of these pupils. Pupils with dyslexia are supported very well and make good progress. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language make good progress because of the good standard of in-class support that is provided. For instance, in a Year 7 lesson on electronics, the learning support assistant helped one boy who had difficulty with mobility to participate fully in the lesson. Of particular note is the support the school provides for pupils who are refugees. These pupils play a full and active part in lessons.

116. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics they teach. In a Year 8 food technology lesson, the teacher used her extensive knowledge of food production techniques to

ensure pupils understood the need to measure ingredients accurately when producing bread. In a Year 8 resistant materials lesson the demonstration of decorative finishing techniques by the teacher enabled pupils to learn about and apply these techniques. Teachers plan their lessons well although they occasionally plan to do too much in a single lesson and do not always complete what they set out to do, this occasionally results in the lesson being a little rushed. Most pupils are attentive however some pupils in Year 5 are inattentive and are easily distracted. The teachers manage pupils well by making sure that pupils treat resources and equipment with respect, behave well when not closely supervised and treat each other in a considerate and courteous way. As a result, lessons are civilised with pupils working sensibly in pairs and small groups. The clear progress pupils make results from clear learning objectives, which are explained in a way that they understand. Good progress is also helped by the way that the teacher summarises what pupils have done at the end of each lesson. In a Year 7 lesson, for instance, the teacher stopped the class five minutes before the end in order to chat to the pupils about what they had learnt and what they would need to do next time to improve further. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and what pupils can achieve. Pupils are well integrated and work well together in small groups. In a Year 7 lesson on electronics, the teacher asked demanding questions of pupils and did not accept superficial answers. This resulted in pupils having to think carefully about their answers, which encouraged pupils to refer back to their notes. Pupils enjoy the subject, and particularly the practical work; they are less keen on the written work. However, teachers have produced a range of interesting topics, which encourage pupils to link their design work with their practical studies. The quality of marking is good, being frequent and informative; pupils know how to improve their work next time. The use of National Curriculum level descriptors to indicate to pupils the progress that they are making over a year is a particularly strong feature of the teaching. The use of homework is inconsistent. In a Year 7 lesson on electronics the teacher asked pupils to complete a task for homework even though many were dispersing at the end of the lesson. This resulted in many pupils not realising that homework had been set. Whilst teachers use the technical language of the subject when describing tasks they do not always insist that pupils use the correct terminology and this results in pupils not always giving full and accurate answers to questions.

117. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is very good. The minor weaknesses identified in the previous report have been fully addressed. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for moving the subject forward. The quality of monitoring is very good with a wide range of monitoring techniques being used. Teaching is monitored on a regular basis and there are good links to the programme for staff development.

118. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Pupils continue to achieve well and the good standard of teaching has been sustained.

GEOGRAPHY

119. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the ages of 11 and 13 is above average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were average when they joined the school. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

120. In Year 5, pupils come to school with basic geographical skills and knowledge. They develop simple mapping skills and understand about scale and direction. They successfully use a compass to determine simple directions and make use of four and six figure co-ordinates to locate map symbols and features. Pupils successfully locate continents, major countries and cities, mountains and rivers. They compare the different life styles of St Lucia and the United Kingdom. Pupils know the names of some river features like mouth, source and begin to understand the idea of a drainage basin; higher attaining pupils have a basic understanding of river erosion. Year 6 pupils build upon the basic geographical skills developed in Year 5. They show a good understanding of the local recycling system; they explain the reasons for re-cycling of materials and the types of materials that can be re-used. High attaining pupils understand the consequences if we do not sustain our environment; they begin to understand simple moral issues related to conservation. Overall, pupils

including those with special educational needs making good progress in map work, use of keys, scales, location of countries and issues related to conservation. Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 and develop a good foundation for work in Years 7 and 8.

121. In the work seen during the inspection standards at the age of 13 were above average. Pupils in Year 7 correctly locate Kenya in the African continent; they accurately predict that the country has a hot dry climate with a rainy season. Pupils use words like permeable and saturated accurately as they learn about the impact of the seasonal rainfall in Kenya. Numeracy successfully supports pupils' work; they make use of rainfall and temperature data in order to plot successfully graphs about Nairobi and Kisumu. High attaining pupils evaluate and explain their graphs and compare and contrast the differences. Year 8 pupils show a basic understanding of both earthquakes and volcanoes and the consequences for towns and villages; for example, the consequences of the Montserrat eruptions. Teachers make good demands of their pupils in order to improve investigative and analytical skills. All pupils in Years 7 and 8, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, are well integrated into lessons and receive good support by teachers, classroom support assistants and their peers.
122. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in all years. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and there were occasions when the teaching was very good. Teachers show a good knowledge of geography and apply their knowledge well; for instance, in a Year 8 lesson, about volcanoes and earthquakes. Teachers' good geographical knowledge and understanding enables pupils' own knowledge and understanding to be challenged; this extends pupils' horizons. Pupils are encouraged to ask and answer geographical questions in some detail; this further enhances their understanding. Teachers have high expectations of both pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond well to challenging questions; this was observed when Year 7 pupils study climatic conditions in Kenya. They successfully learn the basic geographical skills, which are supported successfully by literacy and numeracy skills. Year 6 pupils make good use of technical words, like sustainable environment, when they study recycling. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows they use simple well-drawn diagrams, sketch maps are appropriately labelled, notes are made in a number of ways including effective spider diagrams, and maps have keys relating to scale, direction and symbols. Pupils illustrate their work effectively with charts and pie graphs to represent simple data. For example, Kenya's monthly rainfall and temperatures are successfully charted. Overall, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and at times, they are very good; relationships are also good. All these features underpin teaching and enhance the learning environment. The range of tasks is good, meeting the needs of all different abilities within a class. Teachers are sufficiently flexible in their teaching to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs; this support and that of learning support assistants is a good aspect of teaching.
123. The subject co-ordinator shows very good leadership and management. She has a very clear view of what constitutes good provision in geography. There is a good curriculum, which has breadth, balance and relevance. All documentation is new and of a high quality; assessment and policy documents are good. Monitoring of pupils' work is a strong feature of the subject; however, within the team of teachers that teach geography there is a need for improved consistency in marking. Good use is made of selective data in order to track pupils' progress. The monitoring of teaching is relatively new and is starting to develop successfully as it links with performance management procedures. Literacy and numeracy successfully support learning; however, access to information and communication technology constrains this investigative element of the subject and is in need of further development.
124. The subject has made very good progress since the last inspection; all the issues of the last report have been successfully addressed by the newly appointed co-ordinator. The profile of geography has improved significantly; pupils now show enthusiasm for the subject. Both standards and the quality of teaching have improved.

HISTORY

125. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the ages of 11 and 13 is below average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. The achievement of pupils for whom English is an additional language, where they receive additional support in class, is good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
126. Pupils by the age of 11 explore areas of life in Victorian England and make simple comparisons between the living conditions of the rich and poor. They empathise with a character from the time, for example a servant in a wealthy house, however their observations are generally simple and stereotypical. They identify changes that have taken place over time for example in schools, and suggest reasons for the disappearance of some occupations. During their study of life in Ancient Greece pupils in Year 6 are beginning to use a variety of sources in order to gain information, for example from the decoration on Greek pottery, and they understand the term 'Primary Source'. They begin to recognise the difference between primary and secondary sources. Higher attaining pupils use information to make simple deductions, but most pupils restrict themselves to simple observations. Pupils use simple timelines, and they arrange information in chronological order, for example the Tudor kings and queens. Their sense of chronology, however, is still underdeveloped.
127. Pupils at the age of 13 select and extract information from written text in response to questions. Written work indicates evidence of reasoning, but responses are generally simple and do not indicate an understanding of contrasting viewpoints. Pupils in Year 8 are beginning to identify positive and negative aspects of Elizabethan England however this has yet to be translated into understanding of positive and negative views of the same events or changes. Pupils acquire a basic understanding of the Reformation, although from the Tudor dynasty viewpoint only, and understanding of the dissolution of the monasteries is limited to financial benefits. There is limited opportunity for pupils to develop skills in extended writing and research. As a result, their progress in the organisation and presentation of a considered response is still underdeveloped. Pupils develop their use of sources, however few pupils indicate an understanding of the need to compare information in order to check the accuracy of the information gained. Understanding of bias is at an early stage of development. Limited previous work on the handling of source material has reduced the attainment of pupils in this skill. Pupils in Year 7 identify the events surrounding the 'Battle of Hastings' and consider the problems faced by William 1st after the conquest. When presented with the opportunity they make good reasoned judgements over the priorities that these problems should take. Higher attaining pupils recognise that problems are inter-related. Their knowledge of the rivalry that gave rise to the Norman Conquest is weak.
128. Pupils with special educational needs who receive additional support in class make satisfactory progress. Pupils who do not receive additional support, particularly in the early years, find it hard to complete work in class. This results in a lack of continuity for them. The emphasis on whole class teaching and the lack of differentiated work results in reduced challenge for higher attaining pupils, who are unable to become more independent learners. The attainment of boys and girls is similar, however the attainment of a small group of boys in Year 8 is reduced by poor attitudes towards history.
129. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in general are satisfactory, and amongst the girls are good. Pupils are quick to respond to questions and girls in particular take pride in the completion of their tasks. At times pupils do not show consideration for others in the room and talk across the teacher, and their classmates. A minority of Year 5 boys do not concentrate and are slow to settle to written work. When they are given the opportunity pupils work well in pairs, discussing information and sharing ideas.
130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the years. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and seek to involve their pupils in the work of the class. Teachers emphasise the development of specialist vocabulary, encouraging its use, and ensuring that all pupils understand. In the best lessons teachers plan carefully to enable a range of activities to take place that will support pupils' concentration and develop their skills of investigation and reasoning. Where there is less variety in activities and lessons are less structured, the pace becomes slower, pupils'

concentration lapses and progress in understanding is reduced. Teachers are beginning to use the topics to support the development of the key elements in history, enabling pupils to use, rather than just receive, information about the past. This is still at an early stage of development and as a result progress in the development of these key skills is slow. Teachers' knowledge of the periods taught is satisfactory, however confidence in the variety of teaching styles, and in the development of independent learning and research by the pupils, is limited. As a result progress in these areas is reduced. The relationships between the pupils and teachers are good, and teachers create safe working environments in their classrooms. Pupils are confident that their responses will be positively received, and as a result they are generally positive about their work. There is too much variation in the amount of homework set for different groups.

131. The management of the subject has changed since the last inspection and is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has set appropriate priorities for the development of the subject. Action has been taken to address the weaknesses identified in the last report and strategies are in place that are designed to focus the subject towards the development of skills in history. The impact of the developments has yet to be seen in the attainment of the pupils however, and staff development is still a priority. The subject has developed a structure that will enable it to assess and monitor the progress of pupils in the key skills of history. Pupils are to be introduced to the expectations of the National Curriculum. At present, there is no body of information that will enable teachers to monitor progress over time and pupils have little opportunity to participate in their own assessment. Targets are set in many books, however day-to-day marking tends to be brief and on occasion overlooks errors. Encouraging comments are made and the rapport between pupils and their teachers is good.
132. The subject is investigating the use of ICT, for example for an investigation into the use of the 'Domesday Book' however it is not yet part of the schemes of work, and there is little software to support its use. Pupils have little opportunity to develop their numeracy skills in history. Spreadsheets and statistics do not support the investigations into conditions into Victorian England, for example. The subject does contribute well towards the cultural and moral development of the pupils however, and good opportunities are found in the studies into the civilisations of Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, and in the Year 8 study of the Islamic Empire.
133. Since the last inspection the subject has made good improvement. Attainment at the end of Year 8 is rising and there is now a clear emphasis on the teaching of key skills of history. Pupils are becoming more familiar with the use of sources. The management and teaching of the subject is now satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching has improved. Assessment, although unsatisfactory at present, has the system coming into place that should remedy its failings.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. In the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the ages of 11 and 13 is below average. All pupils make satisfactory progress in individual lessons but, with the exception of those who attend the special unit, are not achieving as well as they should be because they do not have enough opportunities to practice their skills across the curriculum.
135. Almost all of the work observed during the inspection was, by coincidence, involved with presenting text and graphics although work involving data handling was displayed. By the age of 11, pupils find the files that they need on the computer. They present information in different forms, but do not show any real awareness of changing their work to meet the needs of a specific audience. Many pupils do not remember sufficient technical vocabulary to be able to describe what they are doing in the correct terms. By the age of 13 pupils organise presentations and produce computer slide shows that combine text and graphics. They are beginning to use more advanced features of software, such as animation, but are not able to analyse the requirements of a particular audience in order to match the presentation to the needs of the audience. There is little use of email and pupils' knowledge of how information and communication technology is used outside of school is particularly weak.

136. Most pupils make little use of their skills in other subjects and this has a significant impact on the standards that they attain. The curriculum is planned as a series of discrete topics, but considerable amounts of time are given over to revising skills that were taught earlier as pupils have forgotten them because of lack of practice. Whilst this is true for the great majority of pupils, those who attend the special dyslexia unit make very good progress because they use computers every day, often for quite long periods. These pupils are adept in using a wide range of software and their attainment is considerably better than other pupils, including those with other special educational needs.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all years. One of the most significant strengths in the teaching is the way that the information and communication technology technician is available to act as a support teacher for many lessons. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from being helped with their basic literacy skills and any problems with hardware are quickly sorted out so that lessons can continue without interruption. However, new terms and technical vocabulary are not reinforced sufficiently by, for example, writing them on the board. Teachers are good at spotting when there is a need to stop the whole class to make a particular point or to reinforce a new way of working, but teachers need to be more vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are listening when the teacher is speaking. All classes contain more pupils than there are computers available, which means that pupils have to share. Most pupils organise themselves well in groups, but some pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, need more guidance on organising their work so that all pupils play an appropriate part in activities.
138. Satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching was poor in Years 7 and 8 and this has improved significantly. The other main criticism made in the previous report was the lack of computers and this is still the case; the school does not have enough computers to allow pupils to practise their skills in other subjects and does not meet statutory requirements in this respect. However, the school now has the computers and is just waiting for the new room to be completed so that they can be deployed and the paucity of provision can be rectified.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

139. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 in French is average and above average at age 13. Since pupils enter the school with below average literary skills, this represents good achievement across the school for all pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English. The provision of French from Year 5 gives pupils a flying start on entry to Year 7, when pupils usually begin a foreign language.
140. Evidence from the inspection shows that by the age of 11 pupils reach average standards in speaking, reading and writing, but above average standards in listening and responding. Pupils speak clearly in brief sentences. While higher attaining pupils pronounce words accurately, the pronunciation of others is more approximate. Pronunciation is better when pupils speak French than when they read aloud. Reading improves when pupils repeat what the teacher has read. Listening skills are good. They are significantly better in Year 6 than they are in Year 5, where listening is weak. In Year 6, pupils listen carefully to the teachers and respond well to their questions. They understand questions about morning routines such as getting up and leaving for school and state the times they do these activities. In writing, pupils copy correctly, though may miss details such as accents. They complete sentences using the appropriate word from a given list and show sound understanding of meaning. Pupils present their work well.
141. By the age of 13, pupils reach above average standards in speaking, listening and reading, but average standards in writing. Pupils speak in developed sentences, using good vocabulary. Lower attainers answer questions with confidence, as in a Year 8 lesson where the teacher discussed with pupils their hobbies. Most pupils listen well to teachers and so improve pronunciation. Many

pupils read fluently and with good understanding, though those with learning difficulties need considerable support. Writing skills develop well. Pupils write in complete sentences and short paragraphs, though accuracy varies. Higher attaining pupils link ideas in complex sentences and use a range of tenses. For example, they write about what they intend to do in the holidays and about their ideal day. Pupils give reasons for likes and dislikes and sometimes use familiar words in unfamiliar situations. Their good research skills are evident when they use dictionaries and exercise books to check on spelling and grammar. Pupils present their work well.

142. Teaching and learning in French are good in all years. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which enables them to ask questions that assess pupils' understanding and extend pupils' thinking. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher questioned pupils about their interests and expected reasons to be given. Her high expectation led to a good response and opportunities for pupils to develop speaking. Teachers' planning of lessons is good. They include a variety of activities to sustain pupils' interest, as in a very good Year 8 lesson on accepting or refusing invitations, where key skills were practised. Occasionally, an activity goes on for too long so that pace and learning slow; or insufficient time is allowed at the end of a lesson to review what has been learnt and some of the lesson's impact is lost. Teachers focus well on basic skills. For example, in a Year 5 lesson the teacher worked hard to develop listening skills which were weak and a significant barrier to learning. Teachers' enthusiasm and encouragement usually lead to a good response from pupils, who show an interest in their work. However, there are a few pupils, mainly boys, in Years 5 and 8 who show little commitment to learning and do not make the progress they should. Teachers make effective use of paired work to involve pupils actively in their own learning. Pupils collaborate well, as in Year 6 lessons, where pupils enthusiastically questioned one another about their morning routine. As a result, they revised time words, practised new vocabulary and learned rapidly. Assessment during lessons is frequent so that pupils know how they are getting on. Teachers mark books well, commenting in French where appropriate, and indicate what pupils need to do to improve.
143. The new schemes of work for French are good, with coverage in most lessons of all four language skills. There is insufficient use of computers to promote learning, though in information communications technology lessons, pupils have produced bar graphs in French listing which lessons they like best. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers keep records of pupils' progress in the different language skills and the colour coding system makes achievement easy to track. Teachers use information to plan future lessons to remedy weaknesses. This is helping to raise standards, for example, in writing for Year 8 pupils. The subject is well managed and the quality of leadership is good. The co-ordinator has a clear educational direction for the subject and has worked conscientiously to meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum. She coped well with recent staffing difficulties, ensuring that all pupils continued the schemes of work.
144. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Teaching is now good, rather than satisfactory, and target setting is developing well. Pupils have a greater awareness of how well they are achieving, helped by simplified national test criteria to show them how to reach the next level. Teachers have shared classroom practice and worked closely on the new schemes of work. With these improvements, and the very recent appointment of an experienced teacher, there is good capacity for further improvement.

MUSIC

145. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the ages of 11 and 13 is average. This represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. Over the length of time they are in school, pupils achieve well, making good progress as a result of interesting lessons that provide lots of practical challenges. This is the case for all pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment. Special educational needs pupils achieve well because they are given practical based work that they enjoy, and higher attaining pupils also achieve well as a result of the lessons provided by visiting instrumental teachers and the regular opportunities to play and perform together inside and outside school. There is no difference between the progress of boys and girls, or those from different ethnic groups. Pupils have regular opportunities to use computers in class and make satisfactory progress using a simple notation program that enables them to input notes to form simple melodic compositions.
146. By the age of 11, pupils accurately memorise the parts to the African song 'Wimmoweh'. They sing enthusiastically and unselfconsciously, enjoying the confident accompaniment provided by some of the class who used pitched percussion instruments. However, some pupils have difficulty accurately pitching the higher notes, and this is a clear area for development that is recognised by the music teacher. Nevertheless, this did not prevent them doing their best in the planned activities. Later in the lesson, pupils successfully learnt how to play three note triads to accompany the song, which they took it in turns to play on glockenspiels.
147. By the age of 13, pupils play the tune 'Ode to Joy' on electronic keyboards, with most using accurate fingering and maintaining a steady pulse. Although lower attaining and special needs pupils stumbled over the more intricate middle part of the tune, they realised where they needed to practise more to ensure that they improved. Higher attaining pupils played the tune in pairs with one of the players adding an accompaniment in a different rhythmic style. This was more challenging, and required the pupils to listen very carefully to each other in order to stay in time. One boy provided an accomplished guitar accompaniment to the tune, which was much appreciated by those youngsters close by. Later in the lesson, pupils accurately completed a short test paper on the technical aspects of music, such as the length of notes and rests and the meaning of musical terms. Several pupils constructed simple but effective melodic compositions using the three computers in the room.
148. Those pupils who receive instrumental lessons achieve very well. The regular opportunities for extra-curricular activity ensure that they consolidate their skills. The school has a large number of very well run performance groups who regularly play to audiences inside and outside school. These youngsters are excellent ambassadors for the school, and full credit should be given to the music teacher who devotes considerable time and energy coaching and managing these groups. The range and quality of extra-curricular work is a major strength of the subject.
149. The quality of teaching is good in all years. The specialist teacher of music communicates the principles of the subject clearly and has realistic expectations of what pupils can achieve over the course of a lesson and over the long term. As a result, pupils progress well, learning about the subject in an organised and thorough way. The teacher plans lessons that interest pupils and ensures that a range of theoretical and practical aspects is covered. Pupils rarely become bored in lessons because the teacher moves briskly from one activity to another. As a result, pupils work at a productive pace. The teacher manages pupils well by making sure that they treat instruments with respect, behave well when not closely supervised and treat each other in a considerate and courteous way. As a result, lessons are civilised with pupils playing sensibly in pairs and small groups. The clear progress pupils make results from clear learning objectives, which are explained in a way that they understand. Good progress is also helped by the way that the teacher summarises what pupils have done at the end of each lesson. In a Year 8 lesson, for instance, the teacher stopped the class five minutes before the end in order to chat to the pupils about what they had learnt and what they would need to do next time to improve further. The teacher asked the pupils for their own suggestions and ideas so that they developed a greater sense of responsibility for their own learning. The teacher successfully uses a range of resources that support pupils'

learning. She ensures that pupils have opportunities to work both individually and as part of a group. This teamwork approach helps pupils' social development. The teaching of extra-curricular groups is very skilled. The teacher inspired pupils to achieve very high standards in their singing and playing, combining ambitious challenge with a sense of fun and musical adventure.

150. Whilst much of the learning is active rather than passive, the continuing lack of practice space and shortage of instruments, which was reported in the last inspection, results in some pupils not being able to engage fully in practical activity. In a Year 8 lesson, for instance, half of the class played instruments whilst the other half did theoretical written work. The two halves swapped over half way through the lesson. It was evident that pupils learnt more through doing rather than writing because they were more enthusiastically involved in activities. This is borne out by pupils who say that they much prefer to make music rather than write about it. Consequently, the shortage of practice rooms and instruments has an adverse impact on pupils' enjoyment of lessons and their progress suffers.
151. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved. The standards that pupils attain have improved since the last inspection as a result of better planning of lessons. The subject is well managed by a capable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the ages of 11 and 13 is average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were average when they joined the school. Boys and girls reach similar standards. Boys and girls reach good standards in competitive sport and gym. Several pupils represent the county; a few individuals compete at regional and national levels.
153. Year 5 pupils, in both cricket and rounders, know and demonstrate good fielding techniques when stopping a ball. In cricket, they know what constitutes a good length ball; a minority of high achieving pupils do this within mini cricket games. They know that in jumping activities a good arm swing improves the distance of the jump. Year 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs, show competence in cricket, rounders and aspects of athletics and they know the relevant rules. In cricket, they know how to hold a cricket bat correctly; high attaining pupils play forward defensive shots with a straight bat successfully. Low attaining pupils do not play down the line of the ball; instead they play cross-batted strokes across the line. In games pupils apply the rules fairly and accept decisions gracefully. They understand the reason for stretching in warm up is to minimise injury. High attaining pupils begin to know the anatomical names of the different muscles, for instance the quadriceps, they use when taking exercise. All pupils in the Years 5 and 6, including those with special needs and dyslexia are fully integrated into lessons and show satisfactory achievement.
154. Year 7 pupils build upon the work in Years 5 and 6. In cricket, pupils know, and many demonstrate, that good use of footwork is needed when batting in order to be in the best position to strike the ball. They show knowledge of the forward defensive stroke and on and offside drives. High attaining pupils start to have some awareness of simple cricket tactics. By the age of 13 pupils have developed a good understanding of the importance of warm up; in addition to minimising injury, learnt in Years 5 and 6, they know that warm up helps to improve athletic performance. When triple jumping the majority of Year 8 pupils achieve the three phases from a standing start; however, only a very small minority achieve the three phases successfully using a run up. Many low attaining pupils are unsuccessful in achieving the rhythm and correct order of the three jumps. In shot putting pupils achieve well; many use a good technique using the legs to give power to the putt. Pupils achieve good length putts when comparisons are made against national scoring schemes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well integrated into lessons and receive good support by teachers and their peers. In all lessons throughout the age range, pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities are well included into lessons and achieve in line with their peers.

155. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in all years. Some good teaching was observed during the inspection as well as one lesson that was unsatisfactory. There were other instances where teaching had some shortcomings. However, the majority of teachers show good knowledge and understanding of physical education. Their knowledge has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. For example, in cricket lessons in Year 7, very good knowledge of cricket linked with good diagnosis and fault correction challenges pupils, extending their skills of the forward defensive shot. In most lessons expectations were sufficiently high to ensure good behaviour and that pupils acquire and consolidate the skills being learned. Pupils work satisfactorily, showing interest and good concentration in physical education. Good questioning by teachers reinforces pupils' knowledge and understanding. For instance, during a Year 8 lesson the teacher probes and challenges pupils' knowledge of shot putting successfully. However, in a very small minority of lessons, insufficient challenge and pace constrain progress within the lesson, as seen in Year 7 and 8 rounders lessons. At times, some teachers use limited teaching methods, which constrains the active involvement of pupils in their learning; for instance, in a Year 8 triple jumping lesson. At times, there are also insufficient activities and tasks to meet the needs of the whole range of pupils in the class. Teachers make successful use of information from individual educational plans in order to adapt their teaching strategies to meet a pupil's individual needs. Overall, pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to the subject support teaching.
156. Good use is made of the facilities so that pupils receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum with the exception of swimming in Years 5 and 6. This means that the Key Stage 2 curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. With this exception the curriculum embraces the changes made by the curriculum 2000 update and assessment is coming into line with changes. Improved use of information and communication technology is needed in order to analyse assessment data. Literacy and numeracy support the physical education programme. The subject offers a good and varied range of seasonal extra-curricular activities for all pupils; about one third of the pupils participate and this enhances the curriculum. Team representations and displays in dance give opportunities for pupils to be suitably challenged and extended. The monitoring of teaching is undertaken within the subject by the subject co-ordinator. Further development of regular and systematic monitoring of teaching is needed in order to share good practice and focus on improved pupil outcomes. Reporting to parents needs greater consistency.
157. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection and many of the issues have been addressed. The standards of teaching have improved and as a consequence learning has also improved. Curriculum and assessment have been updated to be in line with curriculum 2000; as swimming does not form part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum it fails to meet statutory requirements. Better use of teaching methods, extended and improved analysis of assessments will assist further development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment at the age of 11 is below the standard expected in the Agreed Syllabus. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average when they joined the school. The standard of attainment of pupils at the age of 13 is average and this represents a good level of achievement for these pupils, whose levels of attainment were below average at the age of 11. Boys and girls are making similar progress. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 and 8, with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, is good.
159. Pupils at the age of 11 have investigated elements of the major world faiths, including holy books such as the Qur'an, the Torah and the Bible. Detail is limited however, and there is little opportunity for first hand investigation. Pupils' books indicate some knowledge of festivals such as Hanukkah and Diwali, although little understanding of the reasons for them is shown. Pupils consider briefly the lives of great religious leaders and teachers, and consider examples of the use of story in religious teaching, such as the parable of the 'Good Samaritan'. They re-tell the story in a modern setting indicating that they understand its use and meaning. Pupils in Year 6 consider the creation stories, however their understanding is reduced by the emphasis upon the content rather than

understanding in some classes. Opportunities for pupils to discuss and enquire are limited by a lack of confidence among some teachers in their own understanding of the subject. Attainment of pupils is restricted by the lack of homework. As a result lower attaining pupils fail to complete work, and higher attaining pupils do not get the opportunity to develop their ideas independently.

160. Pupils by the age of 13 begin to become familiar with the involvement of religious belief in the lives of believers. They investigate some 'Rites of Passage' from birth to death, such as baptism and weddings, and they begin to recognise the importance of marking such stages in life with the use of ceremonial. They do not fully recognise the significance of the events to a believer, as was demonstrated by a pupil who wrote in a letter describing his bar-mitzvah. Some pupils are given the opportunity to investigate independently and to present their findings as projects, or to the class. Higher attaining pupils make links between these ceremonies however for the majority of pupils identification of the faiths associated with the ceremonies is weak. Pupils investigate the duties associated with belief such as those demonstrated in 'the five pillars of Islam'. Pupils identify the requirements of the Hajj, however their understanding of beliefs associated with these duties is undeveloped.
161. Attainment of older pupils is reduced by a lack of prior knowledge and understanding when they were in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are beginning to demonstrate understanding, but links with earlier work are not readily made. When considering the 'new commandment' presented by Jesus, pupils made links with the laws of Moses only after prompting, and they had difficulties in recalling them. Pupils have a sound understanding of some of the key events of the life of Jesus, however, and they are aware of the variety of explanations that have been suggested for the resurrection. They recognise that opinions may be different yet valid, and they are able to reflect upon their own thoughts and feelings.
162. The attitude and behaviour of pupils overall is good however the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in the lower years is variable. When they have clear tasks that are appropriate for their abilities they are enthusiastic and apply themselves well. Where the purpose of the activity is less clear and the task is mundane, concentration lapses and effort is reduced. A minority of boys demonstrated a lack of consideration for their classmates and teacher. Very good response was observed in a Year 6 class where pupils took part in a 'stilling' exercise designed to focus their thoughts on the wonderful world around them. In Years 7 and 8 the attitudes and behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are quick to respond to questions and respect the opinions of others. Responses and questions that developed from a short discussion of the feelings of Jesus the night before the crucifixion demonstrated thought and sensitivity from boys and girls in Year 8.
163. The quality of teaching is satisfactory for Years 5 and 6 and good for Years 7 and 8. In Years 7 and 8 lessons are carefully planned to enable pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in clear stages. Pupils recognise the progression within the lesson and there is a logical format. Instruction and explanations are very clear and this clarity enables pupils to focus on the key question posed in the lessons objectives. The management of pupils is very good in Year 7 and 8, and the confidence and rapport that the pupils have in their teachers is evident. In Years 7 and 8 however, non-specialist teachers have little experience in the delivery of religious education and their conscientious efforts to deliver the content of the lesson reduce the opportunities for the pupils to explore the meaning behind the content. Lack of background knowledge reduces the confidence of delivery, and the quality of the responses to pupils' queries. There are no opportunities at present for pupils to explore religious centres at first hand. Where the recreation of a 'Langer' within the classroom took place, pupils were enabled to re-enact a festival and in so doing benefit from the social interaction that such occasions create. The restricted size of the subject's main room reduces opportunities for more active learning and discussion. The use of artefacts and display within the classroom extends the experience of the pupils however, and is developing within them a respect for the beliefs and customs of others.
164. The management of religious education in the school is good. The management of the subject has changed since the last inspection, and the co-ordinator has identified areas of weakness and has taken action to resolve them. The schemes of work for Years 7 and 8 have been reviewed, and

forms of assessment are being introduced in line with those suggested in the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are not yet involved in the assessment of their work, and although targets are set in their books, pupils are not always aware of the grades they receive for their work. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory, however there is insufficient time to support teachers in their delivery of unfamiliar material, which results in some inaccuracies, or to enable the sharing of good practice. Information and communication technology is not yet used for investigation or for the delivery of religious education, and the subject has no software or computers. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, and the opportunities for reflection, and consideration of the ultimate questions of life are valuable.

165. The improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards of attainment have improved and teaching is now good in Years 7 and 8. The management of the subject is now good and there is a greater emphasis on understanding in Years 7 and 8.

THE WORK OF THE DYSLEXIA UNIT

166. The Dyslexia Unit is a Local Education Authority provision for eight pupils from across Bedfordshire, and occasionally outside it. Five staff within the unit support a further fifteen pupils with special educational needs, six of whom have statements.

167. Pupils enter the unit with reading ages well below their real ages and with well below average skills in spelling and comprehension, and with low self-esteem. For some, handwriting, too, is difficult. During their time in the unit, pupils' reading ages rise significantly and handwriting becomes more consistent. Pupils learn to remember spellings from week to week, and to improve their comprehension skills. Their awareness of letter sounds is good. For example, a pupil in Year 7 was able to explain the significance of the silent 'e' at the end of words, such as 'wine'. Pupils use computers well to present their sustained writing. In work on 'Me in Ten Years' pupils had drafted their accounts neatly, and older pupils were employing a variety of simple and complex sentences. Over time, these improvements represent an excellent level of achievement.

168. Teaching and learning in the unit are excellent. Staff have excellent knowledge and understanding of how pupils with dyslexia learn. This enables them to choose suitable resources and to plan for a variety of activities to keep pupils interested. As a result, relationships are excellent and pupils develop very good social skills. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are excellent. Because pupils feel valued, they take care with their work. Pupils say how much they enjoy lessons in the unit. All lessons observed were characterised by very good pace, frequent change of activity and a very clear focus on pupils' targets. For example, in a lesson for 12 and 13 year olds, each pupil had an individual learning programme, including the use of computers, word games, books and the whiteboard, to help raise literary skills. All made very significant gains in spelling and reading. Staff know pupils very well, so they build on pupils' strengths and correct weaknesses. This leads to pupils feeling much greater confidence in what they can do, and excellent learning results. The teaching and the learning support assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They encourage independent thinking and help pupils improve their research skills. Consequently, pupils use word lists and computer software with confidence and often without close supervision. Staff make very good use of homework. Pupils are expected to spend about fifteen minutes a night on work, which is very closely linked to lesson content. For example, a Year 7 pupil working on numeracy skills took home a special domino set to help him improve his knowledge of multiplication tables. Parents are supportive of the homework set and communication with the co-ordinator is very good. This helps to build on achievement in lessons and is raising standards very significantly.

169. Provision in the unit is very good. Pupils arriving by taxi begin their day in the unit where staff check they are properly equipped for lessons. This makes for a calm and positive start to the day. Pupils work in small groups, occasionally in one to one situations, but most of the learning is in mainstream classes with support from learning assistants. In mainstream lessons, pupils make good, sometimes very good progress, because of the expertise of the assistants, the very close liaison with subject teachers, and the carefully constructed individual education plans. Pupils

integrate very well at form time. For example, a Year 8 pupil attached to the unit spoke confidently when giving his ideas to the teacher, as a result of a group discussion on cheating. The work of the unit has a very significant effect on pupils' progress across the curriculum. Pupils do not study French and are occasionally withdrawn from other subjects, but unit staff work very hard to ensure pupils participate as fully as possible in the National Curriculum work. Assessment procedures are excellent. Pupils are regularly tested and in-class assessment is frequent. Achievement is well recorded. For example, support assistants keep careful record sheets of how pupils achieve in mainstream lessons. Hence, tracking progress is easy.

170. Leadership and management of the Dyslexia Unit are excellent. Standards have been fully maintained since the last inspection and the staff handbook remains a very informative document. The co-ordinator has considerable expertise in teaching dyslexic pupils and leads by example. She has created an excellent team spirit amongst her staff, where there is very good practice in sharing resources and knowledge. All staff are totally committed to pupils' learning and to their general well being. The co-ordinator monitors the work of the unit very efficiently through regular staff meetings, informal discussions, and reviews of record sheets. She ensures that annual reviews are very well arranged and that targets on individual education plans are regularly updated. She has built up a very good bank of resources and organised the classroom so that it is a welcoming and stimulating place in which pupils learn. The accommodation is well situated in a central position of the main school block and this helps pupils to feel that they are an integral part of the whole school. Statutory requirements of statements are fully met.