

INSPECTION REPORT

WITTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Droitwich Spa

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116779

Headteacher: Mr. D Coll

Reporting inspector: Mr. I. Pratt
13626

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 225008

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 - 12 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Old Coach Road
Droitwich Spa
Worcestershire

Postcode: WR9 8BD

Telephone number: 01905 773362

Fax number: 01905 795474

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr. B. Baker

Date of previous inspection: 23 - 26 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Pratt OIN 13626	Registered inspector	Physical education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements The quality of teaching and learning Leadership and management What should the school do to improve further?
Kenneth Parsons OIN 9756	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Care, support and guidance of pupils Partnership with parents and carers Accommodation
Anne Hogbin OIN 23009	Team inspector	English Geography History	Staffing
Ian Tatchell OIN 27243	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
Vince Leary OIN 23319	Team inspector	Science Music Equality of opportunity	Resources for learning.
Pat Wootten OIN 22654	Team inspector	Religious education Art Design and technology	Learning opportunities
Judith Tolley OIN 17404	Team inspector	French	

The inspection contractor was:

Quality Assurance Associates Ltd.
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset DT2 9PU

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Witton Middle School is a mixed school of larger than average size, serving 535 pupils aged between nine and twelve years of age. Fifty three per cent of pupils are boys and 47 per cent are girls. The school is popular in the area and is oversubscribed every year. Pupils enter the school in the September of the academic year in which they will be ten. Their attainments on entry to the school vary very widely, but overall standards are broadly average for their age.

The school, which is one of two middle deemed primary schools in Droitwich Spa, serves the town and outlying villages. Pupils come from widely differing social and economic backgrounds, but eligibility for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average; most have moderate learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Five pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin, and a very small proportion have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Witton Middle is an effective school. It provides a sound, all-round education for its pupils and serves its community well. In relation to their attainments on entry to the school, the pupils achieve satisfactory standards by the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this promotes learning at a generally good rate. Pupils have good attitudes to work, behave well and attend school regularly. The relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management for the school, which is effective in achieving the targets it sets itself. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall, and this helps the pupils learn at a good rate.
- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher, and the governors and other staff with management responsibilities contribute well to improving the work of the school.
- The school reflects carefully on its strengths and weaknesses, shows a strong commitment to improvement and takes decisive action to raise the standards pupils achieve.
- The pupils' moral and social development is promoted very well, and this results in good attitudes to learning, good behaviour and very good relationships.
- The good opportunities for learning that are provided by the school foster the pupils' learning.
- The school has strong links with the parents, who support the pupils' learning well, both in school and at home.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching of reading does not meet that of writing, and teachers are not as systematic in monitoring and promoting individual progress.
- Standards in art at the end of Key Stage 2 are below the levels expected nationally.
- Assessment information is not used consistently by teachers to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged, and this results in high attaining pupils not attaining the standards of which they are capable.
- The school's intentions for spiritual development of the pupils are not always put into action.

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

This is a school with many significant strengths that heavily outweigh its weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since its last inspection in June 1996. The results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved year-on-year at a rate similar to the national trend. The 'key issues' identified by the last inspection have been tackled in a thorough and systematic way, and this has improved the quality of education provided. The quality of teaching is now good overall, and is more consistent across the subjects of the curriculum. Good progress has been made in monitoring the quality of teaching and the standards attained by pupils, and the information from monitoring is being used well to improve standards. In writing, for example, major changes in teaching brought about an 18 per cent improvement in the proportion

of pupils reaching Level 4 in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Homework is now used well to support the pupils' learning. The school has worked hard to improve its facilities for teaching ICT, and has made satisfactory progress. The library, however, has improved well, and despite the need to increase its book stock still further, it provides a good resource to support the pupils in their learning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	C	C	D	well above average A
mathematics	C	C	C	C	above average B
science	C	C	C	D	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The grades and descriptions used to compare Witton Middle with similar schools, differ from those suggested by OFSTED because more pupils are eligible for free school meals than that reported annually to the Department for Education and Employment. The Registered Inspector has therefore upgraded the results to give a more accurate picture of the standards achieved.

Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds indicate that standards are in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, the results are average in mathematics, but below average in English and science because too few pupils attain the higher levels. Since the last inspection, standards in all three subjects have risen at a rate very similar to the national trend. The results of the last five years show that girls do better than boys in the tests, although no similar pattern was seen in their work in school. The school's targets for improvement in English and mathematics are suitably challenging and are based on the careful monitoring of the pupils' academic performance.

Work seen during the inspection shows that at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above those expected nationally in mathematics and music, and in line with expectations in English, science, ICT, religious education, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Year 6 pupils achieve good standards in French. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, they attain above expected standards in mathematics and French and achieve in line with expectations in other subjects. The exception is in art, where pupils enter the school with below expected standards which are not significantly improved upon as pupils move through the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils like school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; a very large majority of pupils behave well in class and around the school,
Personal development and relationships	Good personal development; pupils show responsible attitudes and usually respect the values and beliefs of others. Relationships between pupils and with adults in the school are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory;

The pupils' positive attitudes to the school create a pleasant atmosphere and purposeful climate for learning. The school is an orderly community, where good and courteous behaviour is the norm, although a few pupils,

mainly boys, are at times thoughtless when moving around the school. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities given to them and respond in a mature and sensible manner. They show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others on most occasions, but occasionally respond in a disrespectful way when studying cultures other than their own.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 9 - 11 years	aged 11 - 12
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 is good overall and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has decreased significantly since the last inspection. The inconsistencies in teaching, noted by the last inspection, have been very largely eliminated due to improved monitoring of teachers' work and developments in teaching strategies, such as those used in the literacy and numeracy hours. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons, good or better in 70 per cent of lessons and very good in 21 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory or worse in 4 per cent of lessons. Teaching is good in mathematics, religious education, French, geography, history and physical education, and it is very good in music. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English, science, ICT, art and design and technology. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily overall. The teaching of writing is good because teachers assess the pupils regularly and are clear about what pupils need to do next in order to improve. They constantly aspire to raise standards in writing. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching reading and speaking and listening is not so precise and they do not constantly assess how pupils are progressing through the National Curriculum levels. Numeracy skills are taught well through many subjects of the curriculum.

In both key stages, teachers show good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and ensure that lessons progress at a lively pace. Their confidence, and the well ordered and organised lessons motivate the pupils to get on with their work quickly, to concentrate and strive to learn what is intended. Learning support staff are deployed to help pupils well, and the quality of their support promotes learning effectively. Lessons have clear learning objectives, but assessment information is not used consistently by teachers to ensure that all pupils, particularly high attainers, are consistently challenged by the work they are given, and this slows the progress that they make.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall; promotes the pupils' learning well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; the quality of support from teachers and teaching assistants is good, enabling the pupils to learn at a good rate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall; good provision for social and moral development, and broadly satisfactory provision for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; the school provides a supportive environment and high standards of care for its pupils. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

The school provides the pupils with good opportunities for learning. French extends the usual curriculum in Year 6 and a good programme of personal, social and health education ensures that these aspects of the pupils' development progress well. A wide range of popular extra-curricular activities enhance and extend the

pupils' learning well. Opportunities for social and moral development are promoted very well through the consistent application of the behaviour policy and the very good role models provided by adults. The school's good intentions for spiritual development are not always met, particularly in religious education and class assemblies. Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainments and monitoring their progress are satisfactory and relevant targets for development are set for each pupil. The school is making good progress in analysing its performance, and taking action to improve standards when necessary. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are effective. The school has effective links with the parents and provides them with good information about the school. Reports on children's progress are barely satisfactory; many lack detail about what pupils can do and the progress they have made.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher provides very good and effective all-round leadership and management for the school, and is ably supported by senior managers and co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; the governors support the school well, and are fully involved in planning, monitoring and evaluating its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is good, enabling it to identify accurately its strengths and weaknesses and take decisive action.
The strategic use of resources	Good; the school allocates resources effectively and efficiently, ensuring that its priorities are suitably supported with funds.

The headteacher gives the school very clear educational direction, focused on improving standards and the quality of education. The governors are very supportive of the school, and their role in its management is good. The work of the school is monitored rigorously, and action is taken to improve if required. Financial planning and monitoring are good, and the very effective work of the school administrative staff ensures that goods are purchased at highly competitive rates. All of the non-teaching staff make a very valuable contribution to the day-to-day running of the school and the maintenance of its warm, friendly atmosphere. The site manager, supported by the cleaning staff, works tirelessly to provide the best possible environment for learning. The school has a satisfactory quantity of teachers, support staff and resources for learning. The accommodation is very good; facilities for science, ICT, physical education, music, design and technology and the library promote learning well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils like the school and progress well. • The good quality of the teaching. • The good behaviour of pupils. • The expectations of pupils to work hard. • The good leadership and management. • The way the school helps the pupils to be responsible and mature • The school can be approached if parents have questions or problems. • The good range of extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information about how their child is getting on. • The quality and consistency of homework provided. • The way the school works with parents.

The inspection findings strongly agree with parents' positive views about the school. Inspection findings support parents' concerns about the information they receive about how their child is getting on. Many reports do not provide enough information on how children are actually progressing, and there are few specific targets for future

development. The inspectors disagree with the concerns of a few parents about homework, which is found to be set with reasonable consistency and contributes well to the pupils' learning. Inspectors also feel that the school makes every effort to work closely with parents, who are always welcome in school to help or discuss their children's development.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils enter the school in Year 5, in the September of the academic year in which they will be ten years old. Their attainments on entry to the school vary very widely, but overall standards are broadly average for their age, except in art where standards are below expectations.
2. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, show that standards broadly meet the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the results are average in mathematics, but below average in English and science. This is because the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 is below average in English and science. Since the last inspection, standards in all three subjects have risen at a rate similar to the national trend.
3. The school's targets for improvement in English and mathematics over the next two years are suitably challenging and are realistic, being based on the careful monitoring of the pupils' academic performance.
4. Work seen during the inspection indicates that at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, standards are above those expected for pupils of this age in mathematics and music, and they achieve good standards in French. The pupils attain standards that are broadly typical for their age in English, science, ICT, design and technology, geography, history, music, religious education and physical education. Standards are below expectations in art. Standards remain low in art because the systematic teaching of basic skills is not sufficiently strong, and because of insufficient opportunities for pupils to be creative.
5. Overall, the pupils achieve satisfactorily in response to the good teaching they receive and their positive attitudes to learning. With the large proportion of good or better teaching in the school, it might well be expected that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 should be higher. This anomaly occurs because improved teaching has not been in place long enough to have a positive effect on standards within all subjects. An additional factor is that the level of challenge provided for high attaining pupils is not always consistent, and this results in these pupils not attaining the standards of which they are capable. In mathematics, however, the quality of teaching is consistently good because it provides challenging work for pupils of all attainment levels, including high attainers, and this leads to above expected standards.
6. Pupils with special educational needs, who receive support in lessons or who are taught in smaller groups, make good progress and achieve well because of the good quality support they receive from teachers, classroom assistants and volunteers. They reach levels of attainment which are often below the levels of attainment for pupils of their age, but which still relate well to their ability level. Boys and girls attain broadly similar standards.
7. Standards in literacy are broadly in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 due to the recent implementation of the literacy strategy which has brought about improved curriculum planning and teaching. Literacy standards are promoted well across the subjects of the curriculum. Writing is used effectively in many subjects. Skills in independent research, such as using books, the Internet and CD-ROMs, are developing well. Numeracy skills are promoted effectively in science, design and technology and geography, through the use of measuring, recording data in tables and the production of graphs. The mental mathematics sessions within numeracy lessons are promoting the quick recall of number facts, and are giving the pupils increased confidence in manipulating numbers in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils have a good and positive attitude to their education. They enjoy going to school and are ready to start work when the school day commences. During the day they move between classes in an orderly manner without wasting time. They are keen to learn and are attentive and conscientious in lessons. This positive attitude is encouraged by the good quality of teaching pupils experience in most lessons and contributes significantly towards their learning. During well-taught lessons, they sustain interest in their studies and are keen to participate through answering questions. For example, a low attaining Year 5 mathematics group were keen to discuss their findings on the probability of different numbers coming up

when rolling a die. They work well in small groups, as in a Year 6 history lesson, which involved them working together to draw evidence from a film on Victorian schooling. They participate fully in making suggestions and listen carefully to points put forward by others. Pupils settle promptly to written work and are able to work in silence when required to do so. They respond positively to teachers who have high expectations of them in both work and behaviour, but in the few instances where teaching is less satisfactory, they lose interest and work less effectively. The good level of support received by pupils with special educational needs contributes to the positive attitudes they often display in lessons. When working in small groups with the support of a teacher or learning assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions.

9. Pupils behave well and are aware of the school's high expectations. This means that teachers spend little time in maintaining order, and can therefore use the available time productively to further pupils' learning. Pupils usually behave well at breaktimes, and the playground is an unthreatening environment. During the inspection, a succession of wet playtimes and lunchtimes stretched pupils' tolerance of being inside all the time, and most responded in a mature manner. Behaviour in the dining hall is very acceptable, and in the classrooms at lunchtime most pupils were engaged in quiet activities, such as reading, talking or playing games. Pupils are normally well mannered and polite. Pupils usually speak politely to each other and to adults. They put into practice the school's ethos of valuing each individual and they understand the impact of their actions on others. Parents are very satisfied with the school's standards of behaviour and believe that it is successful in helping their children develop good attitudes and values. Occasionally Year 7 pupils are boisterous when leaving the building at breaktime, and whilst standards of politeness at such times are not high, it is thoughtless rather than intended behaviour. Bullying was not raised as an issue by pupils or parents, and none was seen during the inspection; it is a rare occurrence in the school. However, there have been a number of fixed term exclusions of pupils, the most recent being three boys excluded during the inspection week for an incident involving a knife. This was an exceptional incident and is not seen to be typical of standards in the school; it is not at all a threatening environment.
10. Pupils' personal development is good. The school has satisfactory opportunities for them to take responsibility, examples being, the small team of pupils who volunteered to pick up litter and others helping set up laboratory equipment, but this is an area where the school could provide more opportunities. Pupils are capable of carrying out tasks without needing adults to give them detailed direction, for example, setting up classroom furniture for specific lessons without any need for teachers to intervene. Their personal confidence is well developed, as displayed in a Year 7 French lesson, where a number of boys were clearly inhibited at speaking the language, but nevertheless were prepared to make an attempt, with positive support from their classmates. Pupils' capacity to reflect upon their own feelings and discuss their experiences is very well developed for their age. When they are given the opportunity, they are able to assess their own work sensibly and to say what they need to do to improve.
11. Relationships within the school are very good and pupils in most classes respect their teacher. In most classes, there is a productive relationship between the class teacher and the pupils, with year team leaders also providing a useful additional relationship with an adult on occasions. Pupils work well collaboratively with each other in pairs or small groups when called upon to do so. They listen and give due regard to the views of others, even when they are different from their own, and are supportive of one another. In a Year 7 lesson on personal, social and health education, several pupils were confident enough to relate their own experiences and response to family break-up and divorce to the class. They did this in a very mature and thoughtful way without inhibitions about their classmates' response. However, in a Year 6 lesson on Sikhism, pupils did not show respect for that culture's music. They play well together. Boys and girls work together unselfconsciously. Pupils look after the school's property, use equipment sensibly and are trusted by teachers to use resources and facilities with minimum levels of supervision.
12. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, being in line with the national average for a school of this type. There are few unauthorised absences recorded in the attendance registers, and the overall figures are acceptable. Most pupils are punctual arriving at school and do not delay the start of the class period. There are significant numbers of family holidays taken in termtime despite the school's efforts to discourage the practice.
13. Standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been maintained at the good level reported by the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good overall, and the consistency of teaching across the subjects of the curriculum has improved well since the last inspection. In addition, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced significantly. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons, good or better in 70 per cent of lessons and very good in 21 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons, all at Key Stage 2. These few lessons had significant weaknesses in the level of challenge provided for the pupils. In art, for example, pupils were provided very simple colouring tasks and provided almost no opportunity to be creative.
15. With such a large proportion of good or better teaching, it is surprising that levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 are not higher. This is because improved teaching, brought about by improved monitoring and the development of teachers' skills, is a relatively recent occurrence and has not been in place long enough to have a positive effect on standards within all subjects. In mathematics, good teaching leads to above expected standards because the learning needs of all pupils, including high attainers, are catered for thoroughly. Standards in most subjects are adversely affected by inconsistencies in the level of challenge provided for high attaining pupils, who are sometimes provided with suitably stretching work, but not always. In English, whilst the teaching of writing is good, reading and speaking and listening are not taught in such a systematic and thorough way.
16. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and returning the questionnaire expressed considerable satisfaction with the quality of teaching that their children receive. A few questioned the consistency with which high attaining pupils are challenged and some were critical about the contribution of homework to children's learning. The inspection findings support their positive views, and their concerns about high attaining pupils. Inspectors disagree with their views about homework, finding it to be used well on most occasions.
17. Teachers settle their classes quickly and have clear and suitably high expectations of the pupils' behaviour. In a large majority of lessons, the good management and organisation of the pupils results in little time being lost, because most pupils are motivated to learn, concentrate well and maintain interest in their work. Expectations of the standards that pupils will achieve are satisfactory overall, but for high attaining pupils, teachers do not always expect enough. This is partly because information from ongoing assessment and annual testing is not used as well as it might be, to guide teachers in setting work to enable pupils to make their next step in learning.
18. Teachers use effective methods and strategies in lessons. For example, many numeracy lessons start with a lively mental mathematics session, which engages all pupils in answering questions, memorising facts and practising their numeracy skills. This regular and interesting work improves their confidence in handling number well. Other effective methods used across the curriculum are, clear explanations, timely demonstrations, and good use of the board to organise ideas. Teachers use whole class teaching very effectively in most subjects.
19. The quality of the teachers' planning is consistently good. Teachers are clear about what they expect the pupils to learn, and invariably share this information with the pupils. This stimulates the pupils' interest, enables them to understand what they are trying to achieve and motivates them to learn what is intended. In the best lessons, teachers refer back to their intended learning objectives both during and at the end of the lesson, enabling the pupils to understand how much they have learned, and what they still need to learn.
20. The day-to-day assessment of pupils' recorded work is satisfactory. Work is regularly marked and teachers frequently provide pupils with constructive written comments that enable them to understand what they have done well and how to improve.
21. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and this, linked with their enthusiasm, results in interesting and lively lessons, in which pupils are eager to learn, and make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skill.
22. The quality of teaching is very good in music and is good overall in mathematics, religious education, French, geography, history and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English, science, ICT and design and technology.

23. The teaching of literacy is effective. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy successfully, and well-planned lessons that focus on writing are improving standards significantly. The teaching of reading has not benefited from the attention paid to writing, and whilst satisfactory has considerable scope for improvement. Literacy is taught satisfactorily across the subjects of the curriculum, The teaching of numeracy is also effective. The school has implemented all parts of the National Numeracy Strategy, and the quick-fire questions and other mental mathematics tasks are particularly effective in helping to give the pupils more confidence with numbers. Numeracy skills are developed and used well in science, geography and design and technology.
24. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. Sessions are well planned, resources are effectively used and lessons move at a brisk pace so that much is achieved. Tasks are challenging and are matched to the ability of the pupils. Staff build up a good relationship with these pupils and, by gentle encouragement, take every opportunity to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In classes, pupils with special educational needs receive support and suitably modified work where appropriate.

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

25. The curriculum is broad and balanced and overall meets statutory requirements. French is taught in Key Stage 2 as well as Key Stage 3, which is over and above these requirements. All subjects are well supported with sound policy statements and schemes of work, but a few such as art and design and design and technology have not been updated to comply with the new National Curriculum 2000. Religious education is taught in accordance with the Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus. Time allocated to subjects is appropriate, and overall time for lessons is well above the recommended minimum for Key Stage 2 and slightly above for Key Stage 3.
26. The curricular needs of pupils identified through the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are well met. Pupils are successfully integrated and the timing of additional teaching support is carefully linked to class timetables to provide benefit. This works particularly well during literacy and numeracy hours, and is very efficient use of the special educational needs teacher and learning support assistants. Pupils' individual education plans set specific, achievable and appropriate targets for development, and these guide teachers well in setting work that is well matched to the needs of individual pupils. The pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and continuing assessment is good.
27. There are effective strategies for teaching literacy skills throughout the school through the implementation of the literacy hour, and opportunities for developing literacy are provided across the curriculum. Strategies for teaching numeracy are good, and opportunities for developing these skills are provided within many subjects, such as geography and science. Pupils are taught in groups according to their attainment level in some subjects. This grouping is used effectively across year groups for literacy and numeracy, and this enables work to be closely matched to pupils' abilities, thereby challenging them to move on to the next stage of learning well. This strategy works well overall. However, across the full range of subjects, the curriculum is not always sufficiently challenging to ensure that high attaining pupils make the best possible progress, and in some lessons the curriculum being taught does not build on what the pupils already know and can do. Information and communications technology is being used well to support some subjects, such as research in history, but there is need for a more coherent planned approach in subjects such as art and design technology where the use of new technology is underdeveloped.
28. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits in the local area to places such as the local churches for religious education, the River Malvern and further afield to Weston-super-Mare, as part of the geographical study of a contrasting locality. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in residential visits to places such Cleobury Mortimer, or go to France to experience at first hand the language and culture they have studied in school. A good range of popular extra curricular activities further enhances the curriculum. Activities include a Caribbean steel band and many other cultural activities such as choir, art club and school productions. Sporting opportunities, such as football, netball, rugby and gymnastics, as well as computer studies, all extend the curriculum and contribute well to the pupils' learning, standards and social development. The overall quality and range of learning experiences are good.
29. The school is an inclusive community and all pupils have full equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education. A well-planned personal, social and health education programme is further strengthened by drug education, which is taught

by the police youth officer through the 'STAR' programme, and sex education, which is mostly taught through the science curriculum.

30. Sound use is made of the local community to support learning. Twenty or so volunteers visit regularly and listen to pupils read, and visitors from local churches and religious organisations are on a rota to lead school assemblies. In the past, teachers have gained much from spending short periods of time in local businesses, and this has enriched the curriculum on their return to school; such as the time spent by a teacher visiting the local newspaper which then impacted on literacy lessons. In ICT, the pupils' opportunities for learning have benefited from community links, and computer equipment has recently been acquired through business sponsorships. The school has very good links with feeder first schools and the high school. There are regularly reviewed curriculum agreements to ensure that units of work are not repeated. Receiving staff make visits to talk to current teachers and pupils also make familiarisation visits. Transfer procedures and documentation provide for smooth transfer from feeder first schools and on to the receiving high school, a feature much appreciated by parents.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

31. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is sound overall, with some significant strengths and some areas for further development. The senior management team has a strong commitment to spiritual development, but the aspirations set out in documentation are yet to be fully realised. However, many opportunities are provided for pupils to experience awe and wonder through visits to places of beauty or of special interest such as the Millennium Dome, and to take part in uplifting occasions such as the massed choir festival. The school has clear expectations that pupils will be provided with opportunities for reflection, exploration of inner feelings and response to matters which puzzle them. In religious education lessons and collective worship, however, this is not always the case. Some good opportunities are provided, such as in a class assembly when pupils were asked to reflect on the Christmas experienced by a very deprived pupil, and when the tragic death of a young boy was discussed. In religious education, the emphasis is on learning facts about religion. Planning for spiritual development across the curriculum needs to be further developed. Currently many opportunities are not recognised or developed, and although the school makes broadly satisfactory provision for collective worship, some class acts of collective worship make little or no contribution to spiritual development.
32. Provision for moral development is good. The pupils develop a very clear understanding of right and wrong through the 'Witton Way' code of conduct, which also fosters behaviour and mutual respect. Care, courtesy and consideration are reflected in the attitudes of almost all staff and pupils, and the very good relationships within the school develop as a result. Provision for social development is also good. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons, and they do so harmoniously. A good example of this was seen in design technology lesson involving the use of hot wax and irons, when pupils needed to collaborate throughout. Residential visits to places such as Cleobury Mortimer enable pupils to learn co-operation and take responsibility for tasks which impact on or benefit the whole class. A 'school council' has recently been set up, and pupils feel that they have a voice in school improvement issues. The school takes part in sporting fixtures and many other activities involving other schools such as choir festivals. Some pupils are chosen to be monitors on the buses or in school, and this enables them to contribute to the general life of the school. There are, however, limited opportunities for pupils to take the initiative and additional responsibilities for the older pupils are limited in number.
33. Provision for pupils to gain understanding about their local culture is good. Pupils take part in art and music festivals, carry out local studies in history and geography and gain much from visiting theatre groups and artists in residence, such as the rag artist and blacksmith. Religious education makes a good contribution to the development of respect for other people's beliefs and knowledge about world faiths such as Judaism and Islam. The study of artists such as Mondrian and Picasso, and the work of famous musicians, all serve to strengthen provision. However, the provision is under-developed for pupils to learn about the different cultures and traditions represented in nearby cities and elsewhere in this country, but not in the immediate environment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school provides a supportive environment and high standards of care for its pupils. Its procedures for child protection are good. The assistant headteacher is responsible for the school's provision and she liaises as necessary with the local social services department. Staff are made aware of their child protection responsibilities, although there is room to make this process more formal. The school keeps detailed records on pupils where there are particular causes for concern. Pupils are given guidance on how to protect themselves through the personal, social and health education curriculum. Appropriate health and safety procedures are in place. The governors take their responsibilities seriously and have an overview of the school's provision. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, although this process would benefit from more formal documentation. Routine safety procedures are all in place. Good safety practice was seen in lessons during the inspection, with pupils given reminders of safe practice when necessary.
35. The school has a satisfactory set of procedures to monitor pupils' attainment and progress. The school uses the results from statutory and optional National Curriculum tests, plus Cognitive Ability Tests to track pupils' attainment against their individual potential, and uses the results to set individual targets. Procedures for assessing the pupils' ongoing development vary between individual subjects, making it difficult to generalise. The best practice is in maths, where there are tests at the end of each module of work. The results of these are used to track pupils' progress and to highlight to staff when the curriculum planning needs to be modified, for example, if pupils have not fully learnt a particular concept. The maths co-ordinator collates pupils' results and then feeds back the conclusions to other teachers, which ensures consistent action. Results also inform decisions about allocating pupils to appropriate ability teaching groups. In English, there is evidence that the use of assessment, closely linked to National Curriculum expectations, has helped to raise standards in writing, but in reading, assessment and record keeping is limited. In science assessment is less developmental, but is used to help set pupil targets. Assessment in ICT is limited. Assessment procedures vary within the foundation subjects, although most are sound. In art, there are targets for individual pupils; whilst in geography and history there is too little monitoring of skills development. Overall, there is a lot of effort being put into assessment with some good practice being used to develop curriculum planning and to help individual pupils. There is the opportunity for the best practice to be extended through the school. Monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs is effective. Pupils progress is carefully monitored, regular reviews take place and information from ongoing assessments is used appropriately to form targets for future improvement. Recording systems for pupils with special needs provide a useful overview of pupils progress.
36. The school makes good provision for the personal support and guidance of pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and treat them as individuals. Although there is some formal record keeping, monitoring of pupils' personal development is largely informal, with all pupils known to their class teacher. Liaison with other members of staff teaching pupils for specific subjects is effective to ensure that class teachers have an overall picture. Year team leaders and senior managers provide additional support for staff and pupils when there are particular problems. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support within the school, from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively.
37. The school has generally satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance. Registers are completed efficiently and the results analysed using the school's computer system. The procedure used to follow up absences is satisfactory, and the schools Education Welfare Officer visits regularly and follows up any specific issues.
38. The school's procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are good. The whole school community is aware of the rewards and sanctions and how they will be applied, although the good standard of behaviour achieved owes as much to the school's overall ethos as it does to more formal approaches. The pupils are involved in developing individual class rules. The varied certificates awarded to individuals who have performed well are valued by the recipients. The school has an appropriate section on its approach to bullying within the behaviour policy, and any incidents are dealt with well. The involvement of year heads provides good support for class teachers and is effective in supporting pupils who have difficulties in behaving well.

39. The good quality of the school's support and guidance for its pupils has been maintained since the last inspection, and contributes well to the standards they achieve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. A relatively small proportion of parents took the opportunities available to them to express their views, with about a third of families returning the parents' questionnaire and only 13, or about two per cent of those eligible, attending the parents' meeting. A very high proportion of parents are pleased with the quality and effectiveness of the education the school provides for their children. They believe that their children like school, make good progress, are helped to become mature and behave well at school. They think the teaching is good, with staff having high expectations of the pupils. Parents generally think that the school keeps them well informed and that it works well with parents. They believe the school is well led. A relatively small minority of parents expressed reservations about homework, and about the school keeping the parents well informed and working well with them. Overall parents' views of the school are good.
41. The school provides a good range of information for parents. It starts before the children have joined the school, with good induction procedures for pupils and their parents to make the transition from first schools as stress-free as possible. This is followed up after pupils have joined the school with the opportunity for two meetings a year. Although the school has a good document to advise staff on the writing of reports, the results do not always reflect it in practice. The written reports on pupil progress are barely satisfactory. Most do not provide enough information on how children are actually progressing, information about curriculum coverage is limited, and pupils of widely differing attainment can receive reports that read very similarly. Parents do not get a clear picture of how their child is performing from these reports, and few contain specific targets for future development; most are very vague. Parents are kept well informed of school events through newsletters. The prospectus and Governors' Annual Reports are both well written, and exceptionally, all parents receive a new prospectus each year. Each pupil has a diary in which homework is recorded, and which provide parents with useful information. There is a space for parents to sign and whilst they are regularly reviewed by teachers, there is only occasional evidence of them being used for genuine two-way communication between school and home.
42. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement but it has had no impact on the school. Parents support their children very well by helping with homework, including in many cases hearing them read on a regular basis. Parents feel that they can contact the school with any problems or suggestions and that they will be listened to. A number of parents help in school and in support of school trips. There is an active school association, which organises social and fundraising events. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review; contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have access to class teachers, who have good communications with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This maintains a steady flow of information.
43. The good quality of the partnership with parents has been maintained since the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The quality of management and leadership in the school as a whole is good and the strengths identified in the last inspection report have been maintained. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has improved particularly well. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership for the school, and is supported well by other staff in posts of responsibility, such as the assistant headteacher, heads of year and subject team leaders. The headteacher has been very successful in establishing a clear educational direction for the school that is firmly focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education provided. Staff and governors share the headteacher's vision for the school and this creates a sense of cohesion and purpose in their work. The school achieves a large degree of success in meeting its declared aims.
45. The governors, and the headteacher responded very positively to the last inspection report, and have made good progress in improving the areas of the school that were deemed to have weaknesses. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved year-on-year at a rate similar to the national trend. The quality of teaching is now good overall and is more consistent in quality across the subjects of the curriculum. In addition, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced markedly. Much of the improvement in

teaching has resulted from significant developments in monitoring, evaluation and development of teachers' work in the classroom. Improved teaching has had a positive impact on standards in mathematics where all pupils achieve well, but has not been in place long enough to raise standards overall in English or in science. In writing, however, good monitoring of standards and teaching led to major changes in the way the subject is taught, and this in turn brought about an 18 per cent improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Homework is now used well on most occasions to support the pupils' learning. The school has made satisfactory improvements in its facilities and resources for teaching ICT. It is continuing to develop these resources, and the opportunities for the pupils to use them in their learning. Good improvements have been made to the library, and despite the need to further improve its stock of books, and it now provides a good resource for pupils to support their learning.

46. Strategic planning for school development is good. Staff and governors are fully involved in identifying the school's priorities for development, and increasingly, data from the assessment of pupils' performance is being used to pinpoint aspects of the school's work that needs improvement. In this way, the school is highly self evaluative of its work and is able to take decisive action to bring about improvements. An example of such analysis resulted in successful action being taken to improve writing standards during the last academic year.
47. Curriculum leaders and other teachers who co-ordinate the work of the school, such as assessment, and special educational needs, carry out their roles effectively, and make a good contribution to the continuing improvements in the school. They play an active part in developing their curriculum areas, and have opportunities to carry out some monitoring of teaching and pupils' work. The monitoring role is best developed in literacy and numeracy, where valuable support from the Local Education Authority specialists has helped the smooth introduction of the school's literacy and numeracy strategy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well.
48. The Governing Body is highly supportive of the work of the school. Frequent visits, regular attendance at meetings and the supply of a considerable amount of information enables them to understand clearly the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and take a full role in shaping its educational direction. Governors are suitably involved in development and budget planning processes.
49. The quality of financial planning is good, and the funds received by the school, including specific grants are used effectively to promote good learning and a good quality of education overall. The school's priorities are supported well by the provision of funds, for example, the development of facilities for teaching ICT, music and design and technology. The headteacher and governors closely monitor the school's spending against the planned budget. The school aims each year to spend all of its funding for the benefit of the pupils currently at the school, and succeeds in doing so through its diligent monitoring of spending. Contingency funds, identified at the start of each financial year are used up by the end of the year, by bringing forward projects from within the three year development plan. Through the highly effective work of the school administrative staff, the school purchases its goods at highly competitive rates, and the governors also monitor the quality of services supplied to the school to ensure that value for money is obtained. In these ways the school applies the principles of 'best value'. The school makes good use of new technology in its administration. All of the non-teaching staff, make a very valuable contribution to the day-to-day running of the school and the maintenance of its warm, friendly and purposeful atmosphere. The site manager, supported by the cleaning staff, works tirelessly to provide the best possible environment for learning.
50. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. The number, qualifications and experience of staff match the needs of the curriculum and allows the school to run smoothly. It is a happy staff with no pattern of illness or turnover beyond that usually found. The level of staffing enables pupils to be grouped by prior attainment for literacy and numeracy, with some small group teaching for pupils with special educational needs. There is an experienced special needs co-ordinator and sufficient trained staff to work with pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The previous report highlighted the need for extra support staff. The new librarian and computer technician are already playing a significant part in raising standards across the curriculum, whilst extra office staff underpin the day-to-day efficiency of management. All staff are clear about the management structure of the school which, through the year group leader system, provides informal but effective support for teachers new to the school. There are currently no newly qualified teachers, but the approved system is in place for when there are. Supply teachers are well supported through printed information sheets and by year group leaders. All teachers enhance their skills through professional development linked to the schools priorities for improvement.

Recently this has been raising standards in writing, as was seen in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2.

51. Quite reasonably, staff appraisal has been suspended at present whilst the procedures for performance management are introduced. The school is in a good position to introduce performance management of teaching staff.
52. The school's accommodation is one of its strengths. The history of the buildings, which were originally designed to house a secondary school, means that the school is exceptionally well provided with specialist teaching rooms when compared with a typical middle school. The availability of these facilities has a very positive effect, in particular on the teaching of science, physical education, ICT and design technology. The school has built on this legacy by creating a very good room for its library, addressing a criticism in the last inspection. In addition, space has been created to allow effective delivery of ICT and for the use of computers in support of other subjects. In addition to specialist ICT rooms, another large room in the Year 7 building is laid out as a regular classroom, but with an ICT suite to one side, allowing an ideal combination of facilities for certain types of lessons that combine both whole class teaching with individual use of computers. Most classrooms are sufficiently large, although some Year 5 rooms are quite small for the 30 pupils they contain. Wall displays enhance the learning environment, but opportunities to celebrate pupils' work are not always taken. In this aspect the school tends to reflect the more formal approach of a secondary school rather than the sort of displays often seen in the Year 5 and 6 rooms and corridors of a typical primary school.
53. The school has the advantage of a large grass playing field for outdoor games when the weather permits. The playground was partly flooded at the time of the inspection, but even in more normal circumstances it provides very little space for the number of pupils it accommodates, making it almost impossible for pupils to organise any active space-demanding games at lunchtimes.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In their work to further raise standards and improve the quality of education at the school, the governors and staff should now consider the following key issues, which relate to the areas for improvement identified in the report paragraphs shown: **(To be inserted in final draft)**

- Improve the quality of teaching of reading so that it matches the good teaching seen in writing lessons by: (paragraphs: 23, 58, 60)
 - developing more systematic and refined assessment procedures, so that teachers know exactly what pupils can do and what they need to do next in order to improve their standard of reading;
 - ensure that assessment relates to National Curriculum levels of attainment, and inform pupils of what they need to be able to do in order to gain higher levels, as the school already does in writing;
 - using assessment information to provide pupils, particularly high attainers, with suitably challenging work;
- Raise standards in art at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 by: (paragraphs: 1, 4, 78, 79,80,81)
 - reducing the amount of time spent on colouring and increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop compositional skills;
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to experiment with a range of media;
 - systematically teach skills of painting, drawing, perspective and proportion.
- Raise the standards of high attaining pupils by: (paragraphs: 2, 5, 15, 17, 27, 55, 71, 75, 90, 91, 92, 99, 122,)
 - ensuring that assessment information is used consistently by teachers to match work accurately to pupils' learning needs, so that they reach the standards of which they are capable;
- Ensure that the school's intentions for spiritual development are consistently put into action. (paragraphs: 31, 123)

Other points to consider for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- Develop the teaching of speaking and listening skills, in line with the quality already achieved in the teaching of writing; (paragraphs: 15, 57, 60)
- Continue to develop resources and opportunities for learning in ICT; (paragraphs: 45, 104, 106)
- Develop procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainments in ICT; (paragraphs: 35, 105)
- Improve the quality of pupils' annual reports, by providing more detail about what pupils know, understand and can do, the progress they have made and precise targets for development; (paragraphs: 41)
- Improve opportunities for pupils to study, understand and appreciate the wide range of cultural diversity present in Britain today. (paragraphs: 11, 33)

* Already identified in the school development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	99
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	49	26	3	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	Nursery	Y5 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		535
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y5 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		132

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.25
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	96	84	180

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	72	72	83
	Girls	69	63	74
	Total	141	135	157
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (75)	75 (75)	87 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	63	72	80
	Girls	66	63	68
	Total	129	135	148
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (76)	76 (79)	83 (80)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	534
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 - Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	7.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	919415
Total expenditure	932367
Expenditure per pupil	1734
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-12952

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Number of questionnaires sent out:	535
Number of questionnaires returned:	190
Percentage return	36

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes the school	46	48	5	0	1
My child is making good progress in school	33	58	6	0	3
Behaviour in school is good	34	59	1	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	23	61	11	3	3
The teaching is good	37	57	1	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	23	54	17	1	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems	53	39	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	53	44	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents	25	51	16	1	6
The school is well led and managed	46	46	1	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	38	56	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	34	55	8	1	2

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

ENGLISH

55. Standards in English are average throughout the school, and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7 they achieve standards typical for their age. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests show that at the end of Key Stage 2 standards are comparable with those found nationally but are below the average of similar schools. Boys and girls have similar patterns of achievement as shown in national results. Standards have gradually improved since the previous inspection, keeping pace with rising national standards. However, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above in the tests has not kept pace. From an above average number of pupils achieving at this level at the time of the previous inspection, there are now fewer pupils doing so than are found either nationally or in similar schools. Work seen during the inspection confirms these results.
56. Pupils enter the school with standards in English broadly in line with the national expectations, although the standard of their writing and spelling is below expectations. During the last year the school has successfully focused its attention on raising writing standards, and this has resulted in an 18 per cent increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected standard at the end of Year 6 in the 2000 national tests.
57. Standards of speaking and listening are typical for the age of the pupils, and they make a satisfactory progress in developing these skills as they move through the school. Whilst there is no specific curriculum to develop speaking and listening or to assess the standards they achieve, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills. Year 5 pupils speak confidently about books they have read and explain the feelings of characters in them. They listen carefully to instructions, such as the need to underline titles and how to present their work neatly. Year 6 pupils use questions well to help them understand their work more clearly. For example, when looking at a shared class text projected on a screen, they ask about the punctuation marks such as brackets and dashes, and about the meaning of new words, and they listen well to the explanation. Year 7 pupils listen carefully to video information about the presentation of Shakespearean plays at the Globe Theatre. This enables them to have an informed discussion about what it would have been like to be part of the audience from the differing perspectives of a nobleman or citizen. Most pupils adapt their speech well for different audiences and speak 'standard English' confidently. Throughout the school pupils enjoy reading plays, taking part in role-play and working in groups, using their listening and speaking skills well as effective team members. The standard of pupils' speaking and listening ensures that they make the most of the teaching and learning opportunities they are given.
58. The standards pupils reach in reading are satisfactory. The school successfully helps an increasing number of pupils to reach the expected standard at the end of Year 6, through providing small group tuition and through the system of regularly reading graded books to volunteer helpers. Many pupils on the register of special educational needs make very good progress through very effective small group teaching and individual support. However, because there is no focused strategy in place to move pupils from being average to above average readers, insufficient pupils achieve highly. By the end of Year 6, most pupils respond to a range of texts as diverse as modern poetry and Shakespeare's plays. They show an understanding of the most significant ideas, themes, events and characters, and are beginning to extract both literal and inferred meanings from the text. Pupils use non fiction texts well and employ skills of skimming and scanning for information, such as when finding out about aspects of Victorian school life. They know how to find library books using the Dewey System, and use the new library effectively to support their learning and their unfolding enjoyment of books. They continue to build on these skills, and by the end of Year 7 the majority of pupils reads fluently, with understanding and good expression, at a sufficiently high standard to read widely for pleasure and information. Average standard readers are beginning to look more deeply into the text rather than just getting the gist of the story or the bare bones of information, through the newly introduced system of guided reading, and their standards are rising. Pupils are not yet sufficiently proficient at using computers and CD-ROMs to find and read non-fiction text, as they do not have sufficient opportunities to do so, although Year 7 are beginning to use the London weather centre information text in geography. Throughout the school, pupils have a good knowledge of different forms of writing such as diaries, autobiographies and accounts. They have favourite authors such as J. K. Rowling, Jackie Wilson and Roald Dahl, and confidently talk about the type of books they enjoy reading. However, pupils with lower standards of reading do not enjoy reading books for pleasure very much, partly because they cannot find sufficient interesting books for their reading standard, either fiction or non fiction.

59. Writing is mainly sound, signifying good achievement for the majority of pupils who enter the school with below expected standards. Standards within the school are rising fast due to very focused, good quality teaching. All pupils produce good handwriting using pen, and levels of presentation in books are good. Pupils distinguish between the first draft attempts in their rough books, where content is important, and show improvements towards the correctly punctuated and formal writing style for the final copy. Spelling is becoming better, with pupils making a great effort to learn the words they most need to use. The majority are keen to do well in their weekly spelling tests and willingly turn to dictionaries and thesauruses when appropriate. Pupils write in a variety of different styles, such as autobiography, verse and play scripts. They use bullet points effectively for note taking from videos in history, and write precisely when recording science experiments. The most able eleven-year-olds write well. They have a good knowledge of writing structures and punctuation, such as when to use brackets and dashes. They write in a variety of different styles using language precisely and for best effect, and effectively take the style of well-known authors as their model. In a top set in Year 6, pupils who had read an extract from Adrian Mole's Diary wrote an entry in the same style, but as another member of the family. They constantly considered whether their language would amuse the reader, and many did. More able pupils in Year 7 have a clear understanding of what they need to do to reach even higher levels of writing and many achieve very well. For example, pupils writing a newspaper style report of the killing of Julius Caesar by Brutus use graphic vocabulary and a range of sentence structures that engage the reader completely. An increasing percentage of pupils are achieving these higher levels, but not yet as many as the national picture. The average and above average attainers have most of the writing skills they need in all lessons, but a minority of pupils do not and rely on their teacher or classroom assistant for personal support or simplified writing tasks. All pupils are starting to use word processing effectively to extend their writing skills.
60. In the main, pupils' achievements parallel the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although the quality of teaching of writing is good. Of the lessons seen during the inspection three quarters of teaching was good and of this, a quarter was very good. The small group teaching and support from classroom assistants for low attaining pupils is effective in raising their standards. However, nine per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils in these lessons did not learn enough. Although lessons contain all elements of the English Programme of Study, the focus is currently on writing. All teachers have had recent training in raising standards in writing, are clear of the stages of progression in pupils' learning and constantly aspire to raise standards for all levels of ability. They regularly assess whether pupils are making sufficient progress through the National Curriculum levels in order to plan future lessons. Consequently pupils are achieving well in writing. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching reading and speaking and listening is not so precise, and they do not constantly assess how pupils are progressing through the National Curriculum levels. Therefore, standards are not rising so quickly as in writing. Very good teaching was seen in the top sets of Years 6 and 7 where there was a terrific challenge in the tasks set and a cracking pace to the lesson. Pupils in Year 7 are given precise instructions on how to lift their standards, and this motivates them to work hard to improve their work. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils made insufficient progress either because of ineffective behaviour management or where the lesson had been insufficiently planned. In the good teaching, it is noticeable that all teachers use questioning well, both to assess what pupils already know or to help them to think more deeply. They insist that proper terms for language are used and encourage pupils to use descriptive words accurately. The ends of literacy lessons are used effectively to encourage pupils to identify what they have learnt and to think about what to do next. Teachers use homework well to extend classroom learning, whether it is to learn specific spellings, find information from books or finish a piece of writing. All teachers ensure key learning points from literacy sessions are strengthened and practised in other curriculum areas. For example, Year 6 pupils write booklets about a river outside Britain as an extended library and homework project that involves both reading and different forms of writing. Teachers use the library well to teach research skills, and foster a love of stories with their classes. In the vast majority of classes the good relationships teachers forge with pupils enables a climate of purposeful learning to take place. Teachers set individual literacy targets with pupils to raise their standards.
61. Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual educational plans that are followed carefully and which results in good teaching which is well focused. One very good lesson was observed in Year 6. Eight pupils worked with a teacher and two support assistants to make their sentences more interesting. The high adult pupil ratio and a clear idea of what was expected, combined with praise for effort, resulted in pupils behaving very well and making a very good effort to improve, and this lead to good learning. Despite this good teaching, their literacy skills are still below the expectations for their age and they need constant support and understanding in the classroom to read and write in other subjects.

62. The management of English is good. The setting arrangements across the year groups fosters effective learning because work is mainly well matched to the differing learning needs of pupils. The two co-ordinators have a clear vision to improve standards, and have a realistic view of the strengths and areas to develop. During their short tenure they have worked closely with the assessment co-ordinator to interpret the data collected from pupils' tests in order to monitor and raise standards. Assessment data has been used well to create and implement the detailed planning, assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in writing, and this has already had spectacular results in raising standards. When areas for development are pinpointed by the analysis of data or by the monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinators or headteacher, effective use is made of support from the Local Education Authority, who work with the school to provide professional staff development. The co-ordinators have draft development plans to raise the standards in reading and speaking and listening, and will be discussing these with the rest of the staff before implementing. The co-ordinators have worked very closely with the Parents' Association who have funded the library to make it an effective learning environment. However, levels of resourcing are at a basic minimum due to budgetary restraint. Pupils complain that in such a large school it is difficult to get to read the most popular books, and class teachers have to photocopy pages from books needed for the Literacy Hour, as insufficient copies are available. Where sufficient books are available for guided reading, as in Year 7, pupils are making good progress. Whilst some books are available through the schools library service to augment stock, this is insufficient to have permanent classroom displays for access and interest, and topic books have to be passed from class to class. The large numbers of pupils borrowing individual books results in books becoming tatty quickly and in need of replacement. The school librarian makes a valuable contribution to repairing them and works hard to make the library system run smoothly. In order to increase stock parents, governors and co-ordinators have formed a committee to find extra areas of funding. Pupils' interest and appreciation of English are enhanced by visits to the theatre and by actors such as the English Shakespeare Company visiting school.

MATHEMATICS

63. The results in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 showed at the end of Key Stage 2 that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining high standards, Level 5, is also average. The trend over the last three years is one of steady improvement. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Work seen during the inspection shows that at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have made good progress and that their attainment is above average. This good progress is continued into Key Stage 3 and at the end of Year 7, pupils' attainment remains above that expected for pupils of this age. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils' numeracy skills are sufficiently well developed for their work in science, geography, design and technology and ICT, and in turn these subjects reinforce numeracy skills well.
64. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 solve problems involving numbers and quantities based on real life money using one or more steps, including calculating Value Added Tax. One Year 6 class successfully used their knowledge of shapes and co-ordinates to reposition and draw shapes after reflection. Their knowledge of number facts is good, including square numbers. They have effective strategies for adding, multiplying and subtracting three or more numbers mentally. Most pupils readily convert vulgar fractions into decimal fractions and percentages, and solve problems such as 40 per cent of £60 in their heads. Pupils know how to calculate area and perimeter. They identify reflective and rotational symmetry, and know the characteristics of shapes. Pupils in Year 5 identify describe and draw common 2D shapes such as triangles and rectangles variously orientated on grids. Pupils know which is the most appropriate type of graph to use in different circumstances and can construct bar graphs to record the number and colour of all the sweets in a box.
65. Pupils in Year 7 use their knowledge of mathematics to solve problems involving fractions and percentages to investigate a range of information about pupils in the school, for example, the most popular breakfast cereals, and illustrate this information as a pie chart using ICT. They use this knowledge of number facts and patterns to recognise and extend number sequences; explaining their strategies using the overhead projector. High attaining pupils understand the concept of a 'function machine' to illustrate simple and multifunction operations in generating number sequences, and use letters to represent known numbers or variables. In explaining and using their knowledge of number facts, pupils demonstrate well the good progress they have made since Year 5. They can use calculators to check their results and are making good use of ICT to represent and interpret data from secondary sources.
66. Pupils make good progress because of the effective teaching of a good scheme of work linked to the national numeracy strategy, and their good attitudes towards the subject. Teaching pupils in ability groups helps both the higher and lower attaining pupils make good progress because teachers consistently set work that is well

matched to the attainment level of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of their detailed individual education plans and the additional support provided.

67. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and work very hard in lessons. They enjoy the challenges set and respond well to their teachers. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. Teachers' good class management skills are reflected in the very good behaviour and co-operation of all pupils.
68. At both key stages teaching and learning are good, and occasionally very good. High quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the subject and to achieve standards, which at the higher levels, are above national averages. These standards are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and apply the principles of the National Numeracy strategy. Lesson plans focus on what pupils are expected to learn, and in the best lessons this is shared with them. The teaching of mathematical concepts is clearly explained and used well, as seen for example in a Year 6 lesson in which negative numbers were introduced in the context of co-ordinates. Expectations of behaviour and attainment are high, and many tasks, such as work on algebra in Year 7 and data handling in Year 5 are really challenging. Teachers assess pupils' learning during the lesson and through the use of regular tests. Relationships are positive and in the best lessons pupils are encouraged to produce work of a high standard which is rewarded by teacher encouragement and supportive comments in pupils' workbooks.
69. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. There is a good scheme of work which helps teachers effectively in their planning, which is often amended as a result of pupils' assessment and formal review. Assessment procedures are good and data from assessment is effectively used to modify the curriculum. Numeracy is developing well within other subjects such as ICT and geography, and plans to develop this further are appropriate. Effective support is given to the development of pupils' literacy skills through the use of mathematical vocabulary and the good use of question and answer sessions.
70. The department is well managed by the co-ordinator, who provides good support for all staff. Regular curriculum meetings and reviews of teaching and learning take place. There are good resources for the subject which are well used, although insufficient use is made of ICT in lessons. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

71. By the age of eleven, most pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 show that that standards are broadly in line with the national average but below the average for similar schools. Average proportions of pupils reach the expected Level 4 but fewer than average reach the higher Level 5. Over the past three years, results confirm that the school is maintaining the expected levels of attainment nationally, but is not challenging sufficiently its more able pupils to reach higher levels. The school is aware of this and in order to raise standards, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, the school is placing more emphasis on investigative work. Targets are set to increase the percentage of pupils attaining the required level at the end of the key stage, and the forecast is realistic. Pupils in Key Stage 3 reach the expected level of attainment in this subject.
72. In work seen during the inspection, attainments are broadly average. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have at least satisfactory and often good scientific knowledge and skills. They are most confident in their understanding of life processes related to plants, animals and humans. They know about the best types of soil for plant growth. They use keys to classify information quickly and accurately. They are competent at recording their findings and make good use of vocabulary. For example, texture is described as 'wet, spongy and damp'. Most show a sound understanding of materials and know they can be classified as solids, liquids and gases, and understand about reversible and irreversible changes. The development of these skills is strongly rooted in investigative experiences. They follow a standard method for conducting experiments; they make predictions and test their findings to see if they are correct. For example when finding out that condensation is when a gas turns into a liquid, Year 5 pupils are able to predict and explain that boiling water changes into water vapour and that when it comes into contact with a cold surface the process is reversed. Many pupils relate their learning to everyday life. For example, they discussed how evaporation and condensation take place in their homes. They understand how to make a test 'fair', for example, when investigating questions on evaporation, most pupils knew that you keep everything identical and only test one variable. Pupils know that sound is a vibration. They draw accurate diagrams to show the structure of the ear and describe its main functions correctly.

73. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Year 7. By the time they leave school, they have a sound grounding in the range of scientific knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. They carry out practical activities that are effective in helping them to develop their understanding of scientific enquiry, and learn about the world around them. The majority of pupils understand that there is a variety of ways of purifying substances and that dissolving, filtering and evaporation are the main methods. They understand distillation as a process used for separating a liquid into various parts. They gain insight into acids and alkalis and know that Litmus is an indicator whose colour varies with the acidity or alkalinity of the solution in which it is placed. They know that pH value is used as measure of acidity of a solution and how knowledge of acids and alkalis impacts on their everyday life, for example, in remedies for indigestion. Pupils understand the rudiments of electrical circuits, including the use of standard symbols when drawing circuit diagrams. Pupils make good use of their literacy and mathematical skills when writing up reports of experiments. However, higher attaining pupils are not making the same progress as other pupils as they are not sufficiently challenged. Their work shows little evidence of opportunities for pupils to pursue their own independent enquiries.
74. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages and occasionally teaching is very good. The effect of this is to provide pupils with a satisfactory quality of learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of the science curriculum. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary and explain tasks well. The teaching of investigative skills is now being given a high priority. This is impacting on pupils' learning as they are looking for evidence when investigating and most pupils are tightly focused on the tasks they are given. Teachers' planning for lessons is detailed and effectively covers the range of knowledge and understanding required at both key stages. Teachers' planning show clear and attainable objectives, and most share these objectives with the pupils. Consequently, pupils understand the purpose behind the work and recognise its relevance. Teachers' explanations are clear. In the more effective teaching there is use of analogy to clarify difficult concepts. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on circuits, the teacher likened resistors to turnstiles that effect crowd flow and mobility, and then linking it to light-bulbs and the flow of electrons. This improves the quality of pupils' learning and gives them a clear illustration of the concept. Often teachers make very effective use of teaching resources, as in Year 6 classes where the teachers organised a wide range of suitable investigative activities to good effect in developing pupils understanding of sounds. Classroom and laboratory assistants are well briefed and provide good support for all pupils.
75. Although teaching has many strengths, some weaknesses occur throughout the school. Examination of pupils' work shows that teachers do not always plan sufficiently for the needs of all pupils. The same work is generally set for pupils across the classes regardless of ability. Identification of pupils' prior attainment is not sufficiently taken into account when planning lessons. On occasions, teachers rely too heavily on the completion of the planned module of work. This is effective in developing most pupils' knowledge of the subject, but it does not always present sufficient challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils. In some lessons the teachers talk too much and give insufficient time or encouragement for pupils to explain what they think might happen or investigate why predictions and experiments that went wrong. Opportunities for pupils to work independently are a developing feature.
76. Pupils are interested in their work. In the better lessons they work hard and there is a buzz of excitement and interest in many of the practical sessions. Pupils spoken to said "science is enjoyable as we like investigating and enjoy the practical work". Consequently, pupils behave well and work co-operatively with others. In all lessons a striking feature is the way the pupils collaborate and support each other's learning. For example, pupils in Year 7, when working in groups, sensibly shared the tasks of assembling electrical circuits and discussed the writing up of the experiment.
77. Since the last inspection, the coordinator has introduced government recommended guidelines for teaching in Years 5 and 6. Planning, both long and medium term, is now consistent in this key stage. The curriculum for Key Stage 3 is being revised to match the requirements of the 2000 National Curriculum. An organisational strategy that is effective is the setting for higher attainers and using specialist staff to teach them. However, the good quality assessment data available, needs to be used more efficiently to provide a more challenging curriculum for the higher attainers. Pupils receive a balanced science curriculum with a strong emphasis on investigative work, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning and their attitude to the subject. The coordinator now monitors teaching and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection. Resources are satisfactory. These are improvements since the previous report. Safety is a strong feature of all practical lessons.

ART

78. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave the school are below expectations. Some pupils attain in line with expectations and some exceed this level but not enough pupils reach these levels. This indicates a fall in standards since the last inspection when standards at Key Stage 2 were a little above the national expectations, and in line at the end of Year 7. It is important to note that the standards of many pupils on entry to school are below and in some instances well below expectations, particularly in observational drawing and painting. Although many pupils make satisfactory progress in learning at Key Stage 2 not enough pupils make good progress. In Key Stage 3 progress overall is satisfactory although there are too few higher attainers.
79. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have some knowledge and understanding of artists studied and have produced some broadly satisfactory work based on Mondrian. In Year 7 there is evidence of some satisfactory work in pastel based on Picasso. However, other work reflected in sketch books and seen in lessons is not at the expected level. Pupils' work on silhouettes is restricted by the task itself and is of a standard associated with much younger pupils. Introductory lessons seen related to art nouveau indicate lack of experience in working with pastels and paint. Observational drawing of people and faces and the use of paint to illustrate perspective in Year 7 is generally immature. Pupils use paint tentatively and many do not hold or use brushes properly. Some scrub the paint into the paper and many have difficulty controlling the flow of thinned paint. Pupils are unsure about which pencils are best to produce tone, and many draw what they think they see rather than what they actually see. In figure drawing they have great difficulty with proportionality. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils.
80. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and this indicates a fall in standards since the last inspection. In Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory at best and is sometimes unsatisfactory or poor. In Key Stage 3 teaching is satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was seen. Features of good lessons include good subject knowledge, high expectations of concentration and effort, challenging questions and good pointers for improvement in homework and in lessons. There is also a strong focus on building on previous skills, as a result of which pupils try hard and concentrate well, making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Poor teaching occurred where the lesson was focused on task completion within a rigid framework, when pupils were over-directed and opportunities for creativity restricted; the pace was slow and the emphasis was on 'colouring in' using a colour dictated by the teacher. Despite the lack of challenge and slow pace in some lessons most pupils behave well and listen to their teachers. They concentrate, try hard and use resources sensibly. However, a few achieve very little in the time available and have a casual attitude towards their work because of the lack of challenge they are provided.
81. The previous inspection commented that there was 'too much reliance on colouring in printed pictures when pupils should be encouraged to provide their own drawings'. This is still in evidence, and pupils' compositional skills are not well developed. A great deal of time is wasted in colouring in instead of exploring and experimenting with a range of media. Some of the lessons are over-directed and the emphasis is on completing set tasks rather than developing skills and applying them in different contexts. In some lessons there is insufficient emphasis on pupils working with quality when learning or applying new techniques. As a result pupils do not strive to improve.
82. The curriculum is currently being reviewed to bring it into line with the 2000 National Curriculum. Currently the scheme of work is detailed and provides a sound range of learning opportunities across the key stages. However, some of the modules are over directed and have limited opportunities for pupils to explore and experiment, and the planned progression of skills is not sufficiently explicit. Older pupils enjoy attending art club and the school makes good use of visiting artists and craftsmen such as, a rag artist and a blacksmith. A satisfactory range of western artists such as Mondrian, Monet, and Picasso are studied and this contributes effectively to pupils' cultural and spiritual development, but insufficient emphasis is placed on non-western art. The school has addressed the weakness in the previous inspection report and now provides a satisfactory range of experiences in three dimensions such as the ceramic work linked to Clarice Cliff.
83. The subject leader provides overall effective leadership and has worked hard to set up assessment procedures which include regularly levelling pupils' work and setting targets for improvement. She is concerned about the overall standard of work and is committed to raising standards by revising the curriculum to include clearer skill progression and more opportunities for pupils to explore and investigate using a range of resources. However, she has little impact on the quality of teaching and learning because of the lack of time for

monitoring. She is an active member of the local schools' art teachers group, and helps to organise biannual art festivals and a programme of visiting artists, all of which enrich pupils' learning experiences. Resources are adequate but not easily accessible, and this hinders pupils taking responsibility for preparation and clearing away. In overall terms, because of the fall in standards, the subject has not improved satisfactorily since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. No lessons were being taught in Year 6 during the inspection, therefore judgments are based on scrutiny of work through photographs, examples of work completed previously and pupils' notebooks. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave the school are in line with expectations, although standards could be higher still. The use of ICT in design and technology is below expectations. This indicates a slight fall in standards in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection when standards were judged to be 'generally good'. In lessons, pupils make sound progress, although some of the tasks lack challenge for higher attainers and are related more to art and design rather than design and technology.
85. In Year 6 pupils have a good grasp of the design process; they understand the need to carry out research and the concept that products need to be fit for purpose. They understand that designs and finished products have to meet a variety of needs. Notebooks show that pupils are able to plan appropriately and some use is made of annotated drawings to support the planning process. This is however an area that needs further development. Pupils use their understanding of familiar products when designing their own and personal research is a strong feature of design. Pupils' end of module evaluations show that they are able to reflect on what worked well and what needs to be improved. However, ongoing evaluation leading to redesigning or modification of original plans is not evident. Finishing products to a high standard is not a strong point. In Year 7 pupils build on what they already know and explore materials such as acrylic to design and make an attractive key fob for a teenager. They use pneumatics to create movement, and art and design techniques such as batik before using an electric sewing machine to assemble components to create a wall hanging suitable for a young child.
86. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and some good teaching was seen in both key stages. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and this is an improvement on the last inspection. Where good teaching is observed in Key Stage 2, teachers make the best of the prescribed tasks and create challenges through questioning about the design and making process. In Key Stage 3, high expectations of pupils' concentration and effort and giving pupils responsibility for their own learning are features of good teaching. As a result of this, pupils are totally absorbed in their learning and do not want the lesson to end. Less satisfactory teaching is seen when pupils queue to learn new skills such as threading needles. As a result of good teaching, pupils show very positive attitudes towards the subject, and this leads to at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are enthusiastic and 'can't wait to get started', as was seen in one Year 5 lesson when they were designing Christmas cards. They are keen to talk about what they most enjoy as well as that which they find difficult. The previous inspection stated that, 'Over direction in some tasks leads to missed opportunities for pupils to develop their own thinking and plan their own work'. This is still evident in the range and uniform size of materials available, for example, when making Christmas cards, cam mechanisms and wall hangings. Teachers provide good opportunities for social development. Pupils are expected to work together, share resources sensibly and help each other, and they do this well.
87. The curriculum is about to be reviewed to take account of National Curriculum 2000 and to integrate ICT, which is not used sufficiently in the design process or to control mechanisms. Overall, a sound range of experiences is planned for, and the curriculum is broad and balanced. The current scheme of work and medium term planning provides a secure framework across the key stages for non-specialist teachers, but does not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils because of over-direction and limitations on materials. There is insufficient emphasis on investigation and choice of materials, and links with other subjects such as science and art and design have not been sufficiently explored. There is also a need to focus more on finishing products to a high standard. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and tasks are appropriately adapted through extra support. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed appropriately, such as in the learning of new vocabulary and the use of measurement.
88. The co-ordinator provides secure leadership. She is well informed and committed to further development of the subject. She has worked hard to develop effective assessment based on moderated levels and this is beginning to impact on progress. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and of standards is unsatisfactory because of the lack of time available. Accommodation is good and there is sufficient space for

several work stations for different techniques such as hot wax and dye to be used safely. Resources are satisfactory but not easily accessible which makes freedom of choice difficult and inhibits creativity.

FRENCH

89. Standards achieved in French by the time pupils leave the school are above average. The good quality of teaching and pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning result in pupils making good progress.
90. Pupils in both Years 6 and 7 respond appropriately to familiar questions and instructions in French. They identify the main points from texts and short extracts of speech at normal speed with some repetition, and high attaining pupils identify detail and interpret some more complex instructions for others. Year 6 pupils label objects accurately, match print with meaning and have a good foundation to build on particularly in listening skills. In Year 7, pupils describe events simply in past and present tense using set phrases, substituting words to change meaning and write short accounts, following a model. They take part in dialogues, participate confidently in songs and games, and gather information using prepared scripts or written prompts. However, there is little evidence of pupils using the language creatively in speech or writing, and the majority place undue dependence upon written prompts; as a result, pronunciation is sometimes adversely affected and they are not confident in dealing with language at variance with phrases they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs and low attaining pupils achieve well in relation to their ability, however, although the majority achieve above average standards particularly in reading, writing and listening, high attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve their full potential. Listening, reading and writing skills are well developed but speaking is less secure; pupils are confident in prepared situations but are hesitant and uncertain in using the language independently of prompts or notes.
91. The quality of teaching is usually good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers use French to conduct activities and for routine instructions, matching the language used well to pupils' experience and capabilities; this is effective in reinforcing learning and developing listening skills. There are effective checking mechanisms, which ensure all pupils understand. Pupils are usually given the opportunity to practise informally in pairs, and as a result they increase their confidence in speaking. In many lessons, however pairwork activities are limited to rehearsal. Pupils make rapid progress when they are required to use the language to gather or give information, for example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils increased in confidence and competence in speaking and listening when they conducted a survey and recorded their results. Good use is made of games and songs to reinforce learning; pupils display enjoyment and enthusiasm and make rapid progress during these kinds of activities. Pupils with special needs are well supported by materials used to aid their understanding, and by the effective monitoring and intervention of teachers. Objectives are clear and are shared with pupils, and as a result, they understand what they are going to learn, are interested and well motivated. Pupils are very well behaved, listen attentively and concentrate on tasks set. Progress and pace slows and pupils become restless and lose concentration when teacher-led activities dominate and when pupils do not have the opportunity to participate themselves. Lessons are well planned with appropriate and well sequenced activities ensuring that pupils build successfully on previous learning, however, this is not always the case with high attaining pupils who are not given consistently challenging work to enable them to achieve their best work. The presentation of new language in its written form leads to pupils experiencing difficulty in recognising it in context and in a lack of confidence in speaking tasks.
92. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of the way forward in the subject, to raise standards and the quality of education provided. Appropriate priorities have been identified, such as the development of ICT to support and develop pupils' learning. Good liaison with the high school ensures continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. Since the last inspection standards have improved and the department now works well as a team to develop and evaluate the success of teaching strategies. New course materials have been successfully introduced and assessment procedures developed. However, there is still scope to develop the use of assessment to challenge high attainers and improve standards further, particularly in speaking and listening and responding. Timetable arrangements lead to inefficiencies in the use of accommodation; teachers have to move around the school and this severely limits the range and variety of learning opportunities provided, and means that the French language and culture cannot be effectively reinforced or exploited through classroom displays.

GEOGRAPHY

93. Taking into account three lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers planning, discussions with pupils in Years 6 and 7 and looking at this term's work in books, evidence shows standards are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. The pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their attainments on entry to the school. Pupils' learning has good depth, and work in books is very neat. Standards of pupils' achievements, teaching and the curriculum have improved well since the previous inspection
94. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their local environment. Year 5 pupils map routes around the school, use large-scale maps of nearby roads to investigate the different types of housing and identify different places in the locality from photographs. They draw maps and plans on the computer, explain how man affects his environment detrimentally and express possible solutions such as more use of public transport. They know that there are economies, climates, physical features and lifestyles different from England, and with reference to their study of St. Lucia in the Caribbean, give examples to compare and contrast the two places in geographical terms. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Year 6 pupils have a good level of knowledge of rivers, both about their geographical features and of how settlements and industries are created around them. They contrast the environment of Weston-super-Mare with Droitwich Spa, and record their findings from first hand observations and interviews in tables and graphs on the computer, which enhances their work in numeracy and ICT well. Year 7 pupils use the Internet and television weather forecast bulletins well to find out about different types of weather and forecasting, linked with daily weather patterns locally and nationally. They make good use of satellite pictures from the London Weather Centre, and have a good knowledge of different aspects of climate such as depressions and cyclones. Although throughout the school pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding within the different units of work they study, their knowledge is fragmented because there is insufficient curriculum linkage or teaching reference between present and past learning. Pupils have insufficient knowledge of where places are, other than those they have particularly studied.
95. All teaching is consistently good and a third is very good. Consequently, pupils learn well. This is a great improvement since the previous inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory, some teachers had insecure geographical subject knowledge, much work had limited challenge and no use was made of ICT. Current teaching is rooted in giving pupils first hand experiences wherever possible, and in building both skills and knowledge together. This makes geography relevant and meaningful for pupils, engages their interest and has the added benefit of promoting their social development. For example, pupils work co-operatively in groups on a visit to Eastnor to map the flow and depth of a brook and consider how the Diglis Dock area of Worcester could be developed for the community following an information gathering trip there. Where it is not possible to provide first hand experiences and to give extra insight, teachers use videos well to extend pupils understanding. Teachers ensure pupils use the computer as a means of communicating their findings. However, whilst Key Stage 3 pupils are taught how to access stored information on the computer, Key Stage 2 pupils do not use either CD ROMs or the Internet for research, and consequently their skill in doing so is underdeveloped. In Year 7, an example of very good teaching was seen. The method of linking information from a current television weather forecast with detailed information from the London Weather Centre web site resulted in pupils having a very clear understanding of what weather was expected in the next twenty four hours across the British Isles and the reason for it. This was further enhanced by the computer support assistant using his expert knowledge of weather and the need for accurate forecasting gained from his hobby of sailing, to add to pupils' understanding. The pupils were totally engrossed in their research and made very good progress in their understanding of climate. Teachers' subject knowledge is now good. They make visits with the co-ordinator before taking the pupils on field trips, to ensure they fully understand the geographical potential of a location. Teachers assess what their pupils have learnt at the end of each unit of work, but do not quantify this in terms of National Curriculum levels, nor do they check what geographical skills have been mastered. Consequently, there is no evidence of the rate of pupils' progress or that they achieve expected national levels. All teachers give good thought to adapting their teaching to meet the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs, using classroom assistants and modified work sheets to enable them to make similar progress to the rest of the class. The high attaining pupils are challenged at a suitable level through being expected to use more reasoning in their answers to questions. Homework is used well to extend pupils classroom learning.
96. The leadership and management of geography are good. The co-ordinator has addressed all the areas highlighted in the last inspection report as needing improvement, and has successfully raised standards. Through observing lessons and looking at pupils' work she has identified the need to improve assessment to include skills and National Curriculum levels, and realises pupils' general geographical knowledge of where places are is weak. The co-ordinator feels strongly that an appreciation of the sustainability of the

environment and pupils' responsibilities within this should be addressed, and is planning to weave this into the curriculum. Although there are sufficient resources for geography there is a need to replace atlases that are out of date.

HISTORY

97. The pupils' standards in history are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, and they achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their abilities. Standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.
98. Year 7 pupils add a considerable depth of knowledge about the most important dates, people and events of the Roman civilisation to their earlier historical learning. High attaining pupils realise the same event can be reported differently depending on the bias of the reporter. In studying two contemporary accounts of Julius Caesar, they are able to unravel fact from bias, which demonstrates a good level of historical enquiry skills. All pupils understand the different levels of government within the Roman republic. They know about their inventions such as aqueducts and central heating, and have carried out their own extended project about a chosen aspect of Roman life. Key Stage 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Tudors and Victorians. They have satisfactory historical enquiry skills and effectively use evidence from books, worksheets, videos, first hand accounts and artefacts. Year 5 pupils know the Tudor family tree and some aspects of everyday living conditions. Through a visit to The Commandery in Worcester, they have experienced wearing clothing of the period, making candles from beeswax and writing with a quill pen. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge of social conditions in the period they are studying, and how this compares with their own lives. For example, Year 6 pupils talk confidently about Victorian houses, schools and child labour, saying whether they would have preferred to live then or now. Many pupils say they would have liked to learn their letter sounds using a slate or sand tray. Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of key historical dates and people is less strong as is their knowledge of history of the wider world or ancient civilisations. Although some pupils find information using a computer at home, this area of pupils' learning is unsatisfactory in both key stages, as until very recently they have not had the opportunity to develop this skill at school.
99. The quality of teaching is good in all lessons and in almost a half of the lessons observed it was very good. Consequently, pupils learn well. The very good teaching was in Year 6. Teachers make history interesting and employ a good variety of methods to gain pupils' interest and give them first hand experiences, for example, pretending to be a strict Victorian schoolma'm complete with cane and checking hands for cleanliness, insisting on ramrod straight backs and demanding the saying of tables by rote. Teachers are enthusiastic, and this attitude is caught by the pupils who become keen to learn and fascinated by what they are finding out. Their interest has a positive impact on their learning, shown through their questions and comments. Because they are engaged by the teaching, their behaviour is good which allows lessons to remain focused. Teachers plan individual lessons well to ensure pupils make good gains in their understanding of what everyday life was like for different levels of society. However, there is less emphasis on teaching dates and covering the lives, events and changes across a period, or in linking different periods. Consequently, pupils' attainment in this area is weaker. Where lessons are not so effective, the pace of learning slips because teachers do not match work to the different levels of pupils' prior attainment within the class. For example, the lower attaining pupils in Year 7 became disinterested in detecting bias in different accounts as it was too difficult a concept for them and the text was beyond their reading comprehension level. In another lesson, cutting and pasting worksheets about Roman government failed to capture the imagination of the high attaining pupils who lost concentration as the work was too easy. Homework is used effectively to extend classroom learning. All teachers give good thought to adapting their teaching to meet the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs. They use classroom assistants and modified work sheets to enable these pupils to make similar progress to the rest of the class. Teachers test pupils at the ends of different topics to see what they have remembered. However, they do not assess the standards pupils attain in comparison with National Curriculum attainment levels, neither do they assess their levels of historical skills. Consequently, there is no clear view of the rate of pupils' progress or of national standards achieved.
100. The leadership and management of history are good. Through monitoring pupils' achievements by looking at a selection of books from each class, planning the schemes of work across the school and observing lessons, the co-ordinator has a clear view of both the strengths and areas that need developing within history. She has identified the need to ensure there is a progressive acquisition of historical skills across the different units of work and to improve assessment. She has promoted better teaching and learning through

improving the curriculum in line with recent national guidance, extending the range of resources and arranged their storage for easy accessibility, and introduced ICT within history this term. In line with the schools priorities to raise literacy standards, particularly in writing, the co-ordinator has identified different types of writing that can be produced through history, from note taking to eye witness accounts, and has included these into the school's programme of study. Pupils' reading skills are enhanced well by using factual books used for research. History makes a good impact on pupils' personal development, especially in gaining an appreciation of what makes European society what it is today. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

101. Since the previous inspection there has been an improvement in the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, and now standards are broadly in line with national expectations.
102. Pupils make satisfactory progress in ICT. Pupils talk about which information they need and how they can find and use CD-ROM and the Internet to support their work; for example, Year 7 pupils study United Kingdom weather conditions supplied by the Meteorological Office via the Internet as part of a geography module. Standards of assembling, organising and refining ideas using text, tables and graphs are good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produce news sheets with pictures from Clipart, and take care to make their finished work interesting and well presented. Standards in controlling, monitoring and modelling are weaker, however, pupils in Year 6 successfully programme a screen turtle to draw shapes and pictures which are then printed and displayed alongside original designs. Pupils are familiar with computers and most are confident in their use. They demonstrate good prior knowledge and experience of using word processing and desk top publishing; for example, Year 7 pupils produce posters to display in the classroom as part of their personal and social education. They choose different sizes and types of text, they use different colours, highlight words and use a spellchecker. They are familiar with the use of 'wizards' to help them understand aspects of programs, and incorporate pictures from Clipart, the Internet and the digital camera. Pupils' technical vocabulary is satisfactory. In their use of the Internet they can 'log on', search for, retrieve and save information. They understand how to communicate using e-mail. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and use the computer effectively to support their work in literacy and numeracy, improving their basic skills.
103. In the few lessons observed during the period of the inspection teaching was good. Lessons are well planned in conjunction with other aspects of the curriculum; for example, Year 5 pupils produce a news sheet as part of their English. In the best lessons teachers share the learning objectives with pupils so they understand where the lesson is leading. Pupils are interested when they know what they are trying to achieve and show high levels of independence. More able pupils collaborate well with their peers and show a high level of expertise. Many pupils use their home computers and the Internet to research homework projects and produce good work, for example in geography. Most teachers have recently improved their own ICT skills and pupils are benefiting from this improvement in teachers' knowledge and understanding.
104. There are good links with other areas of the curriculum; for example, in a Year 6 lesson links were made with work on shapes in mathematics. In a Year 7 lesson pupils produced temperature and rainfall graphs in their work on contrasting localities using a spreadsheet program. They use word processing to present work in French. Whilst there are several examples of cross-curricular use, ICT generally needs to be used to support pupils' work in all subjects. Pupils make good use of the opportunities to use computers at lunchtime, and many are members of the after school computer club.
105. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection when attainment in ICT in Year 7 was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school now uses the nationally published scheme of work as a basis for its own scheme, and is working towards its full implementation as part of the school development plan. The school has yet to develop assessment procedures to ensure pupils' attainment and progress is regularly recorded and reviewed, although it has plans to do so. All classes are now timetabled to use the two computer suites and can book extra time, a good improvement since the previous inspection.
106. The subject is soundly led by a co-ordinator who has worked hard with the senior management team and staff since the previous inspection to improve resources and standards. Recent and ongoing training in the subject has improved teachers' skills and confidence. The new computers, the full time technician, who is knowledgeable and highly skilled, and the improved scheme of work are having a positive impact on standards, and present good potential for further improvements. The provision of a new suite of computers

has enhanced pupils' learning, particularly Year 7, providing a very good resource within this department. The school has rightly identified as part of the school development plan the replacement of its older computers with new office standard computers.

MUSIC

107. By the age of eleven pupils attain standards which are higher than national expectations. By the end of Year 7, pupils attain standards which are in line with national expectations. This is an improvement on the previous inspection which identified pupils working below expectations in Year 7.
108. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing clearly and in tune. They perform well together in singing practice. They sing songs with changes in pitch, tempo and style. For example, pupils in Year 6, sang a 'patter' song from Gilbert and Sullivan's opera 'The Mikado', with expression and keeping in time. They are actively involved in creating their own music and achieve good standards. In Year 5, working in small groups, the majority of pupils were able, using body movements, keyboards and percussion instruments to develop their own sea-journey compositions. Some are able to assess their compositions independently, refining and improving their initial attempts. For example, building on their knowledge and understanding of the word structures in 'patter songs', many pupils in Year 6, are able to apply this to writing their own version of words to fit a Gilbert and Sullivan melody. Many show an awareness of the relationship between lyrics and melody. They listen to and respond to music from different times and places. They are introduced to Western classical composers, for example, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky and Vivaldi, Afro- Caribbean, South American and music from other traditions. By Year 7, pupils sing songs with good expression, clear diction and improved voice control, appreciating that songs have differences in the rhythm, speed and dynamics. They understand the importance of identifying these elements when performing. They are creating and developing their musical ideas through exploring sounds and creating short compositions. They improvise and most are able to maintain their own part with an awareness of how it contributes to the whole ensemble. For example, pupils were able to maintain a regular pulse whilst adding rhythmic patterns, a few are able to include a simple melodic patterns They select their instruments for their composition work with an awareness of how their choice may improve the quality of the groups composition. Skills are developing in their recording of their work and many are able to represent their music graphically, for example, in their recordings of Victorian music based on 'Song without Words' by Mendelssohn. Music vocabulary is a developing area. A significant number use correctly words such as ritornello, pulse, rhythm and ostinato. Pupils build on their knowledge of instruments and most know a limited range of different combinations such as orchestra, jazz and opera.
109. A significant number of boys and girls, from Years 5 to 7, learn woodwind, strings and brass instruments. There is singing tuition and opportunities to learn the keyboard, guitar and the steel pans, the boys particularly enjoy playing the latter instrument. Their attainment is good. They can sight read formal notation and confidently play their chosen instrument with a degree of competence. The extra-curricular choir, composed mainly of girls, attains high standards. Good numbers of pupils participate in other extra curricular activities such as orchestra, recorders and ensemble. The skills developed by pupils in their instrumental and singing lessons impact on raising standards in their class lessons. These pupils are able to take the lead in the creating and performing aspects of their lessons.
110. Across the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their listening, appraising, composing and performing skills. This is the result of carefully planned lessons and good and exciting teaching.
111. The pupils are well behaved and generally attentive. Their attitude to music, across the key stages, is good. They persevere to improve both their individual and group performances. The pupils are confident when performing in front of an audience, knowing that their contribution is valued. Most pupils enjoy their music activities, singing and playing with great confidence. A good example of this was where two pupils from Year 7 volunteered to sing and play carols as an introduction to a year group assembly. They generally select and handle instruments with care.
112. The overall quality of teaching seen is very good. This is because the teachers are music specialists and use their considerable expertise skilfully and sensitively to develop and extend pupils skills and enjoyment of music. Both teachers are good communicators and excellent practitioners, promoting music as an exciting and worthwhile experience. The teachers use correct musical terms and pupils use these in their discussions. A striking example of teacher's command of their subject is when a teacher explained how

inspiration can originate from body movements. This resulted in pupils, and some with challenging behaviour, using simple rocking movements to aid their creation of 'sea-journey' music. Lessons are well planned with learning objectives and teaching points clearly identified. Pupils' previous knowledge and understanding are used well to develop their performing skills. There is good pace to the lessons and many practical opportunities for pupil involvement. Teachers evaluate skilfully what the pupils are able to do and provide more challenging activities. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils producing group 'pulsation' compositions. Teacher involved pupils in assessing their own and other group performances. This proved to be a very effective strategy which resulted in some pupils refining their performances, and eventually performing their compositions with real skill. Very good relationships with pupils, praise and challenge are key features of the lessons seen. Boys and girl generally work well together, collaborating in the development of their compositions. Homework is provided on a regular basis to consolidate learning. Resources are very well used, resulting in effective practising and development of skills.

113. The previous inspection identified that assessment was at an early stage of development. Assessment procedures are now very good throughout both key stages. Pupils are given detailed written evaluation on their compositions. This ensures that pupils' learning is both continuous and progressive and results in the work being well matched to the pupils' needs. All pupils have their own record of achievement which records the pupils own views of their learning. The use of assessment is helping to improve standards, particularly in Year 7. There are many opportunities provided for the pupils to use their music skills in a school where the performing arts are given a high profile. Their rhythmic and listening skills are further developed in dance. Performing skills are used in school productions and in the weekly whole school assembly. They participate in inter-school concerts, recently performing at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham in a charity concert for Great Ormond St Hospital. Locally, they visit a residential home for the elderly and perform Christmas carols. Leadership of the subject is very good. There is a comprehensive development plan and the recently appointed co-ordinator is very clear about what goes on in the school, and the best way to take the subject forward. Resources are good, an improvement since the last inspection, and are used well in lessons. Also the very good accommodation with recently built practice rooms is a stimulating place for music activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stages 2 and in Year 7 are in line with those expected for pupils of these ages. Standards are very similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The achievements of pupils are satisfactory in relation to their previous learning.
115. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed at least satisfactory levels the control, fluency and agility in their movement. In Year 6 gymnastics, for example, pupils run, jump, change direction and stop with appropriate balance, and show suitable creativity and control when devising individual and partner balances. Whilst pupils show due attention to body tension and extension in their balances, linking movements lack both creativity and quality of movement. Pupils in Year 5 also demonstrate that they are on course to attain expected standards at the end of the key stage. In dance, they show above expected skill in moving in time with the music and devise interesting group pieces of dance, utilising devices such as cannon and repetition to enhance their final performances. Games skills are appropriately developed in football and hockey, although skills were restricted during the entire inspection by poor weather which necessitated all lessons to be taught indoors, thus providing insufficient space. Pupils do, however, show sound techniques when performing basic skills, such as dribbling and a push pass in hockey, and when heading the ball in football. Swimming skills develop soundly, and few pupils reach the end of the key stage without being able to reach the standards required by the National Curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils, often because of the sensitive attention given to them by the class teacher.
116. Standards attained by pupils in Year 7 show at least satisfactory progress from Key Stage 2, although again pupils were unable to demonstrate their full abilities in games because of the use of indoor facilities. Gymnastics skills develop soundly, with some highly imaginative and good quality group and partner balance work being carried out in some groups. Linking movements are again the weakest aspect of pupils' work.
117. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers know what they want the pupils to learn in each lesson, and by sharing this with the pupils, motivate them well to learn what is planned. Teachers use a good range of teaching techniques, including explaining, demonstration and questioning, and this enables the pupils to know what is expected of them. Expectations of work and behaviour are high, and a very large majority of pupils respond well, with interest, enthusiasm and perseverance. The pace of learning in most

lessons is suitably brisk because teachers manage and organise the pupils particularly well and this leads to very little time being wasted. Occasionally, however, pupils are distracted from listening to the instructions and information given by the teacher because they are preoccupied with the equipment they are using, and fidget with it. On these occasions learning is adversely affected. Teachers are skilled in the analysis of the pupils' work, and by providing timely coaching points to individuals and groups, frequently improve the standards of work achieved. Teachers establish good relationships with the pupils, who respond in turn with good behaviour and a willingness to try hard and learn.

118. The school provides a suitably balanced and broad curriculum during lessons, enhancing this greatly by the provision of a very good range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities. Clubs are well attended, and in inter-school and district competitions, the school achieves a considerable degree of success. The school is aware of the need to review the curriculum to reflect the new requirements of the 2000 National Curriculum. Assessment in physical education is underdeveloped and is in need of urgent attention. The subject is managed effectively by a highly experienced specialist, although the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and standards in the subject is in need of further development so that the co-ordinator can gain a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject. The school benefits from good accommodation in the form of a large gymnasium and extensive fields, although these have been used little during the autumn term due to the very poor weather. Resources are good, and have a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

119. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. At the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave the school standards in religious education are in line with the non-statutory expectation set out in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Guidance and with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress across both key stages in their knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and other world faiths such as Sikhism and Islam in Key Stage 2 and Judaism in Key Stage 3; which indicates that standards are rising. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when progress was mostly sound.

121. Pupils in Year 6 know many facts about the Sikh religion, they are able to talk about how respect is shown to the Guru Granth Sahib and make comparisons with how Muslims show respect for the Qu'ran and Christians for the Bible. They know that religious belief impacts on believer's lives and that followers of different religions have different religious practices. They make links between religious symbols and stories and some of the ideas, which underpin them. When they are given opportunities to do so, they ask questions about matters which puzzle them such as, 'Why do Sikhs show the Guru Granth Sahib so much respect, its only a book?' In Year 7, pupils are able to express their thoughts about the order of importance of the Ten Commandments, and when given the opportunity to do so, express their thoughts about meaning and purpose linked to the symbolism of the Seder Meal at Passover. For example, 'Salt water is because they were slaves and if I was a slave I would probably cry when I was on my own, but not in front of the Egyptians'. The pupils went on to explain that tears are salty.

122. Pupils make good progress in learning new facts in most lessons. Progress is less good and occasionally unsatisfactory when the focus of the lesson is not clear and becomes obscured by over emphasis on literacy or other curriculum areas such as history. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, however, the progress of some pupils, particularly the high attainers is inhibited by written tasks or work sheets which are not sufficiently challenging in what they require the pupils to do. There are insufficient opportunities to allow pupils to ask questions, explore meaning and purpose and reflect on what they have learnt, and this has an adverse affect on progress in this attainment target as part of the Agreed Syllabus.

123. The teaching of knowledge and understanding is good overall in both key stages and shows an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' own knowledge and understanding have improved since the last inspection, but in some lessons are still not as good as it might be. This tends to lead to a didactic approach with limited opportunities for questioning by the pupils. Occasionally unsatisfactory or very good teaching is seen. Unsatisfactory teaching is seen when learning objectives are unclear, the pace is slow and time is wasted drawing pictures, which occupy pupils rather than serve a learning purpose. In addition there is insufficient challenge for higher attainers and a positive climate for learning is not present. As a result of which pupils do not cooperate with the teacher, are slow to settle to tasks and do not make satisfactory

progress. Features of good or very good teaching of knowledge and understanding is seen when the teacher has good planning, very secure subject knowledge, high expectations of concentration and effort and uses challenging questions to enable pupils to build on what they already know. When in addition there are good relationships, the delivery is energetic and the pace brisk, this is a powerful recipe for a successful lesson, as was seen in a Year 5 lesson about the different names for Jesus. As a result of good or very good teaching, pupils are keen to answer questions and learn new facts. They listen attentively and work hard even when written tasks are undemanding. A striking quality in almost all the teaching is the very good emphasis on respect for other faiths and religious practices and this makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development and reflects the ethos of the school. However in almost all lessons opportunities for spiritual development are not fully developed and opportunities for pupils to pose questions and discuss things that puzzle or concern them are too limited.

124. The quality and range of learning opportunities are broadly satisfactory and sound use is made of local places of worship and artefacts to enrich pupils' experiences. However, there are areas for development. The curriculum is well structured to develop knowledge and understanding in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus and agreements with the local pyramid of schools. This provides clear guidance for non-specialist teachers. However, the current scheme of work does not sufficiently emphasise all the areas of experience, which need to be planned for. For example, opportunities for spiritual development are not explicitly identified and subsequently they are not developed fully or on occasions are missed altogether. Too many 'standard' worksheets are used for pupils of all attainment levels, and much of the written work does not reflect the pupils' ability to think for themselves. There is insufficient use of discussion, drama or other creative arts to reinforce learning, and there is insufficient emphasis placed on the display of religious education work in classrooms and public areas.
125. There is no one person with overall responsibility for subject leadership following the departure of the previous post holder. The school intends to recruit to the post for the start of the next academic year. In the meantime, the 'holding' arrangement is working satisfactorily with year leaders supported by the headteacher acting as caretakers. The tightly structured planning for knowledge and understanding and the high profile of the subject set up by the previous post holder has laid firm foundations on which to build. However, in the absence of a co-ordinator there is unsatisfactory monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the subject lacks clear direction. Resources are centrally stored and easily accessible. The use of artefacts enhances learning
126. The subject has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection in 1996.