

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **LOUGHTON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110390

Headteacher: Mr K Behrens

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods  
21079

Dates of inspection: 29 April – 2 May 2003

Inspection number: 246992

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 8 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Bradwell Road  
Loughton  
Milton Keynes

Postcode: MK5 8DN

Telephone number: 01908 665971

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Newcombe

Date of previous inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods 21079	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology French Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Webb 9614	Lay inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr D Houghton 21121	Team inspector	English Art and design Music	How high are standards?
Mrs E Pacey 25925	Team inspector	Geography History Citizenship	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Mrs J Cousins 22942	Team inspector	Science Religious education English as an additional language	
Mr M Madeley 22657	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Loughton Middle School is situated in the western part of Milton Keynes and the vast majority of pupils come from the surrounding area. There are currently 465 boys and girls on roll between the ages of eight and twelve, which makes it larger than most schools in the same category. Pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, with around 15 per cent of pupils coming from homes where the first language spoken is not English. This is high compared with the national average, but most of these pupils are competent in English; only 1 per cent of the school's pupils are learning English as an additional language. Nearly 9 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The actual percentage is likely to be higher as within the local education authority school meals are not provided. Eleven per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, with one pupil having a statement of special educational need. This is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is average.

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

This is a good school. As a result of good teaching, pupils attain above average standards in English and science by the time they leave, and standards which are above expectations in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress within an environment which fully lives up to the principles embedded in 'Investors in People' and its aim to provide 'excitement in learning'. The school is led very well, with energy and vision from the headteacher, who has the full support and confidence of staff, governors, parents and pupils. The teamwork between the headteacher and his two assistant headteachers is a strength. Management is also very good. Delegation of management in this large school is highly effective and all staff with responsibilities fulfil these very conscientiously. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, science, art and design, design and technology, music and religious education are above average.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school and pupils show very good respect for one another. They have very good attitudes and attendance is very good because they really enjoy coming to school.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance are very good and have a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes. The ethos of the school and its inclusive nature are very good, as a result of the very good reflection of its aims in practice.
- Provision for links between subjects of the curriculum, the use of information and communication technology and for activities outside of lessons is very good.
- Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are very good.
- The school is led very well, with enthusiasm and dedication. The governing body is a highly effective organisation and governors provide invaluable support for the school.

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

- Consistency between teachers in implementing the school's very good procedures could be improved.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified by the last inspection in February 1998. Short-term planning is detailed, with clear objectives identified for each lesson, and teachers adapt these appropriately for their classes. Assessment is thorough, but the school agrees that practice is inconsistent between teachers. Pupils have good opportunities to read and standards in reading are above average. Subjects are led and managed well and the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum is monitored regularly. Homework is set regularly, but there is some inconsistency between classes, which the school acknowledges. Collective worship meets statutory requirements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	B	B
Mathematics	B	C	C	C
Science	A	A	A	A

  

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

The table shows that standards in the national tests have been consistently well above average in science, and above average in English, both compared with the national average and with similar schools. Whilst standards in mathematics appear to be lower, analysis of the points scored by pupils in the tests in 2002 shows that they were very close also to being above average. Results in these tests have improved year-on-year, in line with the national trend, as a result of good teaching. Inspection findings show that the school is likely to match these pleasing results in the 2003 tests, with standards in English and science being above average and in mathematics being average for current Year 6 pupils. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress and achieve equally good standards in these three core subjects. The school sets challenging, but achievable targets each year as a result of close monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment.

Throughout the school, standards are above expectations in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education. In all other curriculum areas, standards meet expectations, and there is a particular strength in the links made between subjects and the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for supporting those pupils learning English as an additional language is good. All boys and girls, whatever their ability or background, achieve well and make good progress overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school, work hard and achieve well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall, and often very good. Pupils are polite, friendly and confident, and show a high degree of respect for one another.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships are very good and contribute positively to pupils' very good attitudes, but pupils could be given greater opportunities to develop their own initiative.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual in the mornings.

Pupils' attitudes, the sense of respect, the quality of relationships and the high level of attendance are all strengths of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 4 – 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and particularly good in Years 6 and 7. In lessons seen, nearly two thirds were judged to be good or better, with one in six being very good and excellent. Only two lessons were judged unsatisfactory, where the pace of learning was too slow, and pupils made limited progress. Teachers plan closely together, so that pupils of the same age in different classes receive similar experiences, and this planning is comprehensive and detailed. Clear aims for lessons are shared consistently with pupils, so that they are confident about what they are expected to learn. Teachers manage pupils very well, which results in the very good relationships which are clearly evident, and pupils are keen to work hard and please their teachers. They take great pride in their work. Teaching in English and mathematics is good. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well and these skills are used to good effect across all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are confident in the subjects they teach and the school makes good use of their individual expertise and enthusiasm, to the benefit of the pupils. Lessons are lively and stimulating, and the quality of learning is good as a result. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, both in class and in small groups, and they make good progress as a result. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are also well supported and achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils during practical activities. They could, however, take an even more active role during the introductions to lessons, for example, by supporting teachers in assessing pupils' responses.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements fully.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their needs are identified early and they are given good support both in class and in small groups. Provision is managed well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is a significant number of pupils for whom English is not their first language in the school, but only a few are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. All are supported well and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' personal and spiritual development is good and for their moral, social and cultural development is very good. As a result, pupils are confident, well motivated and very well prepared for life in modern, multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Procedures overall are very good, but their implementation is inconsistent between teachers.

The curriculum is significantly enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. A further strength is in the way subjects of the curriculum are linked effectively and in the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. The school's partnership with parents is good and they receive high quality information about forthcoming events and their children's progress.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school is led very well, with energy and vision, by the headteacher. Management is very good. Delegation of responsibilities is very effective and all staff fulfil their roles conscientiously.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The high degree of expertise governors bring to their roles is valued and used very well by the school. They meet all their statutory responsibilities fully and have a very clear understanding of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All aspects of the work of the school are monitored and evaluated closely. The school improvement plan is a detailed document and a very useful tool to manage improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All resources, human and material are used for the full benefit of the pupils.

The school is well staffed by qualified teachers, who receive good support from dedicated teaching assistants. Office staff work as a highly efficient team and provide excellent support for the school, as does the site supervisor. Although some classrooms are too small, accommodation overall is good and the school makes very good use of all available space. Resources are good overall. The governing body is a significant asset and governors make an invaluable contribution to the overall very good leadership and management of the school. Together with the headteacher and senior management, they ensure that the principles of best value are fully and consistently applied in all decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

186 parents returned questionnaires and 18 parents attended the meeting with inspectors.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school, behave well, work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good, teachers have high expectations and help pupils become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed, works closely with parents and is very approachable.</li> <li>• The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents have some concern over the amount of homework provided.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views about the school. Appropriate homework is set, but inspectors agree that parents could be better informed about this, as the use of homework diaries is not consistent between classes.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Pupils do well at Loughton. National test results for 2002 at the end of Year 6 showed pupils achieved standards that were well above average in science, above average in English and average in mathematics both when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, and above, was above the national average in all three subjects. Whilst boys outperformed girls in all three subjects in the 2002 tests, over time there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by either gender, which are consistently above the national average. Inspection evidence confirms standards in English and science are above average for the current Year 6 and Year 7 pupils. In mathematics, standards are again average this year. The slight dip in mathematics compared with English and science is because there is a slightly higher percentage of pupils who do not achieve the expected Level 4. Standards overall have risen in line with the national trend over recent years. Slight dips and rises are largely because of year group differences, for example when there is a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the group taking the tests. The targets set for 2003 and 2004 in English and mathematics are high but are both realistic and achievable.
2. Pupils enter school with average levels of attainment overall. The school has developed detailed tracking and target setting procedures and these make a positive contribution to ensuring that pupils are continually challenged at an appropriate level, and that teachers' and pupils' expectations are high. Consequently, progress is at least sound and frequently good across the curriculum. Pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy are good and this is having a positive impact on their learning in other subjects. Overall national expectations are met in all subjects throughout the school with particular strengths in art and design, design and technology and music, where standards are above expectations. Standards in religious education are above the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus.
3. Standards for pupils who speak English as an additional language are above average in English and science and are average in mathematics. Many of these pupils achieve average standards in English and science as a result of effective teaching. Some pupils gain higher Level 5 grades in English and science tests.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans and achieve well in relation to their abilities. Some, indeed, make enough progress to move out of the special educational needs category. Pupils make this rate of progress because they have a considerable amount of adult support in lessons and their peers are also always willing to help. They also take part in specialist commercial programmes and, in Year 4, specific phonics and spelling work in small groups. These programmes are carefully targeted at their needs and help them make positive progress.

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

5. The very good attitudes and positive values recorded at the time of the last inspection are still evident throughout the school community and a lively and purposeful atmosphere pervades the building once lessons have begun. Pupils like coming to school and almost all arrive on or before time in the mornings. Punctuality is good and their attendance, when compared with the national average, is very good.
6. Pupils are eager to learn and anticipate most lessons with pleasure. They respond well to their teachers, whom they want to please and all try hard to do so. They work very well

together and, when given two minutes to discuss the task, all conversation is about the topic. For instance, in a Year 6 literacy lesson on the features of a persuasive text, concentration was absolute as the class teacher read the text, and discussion on the type of cruise Snow White and her husband would enjoy was detailed and imaginative. When Year 4 pupils were vigorously debating what a bully was in their personal, social and health education lesson, gender and initial impressions were discussed closely when suggestions for inclusion in the New Children's Charter were being considered. Year 7 pupils showed a mature sensitivity when asked how colour could affect the mood of their paintings. All pupils enjoy the majority of their lessons, want to contribute and are pleased when these contributions are recognised.

7. Behaviour at school is good overall and very good for most of the time. Where, rarely, attention wanders in lessons this is usually because the work set is too easy for pupils and at such times a few can be difficult and take up the teacher's time unnecessarily. Pupils follow the school rules and understand why these are necessary. They quickly develop a strong sense of natural justice and regard the sanctions as fair. 'Time Out' is not necessarily a punishment but a space when the opportunity for reflection and discussion of their behaviour with a senior member of staff can resolve a problem. The school is an inclusive community where pupils support each other, regardless of creed or other difference. Pupils value and celebrate diversity and throughout the school relationships with their peers and with adults are very good. There has only been one recent, short exclusion.
8. Outside, pupils enjoy the freedom of the two playgrounds and field and have negotiated who can do what, when and where. For example, a sensible compromise was reached in the school council when a decision was taken that whilst the exuberant games of football were played on the upper field, all non-participants should keep to the edge. Incidents do happen, however, and are either dealt with by one of the supervisors or, if first aid is required, a friend accompanies the injured party to the medical room for attention.
9. Although given limited opportunities to take responsibility, pupils' personal development is good. The three simple school rules ensure that responsibility for self and for others is embodied in all pupils do. Any duty allocated is carried out conscientiously, as demonstrated by the librarians who give up their break times to enable others to have full use of the library. Membership of the school council is important and a whole lesson is given to the class representative to feedback information from this. However, the council is currently too adult-led and directed and more of a forum for talk rather than a democratic council run by the pupils themselves, most of whom are more than capable of taking the chair, setting the agenda and taking the minutes. Pupils are aware of those less fortunate than themselves and all enjoy participating in charity fund raising, such as for 'Red Nose Day' and the NSPCC, recognising that their fun results in money and support for others who really need this.

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

10. The quality of teaching is good overall, with particular strengths in Years 6 and 7, and has improved since the last inspection. In lessons seen, nearly two thirds were judged good or better, with one in six being very good and excellent. Only two lessons were judged unsatisfactory, where the pace of learning was too slow, so that pupils made little gain in their knowledge, skills or understanding.
11. Teachers have a good overall knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Those with a particular enthusiasm and expertise in a curriculum area share this willingly, either by teaching in different classes or by providing advice and support for colleagues. This is of direct benefit to pupils and the quality of learning is enhanced as a result. Basic skills in all subjects are taught well, which provides pupils with a solid foundation for future

learning. The quality of teaching in different subjects is amplified and exemplified within the relevant sections of this report, but there are good features common to all lessons.

12. Thorough lesson planning identifies clear aims and objectives for the lesson, which are shared fully with pupils. As a result, pupils are very clear about what they are expected to learn. In most cases, these aims are revisited at the end of lessons and pupils and teachers together evaluate whether they have been achieved. This results in boys and girls having a clear understanding of their own learning and progress. Most lessons contain an effective balance of whole class teaching and practical activities. For the most part, teachers are skilled at presenting the aims of the lesson and, in good and very good lessons, capture pupils' imaginations very effectively, so that they are eager to begin working. Planning is shared between classes in each year group, which for the most part ensures all pupils of the same age receive similar experiences, although teachers amend the plans appropriately to meet the needs of their particular pupils.
13. Teachers manage pupils very well and this results in the very good relationships which pervade the school. In many lessons, laughter and humour are significant features, which shows how well adults and pupils relate to each other and the warmth and trust which is fundamental to the school's ethos. Pupils work hard and are keen to please their teachers and do well. Both teachers and their assistants provide effective support for pupils as they work; knowing each individual very well, they encourage the less able and those with special educational needs sympathetically and provide additional challenge to stimulate the more able. As a result, most lessons buzz with purposeful activity and conversation, boys and girls of all abilities make good progress and they take pride in their achievements. Teaching assistants, however, play a less active role during whole class discussions. In most classes, they provide useful support in managing the behaviour of pupils as they listen to their teacher, but too often they are passively listening along with the pupils. Their time is valuable and could usefully be employed in, for example, recording and assessing pupils' responses and evaluating how well all are included in the lesson.
14. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Setting arrangements in some subjects ensure that these pupils are taught in small groups, which allows teachers to give each pupil more time and gear the pace of the lesson to their needs. Staff know pupils well and plan, sometimes intuitively, for their needs. Insufficient detail, however, is recorded on lesson planning and this would present a problem for any temporary or new staff. Lesson planning is shared early with teaching assistants so that they understand what will be taught and what they should do to support their pupils. The very best work by teaching assistants has them interacting with the pupils continually throughout the lesson, but this is not always the case. One strength is that teachers use resources very well to help these pupils visualise the concepts being taught, such as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson in which the teacher had herself made very good examples of fractions of a 'pizza' for the pupils to work with. Sometimes, the special educational needs co-ordinator runs valuable individual and additional 'before school' sessions for these pupils.
15. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of good teaching. Teachers' positive approach and their effective organisational skills enable these pupils to take a full part in lessons. Effective arrangements for teaching literacy and numeracy mean that there are smaller numbers of pupils in each group. This ensures that pupils whose first language is not English receive considerable amounts of the teacher's time. Teachers place high emphasis on explaining the meaning of special vocabulary, which might not be easily understood. However, whilst targets are set for these pupils, they are not always specific and measurable and teachers do not have a copy of these readily available in lessons.

16. Most teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, but practice is inconsistent, so that some marking provides evaluative comments on how pupils can improve, whilst some does not. Similarly, teachers' recording of the success or otherwise of individual lessons and their assessment of how well pupils have achieved varies. All teachers know their pupils very well and have a clear knowledge and understanding of their individual progress. However, whilst some teachers make detailed notes to support their assessment of pupils' attainment, and their planning and delivery of future lessons, for others this knowledge is not recorded. Consequently, the information is not available for future reference or for other teachers. Homework is used appropriately to support learning in school.

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

17. The school provides a good curriculum for boys and girls as well as for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. The curriculum is broad, balanced and its relevance for pupils fully reflects the school's aim to provide 'excitement in learning'. In addition to the subjects of the National Curriculum, the school provides a sound programme of sex education, education about drugs misuse and French and citizenship for the oldest pupils. The provision for religious education and personal, social and health education is good and is reflected in the relationships and behaviour of pupils during the school day. Curriculum provision has improved since the last inspection.
18. Procedures for planning the curriculum are thorough and ensure that all areas within subjects are given an appropriate emphasis. The senior management team, subject leaders and year group leaders all contribute to planning and monitoring the curriculum. As a result, teachers are fully supported when they plan lessons. The sharing of ideas and expertise contribute to the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. Good use is made of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills throughout the curriculum and very good cross-curricular links are made between subjects. For example, an information and communication technology lesson about graphic skills made good contributions to mathematics, and art and design, and good use is made of mapping and mathematical skills in history.
19. This is an inclusive school. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of its life. On occasions, however, teachers may deliver the planned curriculum in slightly differing ways reflecting their own interests. Whilst this provides an added stimulus to lessons, it also means that sometimes pupils receive a slightly modified curriculum from that in other classes. For example, in a topic about rivers, one class carried out a wider range of tasks relating to environmental issues than others.
20. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. A wide variety of clubs are provided both during lunchtime and after school. These include art and craft, web design, bookworm, chess, orchestra, choir and recorders. Sporting activities include netball and football clubs which involve boys and girls. The school provides a very good range of residential visits which support work in class and enhance pupils' social development very well. Each year group is offered the opportunity to go on a visit and the school takes very good care to ensure that those pupils unable to participate one year are given places on another occasion. There is a wide range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. For example, the visit to a local Victorian house where pupils have the opportunity to spend a day in role as Victorians and the visit of a Muslim to talk about his faith. These occasions are instrumental in bringing lessons alive and making them meaningful to pupils. Liaison with the community and with other schools in the area is good. For example, elderly folk in the locality are invited in to school and links are maintained with a local residential centre. The police and park rangers visit to talk about road and water safety. Teachers from both the secondary and first schools take lessons,

such as design and technology, and promote very good singing skills in music. Visits to partner schools for a range of activities prepare pupils very efficiently for the next stage of their learning.

21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school has successfully adopted and implemented the new 'Code of Practice' into all its procedures. There is a good ratio of adults to pupils and this allows the school to run a strong range of support programmes which are specific to the pupils needs, often on an individual basis. In addition, up to 60 pupils give up their own time to complete a mathematics programme, which has been very successful in improving their basic skills. However, the school recognises that targets on pupils' individual education plans are not well written, because some are too vague and many are not measurable. This limits the progress the pupils who are not supported individually can make, because work appropriate to their needs is not always given. The school intends to organise training for teachers in writing appropriate targets for pupils.
22. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language benefit from the well-planned curriculum. They are included effectively in all activities and profit from the school's high awareness of other cultures, which celebrates the rich customs of other societies.
23. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and contributes to pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education very effectively. This is an improvement since the last inspection when this was judged good.
24. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school plans many good opportunities for pupils to reflect in lessons. For instance, English lessons allow pupils in Year 4 to reflect about characters' feelings from other cultures using African stories, such as 'Mufaro's Beautiful Daughter' effectively. Assemblies and collective worship give pupils the time to learn stories that explain how God loves us however we look. Prayers are said during collective worship, which is an improvement since the last inspection when this aspect was lacking. Not all assemblies, however, contain opportunities for all pupils to sing uplifting songs, which is a shame, since they sing so well!
25. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school ensures that all pupils are aware of the behaviour code and many classrooms display it. Moral issues are discussed very effectively in personal social, health and citizenship education sessions. For example, Year 7 debate the use of capital punishment and Year 5 discuss the rights and wrongs of people's actions. English and religious education lessons offer very good opportunities to consider the moral in stories, such as when Year 6 write about taking responsibility for their actions. 'Police Week' offers pupils in Year 7 very useful chances to learn about moral dilemmas.
26. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. A very effective programme of after-school activities allows pupils to socialise in many different clubs. Complex playtime arrangements mean that pupils from different year groups mix together happily on different days. Lessons offer many very effective group activities in, for example, science, religious education, design and technology and physical education, where pupils can socialise. Residential trips for all four year groups and Christmas productions provide pupils with rich experiences and opportunities to work together. Drama activities in lessons mean that pupils learn to organise themselves effectively. The school council, however, does not give pupils effective opportunities to develop their citizenship skills because pupils do not learn to debate ways to improve the school community effectively.
27. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school curriculum incorporates many projects about pupils' own and other cultures. British culture is studied

in history, science, English and geography lessons. For example, writing a modern version of 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves' enables pupils to learn about traditional tales imaginatively. Christianity is studied in all year groups; for example, Year 7 learn about the Prayer of Francis of Assisi. A wealth of activities develops pupils' knowledge of other cultures. In numeracy sessions, pupils learn about Ancient Egyptian methods of calculation. Studies in religious education mean that pupils learn about Buddhists, Muslims and Sikhs. Art, music and physical education lessons give very good opportunities to develop pupils understanding of their own and other cultures. This is planned for Year 4, for example, in their art studies of Paul Gauguin when they learn to paint in his style. There are, however, no dual language books available to pupils in the school, to encourage them to appreciate the wealth of language in the world.

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

28. Pupils' health, safety and welfare are high priorities for the school, which is currently carrying out an in-depth review of the already good procedures. Risk assessments, carried out at regular intervals, are carefully recorded and monitored and the site supervisor deals with what he can on his daily round. Security of the building is very good. All staff have been trained in first aid and practice is good with details of incidents recorded and monitored regularly. Four members of the senior management team have been trained in child protection procedures and staff know what they should do if they have concerns.
29. Very good systems for promoting and monitoring attendance result in the high percentage. These include a 100 per cent class attendance for the week certificate awarded by the headteacher. Office staff rarely, if ever, need to telephone parents to establish why a child is absent and the late book contains very few entries. Parents, recognising the importance of regular attendance to their children's education, do not often ask to take their children away during term time and never during the week of national tests. The educational welfare officer visits the school every other week and is appropriately concerned whenever there are concerns about any pupil.
30. The school has very effective procedures to promote good behaviour and younger pupils value the praise, stickers and stamps they get and are keen to contribute to the communal 'class jar of marbles'. Green cards are celebrated by older pupils and all year groups enjoy the lively debates on what should be the next class treat. Their teacher's disappointment or disapproval are the most effective sanctions and behaviour sheets are very well used to support rather than to punish, with pupil and teacher alike pleased when targets are achieved. Verbal warnings, yellow and red cards are used judiciously and exclusion is very rarely needed.
31. Teachers know their pupils very well and have very high expectations of them. They are expected to behave responsibly and to give thought to others, as set out in the school rules and in those negotiated within their class. Monitoring of pupils' personal development, however, is informal and is only recorded in their annual reports. Most monitors are appointed on a weekly basis for a variety of tasks in class and there are limited opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their growing maturity other than by representing their peers on the school council and, in Years 6 and 7, acting as librarians. Pupils do take initiative and recently Years 4 and 6 pupils ran very successful events to support the 'Blue Peter' Water Appeal.
32. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are identified early and external agencies are notified and involved as required. Class teachers and the co-ordinator monitor pupils' progress termly and identify those requiring additional support. Some pupils attend specific activity sessions as appropriate. The school's assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment and progress are carefully analysed and

targets in individual education plans are set, but these are not sufficiently specific and measurable. This means that the teachers are not clear about what pupils need to learn in order to improve. These pupils are well cared for and make good progress in their own personal development.

33. Procedures for identifying pupils who might have special educational needs and then diagnosing these needs are very thorough and pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well supported. The additional level of 'action', devised by the co-ordinator, is useful in identifying any initial concerns. It enables the school to identify pupils early, check on their progress and discuss problems with parents. Support agencies are used very well to test pupils and to provide help with defining what these pupils should study. The school's regular assessment procedures and additional work through observation by the co-ordinator and teaching assistants help track pupils' progress and inform review meetings. All the adults have read the individual education plans relevant to their year group, know what each pupil's difficulty is and are able to help. However, targets in these plans are not sufficiently specific and measurable to ensure consistent progress towards achieving them.
34. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment. Very efficient use is made of assessment to identify pupils with special educational needs and pupils who may not have made the progress expected of them. Tests are carried out at the end of topics to assess the learning of individual pupils. Their needs are then identified and addressed. Results are tracked and record pupils' progress closely, to predict their attainment at the end of the year and at the end of Years 6 and 7. Tests are analysed closely to show areas of weakness in the curriculum and to compare the rates of progress of boys and girls. Swift action is taken to address any weaknesses, for example vocabulary in mathematics and boys' attainment throughout the school.
35. Teachers use their knowledge of their pupils well during lessons to assess and guide pupils through tasks. Procedures for day-to-day assessment are good. They are sensible and easy to use. Some teachers use them very well to help plan lessons and their pupils' next stage of learning. However, the understanding and use of the systems is inconsistent. Where the procedures are not used well, there is insufficient use of day-to-day assessment to plan work for pupils who learn at different rates in the class. Targets are set for pupils in English, mathematics and science, with target stickers placed in pupils' English and mathematics books. However, targets are not always shared with pupils to let them know how well they are doing, or what they need to do in order to achieve higher levels in the National Curriculum.
36. The school has invested a great deal of time in exploring effective methods of marking pupils' work and devising a policy for marking. Once more, however, inconsistencies in following procedures are apparent. Some good marking in English becomes a positive dialogue between teacher and pupils. Other books have few comments to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

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

37. The school has successfully established very effective links and a good relationship with parents. They, in their turn, are very supportive of the school's aims and ambitions for their children. They demonstrate this through their very good attendance at parents' evenings and the help they give their children at home, although a significant minority queried the amount of homework and the regularity with which this is set. Inspectors found that parents were well informed about this, although the use of the homework diaries was inconsistent. Some parents help in school whilst others are proud to accompany their children on educational visits. Whilst the 'Friends' association is run and organised by the dedicated few, parents support their events enthusiastically, which include popular quiz



and family bingo nights and as well as children's discos, and over £9000 was raised last year to swell school funds. The 'Friends' provide much appreciated refreshments at parents' evenings. Whenever school productions take place, the hall is filled to overflowing with relatives eager to celebrate what 'their' child can do.

38. The quality and range of information parents receive is very good. Regular news and other letters ensure they are aware of happenings at school and of future dates for their diaries. The brochure and governors' annual report contain useful and clearly stated information and parents value the interim and annual reports, which detail their child's attainment and effort as well as achievements they have made. Parents know they can approach teachers at any time if they are concerned and the friendly office staff are always willing to help in any way they can.
39. Parents of pupils with special educational needs feel that their children get a 'good deal' at the school and the inspection team endorses this view. All parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and are invited to attend review meetings. They often contribute to the debate and usually offer written comments on the review plan. Most attend regularly, but if there are difficulties the co-ordinator goes out of her way to ensure that they receive a copy of the review. She, and the assistant headteacher who works with her, make themselves available at any reasonable time for consultation and discussion, although the school could make this arrangement more widely known.
40. Effective links are established between the school and parents who have children who speak English as an additional language. Regular meetings between teachers, the co-ordinator for these pupils and parents mean that everyone is kept well informed about children's progress. Bilingual staff are available to translate for any parent who is in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.

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

41. The very good leadership and management, noted by the last inspection has been maintained and enhanced by the new headteacher. He leads the school with energy, vision and enthusiasm, with the invaluable support of his two assistant headteachers, who share his vision and commitment. These three have the full confidence of governors, staff, pupils and parents. The warm, friendly ethos of the school is characterised by humour and very good relationships, and is one in which all feel valued for their contribution and included in its life. The school has 'Investors in People' status and takes great pride in living up to the expectations within this award. The aims and values are fully reflected in its daily life and the headline aims form the titles of the governing body committees.
42. Governors bring a very good degree of expertise to their roles and play a very active part in managing and monitoring the work of the school. Their support and contribution is very much appreciated by staff, who recognise their expertise and value their opinions. Individual support, such as that from the governor with responsibility for information and communication technology, makes a very positive contribution in specific areas. Committees and the full governing body meet regularly and all statutory responsibilities are met fully. Governors keep themselves up to date with educational developments and the work of the school through regular training, reports from the headteacher and key staff, and personal visits to see this at first hand. Their input, for example into the school improvement plan, performance management and evaluating the school's achievements, is incisive.
43. Management is very good overall. Staff appreciate the headteacher's open and empowering leadership style and tackle their responsibilities with energy and enthusiasm. Delegation of responsibility in this large school is very effective and ensures its smooth day-to-day running. Year group leaders manage the curriculum and pastoral care of pupils

within each of the age groups very well and subject leaders co-ordinate and monitor the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across the year groups closely. The headteacher, assistant headteachers and subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively, through formal and informal class visits, and provide valuable models of good teaching in their areas of expertise. Senior management has a very clear picture of the strengths and areas for development within teaching and learning, and effective strategies are in place to improve these, where necessary. Pupils' work is evaluated regularly to ensure that those of the same age in different classes receive a similar range of experiences, that work is of an appropriate standard and that pupils are making good progress.

44. Management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Information about these pupils is shared regularly, including feeding back on courses. Colleagues' input, particularly from teaching assistants, is valued and acted upon. Outside agencies are used well and are kept informed of pupils' progress and needs. The educational psychologist speaks highly of the preparatory work done by the special educational needs coordinator and of her knowledge of a wide range of learning and behavioural difficulties. The budget is managed well. The bulk of it is spent on staffing costs and the school adds additional money to keep the adult/pupil ratio high.
45. Management of provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of pupils' needs and works well with the staff to ensure that these pupils make good progress. The headteacher and co-ordinator carefully monitor these pupils' progress. The co-ordinator does not, however, regularly monitor the use of specific and measurable targets in lessons throughout the school.
46. The school improvement plan is very detailed and comprehensive and is a useful tool for the school in managing and monitoring its development. Priorities are agreed by all staff and governors, and many subject managers have supplementary action plans for their specific areas of responsibility. Targets are regularly examined to evaluate progress and amended as necessary in light of this evaluation.
47. The school is fully staffed with well-qualified teachers, who are supported effectively by well trained and dedicated teaching assistants. Induction and mentoring procedures for those newly qualified, graduate trainees and teachers new to the school are very good. The friendly staff room encourages good communication and mutual support and includes the very conscientious administration and site supervision staff.
48. Whilst the school site and accommodation appear generous for the numbers on roll, some classrooms, particularly for the older pupils, are cramped and space is not always laid out to maximum effect. The assembly hall, although used well for physical education lessons, is too small for whole-school assemblies and the 'greenhouse' for special educational needs learning is too small. A good range of specialist rooms include the new information and communication technology suite, science/technology room, central library area, food technology and designated medical rooms. Outside, pupils enjoy two well maintained tarmac-ed areas as well as a large field for their play and for their physical education lessons.
49. The school is well resourced to deliver the National Curriculum and resources are very good for teaching information and communication technology, physical education, music and art and design. The library is well resourced with a good quality and range of both fiction and non-fiction books, although there are none written in dual-language text. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy good materials to support their learning, often created by their specialist teachers, and those assisting pupils learning English as an

additional language have satisfactory resources to help them. All resources are well stored and easily accessible.

50. The office runs very smoothly due to excellent teamwork and day-to-day administration is very good. Effective routines are firmly established and all office staff make much valued contributions to the smooth and efficient running of the school. The budget is prepared carefully by the headteacher and finance officer before being submitted to the governing body for approval. Financial control is very good. The profiled monthly budget is reviewed regularly by the headteacher and governors are kept fully informed. Spending and virement limits are clearly established. The few minor recommendations in the recent audit report have been fully addressed. The relatively high underspend has been earmarked for a building programme, for which plans have been approved, in order to increase the teaching area. Co-ordinators are responsible for managing their individual subject budgets. Specific grants, such as those for special educational needs and for teaching pupils for whom English is an additional language, are spent very effectively. The school takes the principles of best value fully into account. It analyses its results in detail, comparing them with both local and with similar schools. The very good tracking procedures ensure that pupils are consistently challenged. Pupils and parents are provided with high quality information and are consulted regularly, through meetings and letters for their views and opinions. Resources are purchased at competitive rates. Governors have very good procedures for evaluating the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions on standards in the school; for example the additional spending on music has had a significant impact on improving the quality of playing instruments, singing and pupils' achievements.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Within the picture of the school's many strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should now

in line with priorities already identified in the school improvement plan and using as a model the good practice which already exists:

- improve consistency in the way teachers implement agreed procedures and complete agreed day-to-day assessment in:
  - setting specific and measurable targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language;
  - marking pupils' work so that they know how this can be improved;
  - evaluating the achievement of individual pupils on lesson plans so that the next steps for them are clear;
  - making greater use of individual targets and sharing these with pupils, to improve their knowledge of National Curriculum levels and raise their awareness of what they need to do to achieve the next level;
  - maximising on the use of teaching assistants during lessons, for example by getting them to record pupils' responses;
  - ensuring all of the above are monitored effectively;to ensure effective provision of work matched fully to pupils' abilities and level of attainment in lessons across the curriculum and the age groups.

*(paragraphs 13-16, 19, 21, 32-33, 35-37, 45, subject sections)*

In addition to the development points above, the following areas could be included in the action plan:

- increasing the opportunities for pupils to take responsibility (9, 26, 31)
- providing books with dual language text in the library (27, 49).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	98
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	14	45	35	2	0	0
Percentage	2	14	46	36	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	465
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	74

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	6.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.3

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	63	56	119

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	50	50	61
	Girls	48	41	49
	Total	98	91	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (85)	76 (76)	92 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	48	53	60
	Girls	44	40	50
	Total	92	93	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (87)	79 (82)	93 (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	362	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	24	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	8	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	24	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.46
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: Y4 – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	204

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001 / 2002
	£
Total income	1,023,463.00
Total expenditure	1,040,971.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,120.10
Balance brought forward from previous year	96,756.00
Balance carried forward to next year	146,162.00



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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	465
Number of questionnaires returned	186
Percentage returned	40%

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	48	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	54	6	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	57	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	51	18	3	1
The teaching is good.	43	49	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	47	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	38	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	41	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	56	7	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	49	43	3	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	48	3	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	47	7	2	2

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

### **ENGLISH**

51. Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 6 and Year 7. These standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and a similar percentage of pupils is on target to achieve the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 this year as in the 2002 national tests. This is because both the quality of teaching and the detailed tracking procedures are good and enable the school to monitor individual pupils' progress closely. Standards in writing are average overall, when pupils enter school. They make good progress and by the time they leave standards are above average. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are above average when pupils enter the school. They make satisfactory progress and the above average standards are maintained throughout the school.
52. Overall standards have been rising in recent years although there was a slight blip in 2002 where there was a higher percentage of girls with special educational needs than usual. This resulted in boys achieving higher standards than girls in 2002 which is unusual as girls tend to achieve slightly higher than the boys. The National Literacy Strategy is contributing positively to pupils' achievements and to the rising trend in standards. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress largely because of the additional support they are given which is usually well-focused, although some targets in individual educational plans are not sharp enough. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are very well integrated into classes, many being in the average and above average groups. Good support from specialist teachers is provided for those who require additional support.
53. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school. Teachers plan a wide range of stimulating opportunities to continue improving these skills, including correcting pupils' diction. Within individual lessons, pupils listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to teachers' questions. Pupils discuss their work readily and give clear explanations, for example of how to locate books in the library. In all year groups, they read aloud expressively and discuss the implications of their books sensibly. Pupils are given many good, planned opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. In Year 4, for example, pupils are encouraged to anticipate what is about to be said by others when a play is stopped by the teacher. In Year 5, pupils were put in the 'hot seat' when answering questions from their peers about serving in a large house after their visit to 'Holdenby House'. Skills are also effectively developed through other subjects, such as science, where pupils give clear explanations of their experiments, and in religious education when Year 6 pupils used interesting words to describe Mohammed's feelings and discussed these constructively in groups. Further good opportunities are provided through drama and citizenship lessons and through taking part in school productions.
54. Standards in reading are above average when pupils enter the school. Progress is sound and the good standards are effectively maintained and remain above average throughout the school. Most pupils read fluently and with good expression. The few who find reading more difficult have good word building skills. They read correctly, although less expressively, and do not always understand the text especially when reading some non-fiction books. Pupils make inferences and discuss these, giving thoughtful reasons for their answers. They have favourite authors and readily give reasons for their choice, for example stories are adventurous or amusing. Some of the more able pupils choose more difficult texts because 'they are challenging'. The library is well stocked, although there are not enough dual-language books. Computer records are kept on the loan of books, which enables teachers to monitor in detail the number and range of books that pupils read. Nearly all pupils have good library skills and readily explain the library classification

system. They explain clearly how to locate books and information within books. All pupils have reading diaries, but there is an inconsistency in the use of these and not all teachers or parents make comments in them.

55. Writing skills are average when pupils enter the school. Progress is good and, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards are above average. This good progress is maintained throughout Year 7. This is because teachers place strong emphasis on the development of grammatical skills, for example the use of adjectives in Year 4 to create an atmosphere '... snow was falling from the dark, starry sky...'. They give pupils clear criteria for writing in different styles and for different audiences, for example in Year 6, when writing newspaper reports or in Year 7 writing books to be read to pupils from the first school. By the time pupils reach Year 7, they use paragraphs correctly and they write effectively from different points of view and use text creatively to describe different characters. Punctuation, such as speech marks and question marks, are used correctly. Throughout the school there is strong emphasis on drafting and planning pieces of writing. Pupils make effective use of word processing to present final copies of their work. Writing is also well planned to take place in other subjects, for example in religious education when reflecting about life in a mosque or in geography when writing about volcanoes. Presentation of work is sound overall but there are inconsistencies in the standards of handwriting from class to class.
56. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Seven out of ten lessons seen were good or better, with a fifth of these judged to be very good. Occasional weaknesses occur where the pace of lessons is too slow. All lessons have a clear focus, which is always shared with the pupils and is usually based on the literacy hour structure which helps ensure a good balance between reading, writing and grammar. Teachers are knowledgeable and have high expectations. This is reflected in the quality of work produced by the pupils and their enjoyment of the subject.
57. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator constantly monitors the quality of learning and teaching and identifies areas of weakness which then forms part of a comprehensive action/development plan. She works closely with the library co-ordinator who has also written a detailed plan to improve pupils' library and research skills. The quality of the provision for pupils who require additional help, for example through additional literacy support and 'booster groups' is good. Good record and assessment procedures have been developed but have not been implemented consistently by all teachers; consequently they are not easy to follow. The quality of marking is often very good and in addition to correcting mistakes points out clearly what pupils need to do next to improve the quality of their work. Homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Individual pupils are set targets, but these are not clearly linked to levels of attainment to enable them for example to know what else they have to do to reach a particular level. The school is well aware of these shortcomings and is taking steps to ensure that the new procedures are implemented by all teachers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

58. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Year 6 and Year 7. They have been rising steadily over the last five years, because of the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the policy of keeping groups of least able pupils as small as possible and the improvement in the quality of teaching which is good overall. There is little difference between standards attained by boys and girls. The school should achieve its target in national tests for Year 6 for the average Level 4 this year, but the target for the higher Level 5 is challenging and may not be reached. Overall, this represents good improvement since the last inspection.

59. Standards in Year 6 are similar to the national average. This mirrors the results of the most recent national tests, which were also average. Most pupils have a good understanding of number and use the four operations confidently. Less able pupils often use number lines and other supports when calculating. All pupils name flat and solid shapes accurately and sort them by angles and sides. They also successfully calculate the area and perimeter of basic shapes, with more able pupils confidently using the formula to do so. All pupils create tally charts and graphs from data and interpret the data to answer questions such as 'Which is the most?' They also successfully plot points on a grid, but only more able and average pupils show their knowledge of negative numbers by using all four quadrants of the grid.
60. Pupils' progress is satisfactory through Years 4 and 5 because of the variations in the quality of teaching. Not all pupils receive lively teaching, which has good pace and helps them move forward rapidly. However, in Year 6 progress accelerates, as pupils experience uniformly good quality teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets, although too few have mathematics targets. They work in smaller groups than the others and receive a great deal of adult support, which helps them understand the task and complete it. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress. The current initiative to improve pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary is really helping these pupils.
61. Planning is prepared in year groups and this helps all pupils tackle similar work. Individual teachers make minor modifications to suit the ability of their group and some also annotate their plans with assessments they have made, although practice is not consistent. Resources are used well to illustrate teaching points and this allows pupils to be fully involved in practical activities. Teaching in Year 6 was uniformly good. For instance, computers were used very well to illustrate transformations and pupils enjoyed their work, learning concepts very quickly. In other years, teaching is more varied. Lessons are sometimes less demanding of pupils and teachers occasionally spend too long talking, without involving the pupils. Teachers use some published 'stickers' quite well to indicate what is to be learned. These are useful in focusing pupils' attention on the topic but are rarely sufficiently specific to the pupil. Homework, particularly in Year 6, is used well to reinforce the skills learned in lessons and as preparation for the national tests. The presentation of pupils' work, again particularly in Year 6, is of a very high quality and this is a significant improvement on the previous inspection. Teachers mark pupils work conscientiously, but their comments rarely indicate how pupils might improve their work next time.
62. By Year 7, the spread of pupils' ability is growing wider and the school copes well with this. More able pupils cover the programme very rapidly and achieve well. They have a particularly good knowledge of algebra, plotting straight lines and calculating their gradients. They also have a firm understanding of transformations, like rotation, reflection and translation, and calculate ratios accurately. Less able pupils also achieve well. They consolidate work tackled initially last year through the 'Springboard' programme. They have a secure knowledge of number operations and now interpret graphs at a higher level.
63. Overall, pupils in Year 7 make good progress, because they are taught well by knowledgeable teachers. More able pupils make very good progress because teachers have very good subject knowledge and very high expectations, which the pupils work hard to measure up to. The least able, sometimes including those with special educational needs, are also taught well in small groups. Teachers use resources well to explain difficult concepts. Pupils are motivated to learn because their work is presented in a lively and stimulating way. Pupils learning English as an additional language are not significantly disadvantaged in mathematics because teachers carefully explain the vocabulary they use.

64. Pupils in Year 7 really enjoy their lessons and rate mathematics one of their favourite subjects. Mental sessions are lively and stimulating, such as drawing the flat shapes from a teacher's description. Pupils are encouraged and expected to explain their methods so that they consolidate their learning and any misconceptions are cleared up quickly. Teaching of the lowest set is of a very high quality because the teacher explains work very clearly in an easily understood way, motivates and challenges pupils and uses the plenary well to ascertain what pupils have learned. Most teachers give out regular homework, which reinforces and extends class work. Presentation by pupils in all sets is of a very high quality but teachers' marking often fails to provide an indication of how pupils might improve their work next time.
65. Pupils are confident in using their mathematical skills in other subjects. In design and technology, for example, they carefully and accurately measure materials and use their knowledge to design a Victorian cross-stitch sampler. In geography and history, they use their understanding of scale in map work and in devising a time line. Their understanding of graphs and tally charts is particularly useful in science, where considerable information is presented in graphical form. Pupils really enjoyed the 'Mathematics Week' and recall fondly the variety of cross-curricular activities on offer.
66. Provision for pupils who are gifted in mathematics is good. Additional classes are organised and they are invited to attend special classes at the high school. Both of these activities interest and challenge these pupils.
67. Management of the subject is good. The joint co-ordinators have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and learning within the subject through their observation of lessons. They have put in place additional measures to improve standards, as well as continuing to support all teachers with help and advice. Moves to give the understanding of mathematical vocabulary a higher profile in lessons as well as asking teachers to make greater use of visual aids to help pupils understand complex concepts are entirely appropriate. The inequalities in teaching, however, will need to be tackled, if standards are to be improved. The school has a very positive record of sending teachers on training courses to update their skills but because of recent staff changes some of this expertise has been lost to the school.

## SCIENCE

68. Standards in science are above average in Year 6 and 7, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests Year 6 pupils achieved well above average results. Standards are lower in Year 6 this year because it is a different group of pupils. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve above average standards and make effective progress. Boys and girls' standards demonstrate no significant differences. Pupils who have special educational needs are included well in all activities and make good progress. A few pupils with special educational needs achieve average levels of attainment due to good provision by teachers.
69. In Year 7, standards are above average in investigational skills, knowledge and understanding of life and living processes, materials and physical processes. A significant strength lies in pupils' abilities to carry out practical experiments. The majority of pupils investigate effectively how acid or alkaline liquids are and explore ways to neutralise acids. Pupils draw line graphs carefully to plot data gained from an investigation into the effect of pulling on a stretchy material. Numeracy skills are used effectively when some pupils work on higher Level 6 activities and choose their own scales when drawing complex graphs. Furthermore, many pupils explain clearly what happens to particles when solids dissolve in water. Literacy skills are well used when pupils write about invertebrates in detail. Many pupils draw diagrams effectively to explain a solar and lunar eclipse. There is, however,

rather limited evidence in books of more able pupils carrying out extension activities at higher levels of attainment in Year 7 or throughout the school.

70. In Year 6, pupils have above average investigational skills, knowledge of life and living processes, materials and physical processes. As in Year 7, considerable strength in pupils' knowledge and understanding is in how to carry out investigations. Most pupils plan an experiment for themselves effectively to see which shape of boat moves quickest and they record results well in a chart. The majority of Year 6 pupils write predictions and conclusions giving reasons for their thinking. Some more able pupils write effective conclusions, such as *'By doing this experiment I have found out that the length away you are from the light source does affect your shadow. The closer you are to the light, the bigger your shadow'*, making a useful contribution to their literacy skills. Most pupils effectively name the parts of a flowering plant, for instance, stamen, sepal and stigma. The majority of pupils know that microbes decay dead materials. Pupils investigate and evaluate effectively whether the amount of sugar supplied affects how well yeast grows. Most pupils know about changes of state where water freezes, melts and evaporates. Numeracy skills are developed well through scientific studies. For example, pupils record the weights of objects accurately using a Newton meter. They add labels well to diagrams that demonstrate which forces are acting on it. Results are recorded effectively when pupils investigate if shiny surfaces reflect differently to non-shiny surfaces. In Years 4 to 6, the majority of pupils use scientific vocabulary well. Literacy skills are used effectively when pupils write about methods used for the testing of materials. There is, however, little evidence of pupils using information and communication technology to support their learning in science.
71. The quality of teaching is good. Sixteen lessons were seen and most were good with only one unsatisfactory lesson. One lesson was judged to be very good overall. The best teaching includes effective use of pupils planning investigations, such as when a Year 6 teacher asks pupils to find out what will affect the brightness of a bulb in a circuit. Basic skills are taught well when Year 5 pupils make careful observations of different seed forms. Teachers have high expectations when Year 6 pupils are asked to formulate hypotheses before they undertake practical investigations. Resources are used effectively. This is seen when Year 7 pupils explore forces, using a wide range of apparatus from string to bricks. Good social provision in lessons means that pupils work effectively together in pairs or groups. Teachers' effective management skills ensure that pupils behave well and concentrate on tasks. The ends of lessons are used satisfactorily to assess pupils' understanding or offer pupils a time for self-evaluation. Spiritual provision is good and pupils have opportunities to reflect on the conclusions from their experiments.
72. However, teaching is less effective in other aspects. For instance, lesson planning does not consistently set specific extensions for more able pupils and these pupils are not regularly given extra challenges in lessons at higher levels. Whilst classroom assistants are used effectively in the main part of lessons, they are not always used efficiently at the beginning of sessions. Teachers' marking does not regularly explain to pupils how they could improve. The one unsatisfactory lesson seen did not use time effectively as the teacher talked for a long time without involving pupils. Many pupils did not achieve the main learning objective, as the teacher did not sustain the learning focus throughout the lesson. Teachers' use assessment satisfactorily; mostly through end-of-unit tests. However, few teachers evaluate pupils' achievements on lesson plans so that the next steps are clearly laid out. Pupils are not given information about how to achieve National Curriculum levels of attainment, particularly with regard to scientific experimentation and investigation.
73. Management of science is good overall. The subject leader has a good vision for the ways science could be further developed. Monitoring and evaluation have been improved since

the last inspection and this has been effective in raising standards. The subject leader regularly monitors pupils' books and is aware of a need to develop extension activities for more able pupils in some classes.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

74. Standards in art and design are above expectations by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 7. This represents an improvement on those reported at the last inspection. All pupils enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to their tasks. All make good progress, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, and are fully included in lessons and activities. They concentrate well, produce some effective work and discuss their feelings thoughtfully. They have been successful in local art competitions, for example in designing post office stamps based on the theme 'The changing face of Milton Keynes'.
75. Sketch-books are used effectively to develop pupils' skills and ideas. Pupils in Year 4, for example, use shading to enhance their pencil drawings of Durer's 'Praying Hands' whilst those in Year 7 match colours exactly using water colour paints. Pupils study a wide range of artists and work in their styles, such as Seurat, Gauguin and Renoir. They successfully learn different techniques, such as pointillism, which pupils reproduced using a computer, and frottage. In Year 4, pupils learn how colours can impact on feelings and by Year 7, are fully aware of the impact of colour on moods, for example, when painting the same picture using dark and light colours. Pupils print using polystyrene tiles effectively, basing their work on the patterns and designs of William Morris. They successfully use a wide range of materials, such as pencils of different hardness and a range of different paints. They design and make delightful and carefully sewn tapestries in the Victorian style. Three-dimensional work is also developed well through clay, for example, making Tudor houses and clay tiles and modroc masks. In Year 7, there is very strong emphasis on the make, design and evaluate process which is very well illustrated through pupils' work on Gargoyles and on illuminated letters. There are good cross-curricular links in art, but there is only a limited range of art from different cultures.
76. The quality of teaching is good. This is supported by a good long-term curriculum plan that ensures pupils are given a wide range of experiences from painting to sketching, printing using different materials and work using textiles. Assessment opportunities are now part of the curriculum but have not been fully implemented. The school is fully aware of this and art is a focus in the school improvement plan. The enthusiastic co-ordinator who has only been recently appointed has not had the opportunity to monitor lessons but this will be happening in the near future. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of visiting artists who support and teach pupils both in class, one of whom was disabled and painted by holding the brush in the mouth, and through the school's art clubs. The quality of displays ranges from very good to satisfactory and varies considerably from class to class. Pupils' work is valued by the school and examples are mounted, framed and displayed in the main entrance hall which has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and pride in their work.

## **CITIZENSHIP**

77. Citizenship was not taught at the time of the last inspection. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of twelve, boys and girls develop a satisfactory understanding of what it means to be a good citizen and a member of a modern multicultural society. Opportunities are provided for them to discuss a range of issues about citizenship in personal, social and health education. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to play active roles within the school community and thus develop a greater awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship.

78. Pupils learn that all members of the school community are equally valued and included in lessons and activities. As a result, they treat one another fairly and with respect. They develop a good understanding of the importance of equality of opportunities, for example when boys and girls play football and netball together. They understand the consequences of their actions if they do not comply with agreed standards of behaviour in school. Older pupils begin to learn about the democratic process and the way in which votes can be held. They learn that all members of the community have a right to an opinion. In one lesson on democracy, pupils were very interested in the local elections held during the week and began to consider their responsibilities as members of a community. However, there are missed opportunities when relevant current events are not related to lesson plans. Pupils from all classes elect representatives for the School Council, some of whom carry out their roles with gusto. However, it is more of a teacher led forum for airing pupils' ideas than an organised committee with roles and responsibilities. As a result, pupils' understanding of their duties and what they involve, for example, as chairperson, are under developed.
79. Teaching in citizenship is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included and encourage all to listen and contribute their thoughts and opinions in a sensible way. However, lessons are sometimes too reliant on plans to the detriment of drawing on current affairs. This has the effect of hindering debate and the promotion of important issues, such as voting. This is a relatively new area of the curriculum. Although not as fully developed as it might be, staff demonstrate a strong commitment to improving this subject which lies at the heart of the school's aims and values.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

80. Standards in design and technology are above expectations in both Year 6 and Year 7 because teachers are knowledgeable, the curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to work with a very wide range of materials, resources are used well and the design and technology room provides a very good base to work in. All pupils whatever their ability or cultural background, achieve well. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.
81. In Year 6, pupils use a good range of materials, understand their uses and have a good understanding of the design, make and evaluate processes. They understand that they need to consider the purpose of their model and a lot of work went into this aspect of their soft toy project, including elements of health and safety like care with inflammable materials. Progress is good for all pupils. Topics cover a good range of materials and skills and open-ended tasks allow everyone to achieve well at their own level.
82. In Year 7, pupils also have a good understanding of the design, make and evaluate processes, using different mechanisms for a specific purpose in their models. The majority of pupils have a good understanding of how cams, pulleys and cogs work and incorporate them appropriately in their designs. Evaluations of models are well written and very detailed. They include both positive comments and suggestions for improvement. The work on computer-aided design at the high school provides an invaluable opportunity for pupils to start to explore the potential of this medium. All pupils have made good progress over the year because they have received good teaching in a well resourced situation and can achieve at their own level.
83. Teaching and learning are good overall. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons because they are well taught and everyone works in a positive atmosphere, often helping each other. Resources are good quality and used well by teachers to promote learning. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher had assembled a superb collection of musical instruments, which the pupils handled with great respect. They learned which materials were best for which sound and recorded their thoughts on a worksheet appropriate to their



ability. Pupils sometimes work in pairs or groups and they freely move in and out of the resources cupboard selecting their materials. This type of lesson promotes pupils' personal development well.

84. In Year 7, most teachers have very good subject knowledge, which enables them to explain in detail the skills the pupils have to learn and to provide challenging tasks for them. In a lesson on computer-aided design, the teacher patiently took pupils through the steps required to produce a toolbox. Pupils were both amazed with the process and delighted with their results. Pupils are managed well, which provides an atmosphere in which everyone can work. Their response to the subject is very positive and they continue to build on the positive attitudes of sharing and helping started in Years 4 to 6. Teachers' use of assessment, however, is variable. Some carefully evaluate pupils' designs to see if they are realistic but not all do this well enough.
85. Design and technology lessons provide pupils of all ages and abilities with good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills. For instance, all Year 6 wrote an evaluation of their hydraulics project in an appropriate style; the more able pupils' projects were excellent. All pupils carefully and accurately measure their lengths of wood when making frames. The subject also promotes links with Shakespeare, through the imaginative masks made by Year 6, and with the school's reward system, through the making of chocolate or iced cakes when 20 'green cards' have been achieved.
86. Management is good and has helped to raise standards by improving both the accommodation and resources for the subject since the last inspection. The strong links with other schools ensure that the curriculum builds on what has been learned in the first school and prepares pupils well for the secondary school. Teaching and learning has been monitored conscientiously and teachers have welcomed the feedback. The new assessment and recording sheets are focusing, entirely correctly, on the skills pupils will learn, but are yet to be implemented.

## **HUMANITIES – GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

87. Standards in history and geography meet expectations by the end of Year 6 and when pupils leave the school from Year 7. Pupils' progress in both subjects is satisfactory. There is no difference in the attainment of boys, girls, pupils with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language. This maintains the position at the last inspection report.
88. Curriculum planning for both subjects is good. The subject managers ensure that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and provide good support for teachers to implement planning. Very good cross-curricular links are made between both subjects, such as: using maps for history; with information and communication technology when researching both subjects on the Internet; with art when drawing Tudor houses; with numeracy when drawing time lines to scale, and with literacy when writing in different styles such as diaries and letters. Both subjects make a good contribution to pupils' personal development when they are encouraged to work collaboratively, discuss ideas and listen to each others' opinions with respect.
89. Pupils are interested in their work and keen to start new topics. Pupils in Year 4, beginning to learn about ancient Egyptians, are fascinated with the idea of mummification and discuss it with great animation. They work with interest and enthusiasm on the Internet to find out more about Ancient Egypt. Work on display illustrates a previous topic about St Lucia which pupils can talk about clearly and with enjoyment. Although many have never been to one, pupils in Year 5 demonstrate a sound level of awareness as to the purpose and function of National Parks. Pupils, teachers and parent helpers participate fully and enthusiastically in a visit to a 'living museum' by dressing up and

taking on the role of Victorian characters. Pupils in Year 6 discuss the differences between Tudor and present day maps with thoughtfulness although they needed to revise work on finding and naming continents and countries before concentrating on the Tudors. In Year 7, pupils demonstrate some maturity and understanding when discussing reactions to the plague. One girl talked of the 'panic causing people to feel and believe anything in their desperation'. Work in class is enhanced very well by day and residential visits which not only bring the subjects alive but also make good contributions to pupils' personal and social development. For example, the work on National Parks is supported by a visit to the Peak District, and work on World War II and the Normans is reinforced during a visit to France. The range and variety of topics and activities boosts pupils' interest, enthusiasm and understanding in both subjects.

90. Teaching in both subjects is sound and has good features. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects which enables them to explain clearly and foster pupils' progress. Teachers encourage pupils' to discuss topics and share their ideas, which promotes interest in learning. Leadership in both subjects is good. Both co-ordinators have a clear idea of how they want their subject to develop and are actively devising new procedures to improve assessment procedures based on the development of pupils' skills and understanding. Both are aware of the need to monitor lesson plans to ensure that pupils of differing abilities in the same class are given appropriate work. Satisfactory use is made of homework when pupils undertake projects about Victorians and 'Places I have visited'. Both subjects make good use of a satisfactory range of resources and good use is made of a local loan service for artefacts in history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

91. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) meet expectations for pupils at the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. Whilst this appears to be a decline since the last inspection, when standards in Year 6 were judged to be above expectations, it must be remembered that curriculum requirements have changed significantly since that time. All pupils make good progress in lessons and over time, with those for whom English is not their first language having no problem in taking a full part in lessons. ICT is used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and this is in part due to the good level of resources available to them.
92. Teaching in the subject is good overall, with some satisfactory and a number of very good lessons being seen. All teachers have a good understanding of the subject and make extensive use of ICT across the curriculum. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the value of ICT to support their learning. In English, pupils make extensive use of word processing to publish their work, such as book reviews in Year 7 and accounts of Palm Sunday in Year 5. Pupils in all year groups change font, size and colour in their text for maximum effect and import graphics competently. In mathematics, many pupils independently use a reinforcement program to improve their understanding and have a good knowledge of their own progress. In a very good lesson, Year 6 pupils' understanding of symmetry was very effectively reinforced through using a program which required them to use rotation, reflection and translation in four quadrants. The teacher very effectively amended her plans as pupils, thoroughly engrossed in the activity, raced through the program with skill. Year 6 pupils also gained a good understanding of control as they programmed traffic lights to activate in correct sequence. The activities were carefully matched to pupils' abilities, so that all were included and developed a good sense of achievement. Graphics programs are used effectively to support art and design, such as work on display in the style of Seurat in Year 4 and lessons in Year 5 on the style of Matisse. Pupils in all year groups competently research information on the Internet, making a valuable contribution to ICT skills and subjects, such as history and geography. Older pupils create interesting 'PowerPoint' presentations, such as in relation to World War II in Year 6, and in Year 7 pupils are very enthusiastic about their web-site designs.

93. All this exciting work is supported by the good resources in the school. In addition to the well-equipped suite, there is a mobile suite of laptop computers and additional systems in the shared areas outside classrooms. All resources are in continuous use. The school values highly the support of the technician brought in from the high school in maintaining these and an extremely knowledgeable teaching assistant who manages the school web site, with contributions from staff and pupils. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject with energy and enthusiasm and has detailed plans to improve provision. The governing body is very supportive and the governor with responsibility for ICT has invaluable knowledge and expertise, which he places fully at the school's disposal.

### **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French)**

94. French is taught to pupils in Year 7 and standards meet expectations for their age. All pupils make good progress in developing a knowledge and understanding of vocabulary and the differences between French and English grammar. Those with special educational needs make good progress, through effective support. Those for whom English is not their first language work hard and also make good progress. They write clearly and legibly on a range of topics, such as 'Je m'appelle ...' accompanied by interesting self-portraits! They recognise vocabulary, such as for different articles of clothing, and are careful to make adjectives agree with the gender of the noun. In the lessons seen, however, there was little conversational French; all classes were focusing on writing descriptions of a new school uniform, following the unit 'Au Collège' in a commercial scheme, and most conversations between pupils were in English. Boys and girls worked very well together to create these and enjoyed seeing the efforts of their peers to draw the uniform from their description. When encouraged to do so, the majority of pupils spoke with reasonable accents.
95. Teaching is sound, with good features. Three of the four Year 7 teachers share this and their accents are good, providing a good role-model for pupils to emulate. They do not, however, consistently correct pupils' mispronunciation. Whilst this ensures all pupils are included, are happy to 'have a go' and consequently develop confidence, it does not promote their ability to make themselves understood in the language. Lessons are planned well, based on the commercial scheme, and are packed with activity. Teachers carefully match work to pupils' abilities, providing additional challenge for the more able and sympathetic support for those who find the subject more difficult. The school values greatly the input from a French assistante from the high school, who takes small groups of the most able pupils and makes an important contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
96. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. He has introduced the new scheme, which makes learning relevant and fun, and maintains an effective overview of the work pupils do. Pupils look forward to the residential visit and those who do not choose to spend an extended time in France take part in an interesting French week, which includes a day trip to the country.

### **MUSIC**

97. Music is a strength and standards are above average throughout the school as reported at the last inspection. The school places great importance on music and offers a very wide range of additional support. Extra-curricular activities are extensive and the school offers a wide variety of instrumental lessons, a choir and a school orchestra where pupils reach a high standard. During the inspection for example, some pupils had been invited to make a residential visit where one of the main focuses is music.

98. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. They follow a well-structured scheme, which helps to ensure that their musical knowledge and understanding is developed step-by-step as they move through the school. In Year 4, for example, pupils identify high, low and soft sounds made by instruments and know how they can be changed. Good links are made with science as pupils learn about sound waves and vibrations. In Year 5, pupils learn about musical notation and become increasingly aware how musical scores such as 'Ultava' can be used to tell a story. In Year 6, this theme is developed further and pupils' good knowledge is extended as they realise how music and lyrics create moods for example in the song 'Mischief, Magic and Mystery' which tells the story of Puck from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Compositional skills are developed systematically and by Year 7, pupils compose tunes in ternary form and have a good knowledge of the musical rules governing 16-bar melodies.
99. The high quality of pupils' knowledge and compositional skills is further enhanced by their high quality singing. This is led by a headteacher from a local first school and makes a very worthwhile contribution to the pupils' musical education. Pupils sing tunefully and with clear feeling a wide range of songs, some of which are from different cultures, without any instrumental accompaniment. Their sense of pitch and dynamics is impressive. They sing in two and three parts seemingly without effort. Music is enhanced through a wide range of musical opportunities provided by the school, such as the orchestra, choir and recorder clubs and nearly 100 pupils have instrumental lessons. Music is further enhanced by a range of visitors, such as instrumentalists and by visits. There have been many successes in outside competitions such as at the brass festival. Opportunities to play outside school are numerous for example in the Barnardo's Concert in the Albert Hall and in the local concert hall at Christmas. Music is very well linked to other curriculum subjects. Pupils use computer programs successfully to help with their compositions. They use electronic keyboards confidently. Lessons are often linked to topics, for example the Tudor music in Year 6. Listening skills are enhanced as pupils have to listen carefully to tunes for example identifying when a melody changes.
100. The quality of teaching is always good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and the school is fortunate in having at least one musician in each year group. The curriculum and individual lessons are well planned and ensure that progress is good both in lessons and over time. All groups of pupils are fully included in lessons and activities if they wish and they thoroughly enjoy their work. Many readily practise during their lunch break. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject very well and this contributes to the high standards. Assessment is in its early stages although opportunities have been identified in the curriculum planning. The co-ordinator is fully aware that they have not been implemented consistently and is taking appropriate steps to ensure that these opportunities become an integral part of the curriculum as soon as possible.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

101. Standards in physical education meet expectations in both Year 6 and Year 7. The curriculum is good, offering a broad range of experiences, and clubs and competition offer more able pupils good opportunities to test their skills. They often take part in inter-school activities and have been very successful in recent years, particularly in athletics and team sports like netball, soccer and rugby. However, the quality of teaching is variable because not all teachers are confident teaching the subject. The subject has not been a school priority since the last inspection, thus standards are similar to those found previously.
102. By the time they leave school, about 7 out of 10 pupils meet the national expectation to swim 25m using a recognised stroke and most have a good knowledge of water safety. Virtually all pupils understand that exercise raises their heart rate and that regular exercise is good for growth, though much of this understanding comes through science rather than physical education lessons. The importance of the warm up is well known and pupils

stretch correctly. In athletics, pupils constructively criticise their own performance in long jump and thus improve their performance. They throw and catch with improving accuracy, though boys tend to out perform girls in throwing techniques. Pupils with special educational needs or learning English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers in this subject because of its practical nature.

103. Standards in gymnastics in Year 7 are satisfactory. Pair work is of good quality because pupils listen well to each other whilst planning their sequence, consider various alternatives and take turns well. They approach the open-ended task in a variety of ways testing their skills to the limits in a safe way. For instance, some pupils try 'leap frog' at a comfortable height for them, whilst others succeed in showing a high forward roll. The quality of their balances was good and showed imagination. Pupils with special educational needs are not inhibited in these lessons and achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers. This is also true of pupils for whom English is not their first language.
104. Progress is satisfactory. All pupils develop their skills in gymnastics and dance and become more aware of strategies like attack and defence in games situations. They become more aware of the positive effects of exercise on their bodies and of how to challenge themselves in the gym or during the outdoor and adventurous activities on the residential visit. There is a growing awareness that they should analyse their performance and improve it. In all year groups, more able pupils who attend clubs make good progress because of the provision for extra-curricular clubs and inter-school competition, which enables them to match their skills against similar pupils.
105. Teaching and learning are good overall, but the quality of teaching was variable. Planning is shared across year groups and this helps each pupil receive a similar curriculum. Management of pupils and use of resources were also good in all lessons. Most teachers involve those who are injured or have forgotten their kit by making them umpires or coaches. The strongest teaching was typified by high quality demonstrations and the ability to draw the best performance out of the pupils. In a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 7, for example, the teacher challenged pupils to achieve more and improve the quality of their sequences throughout the lesson and this they did! Balances improved markedly, different levels were used well and linking movements, though remaining an area for improvement, became smoother. In a Year 6 athletics lesson the teacher used the pupils well to demonstrate their long jump technique to others and then asked them to offer suggestions for improvement. More than half the pupils immediately put up their hand! In a Year 5 games lesson, the teacher improved performance of more able pupils by cleverly modifying the game to make it more difficult for them. Weaker, though still satisfactory, teaching is typified by a lack of demonstration to illustrate the task and only satisfactory use of assessment. These combine to restrict pupils' progress because they do not have a clear understanding of the task.
106. Displays of trophies and photographs of the residential visits promote pupils' interest in the subject and remind them of what can be achieved. The school has achieved the 'Active Mark', which indicates a strong commitment to physical activity for all. Both lessons and clubs would indicate that this is the case.
107. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned and offers pupils a wide range of experiences. For instance, many types of games are taught and there are also planned additional opportunities for weaker swimmers to learn to swim. Resources for the full range of games and indoor activities are plentiful and in good condition. High quality residential visits are made available to all who wish to go and offer an exciting range of activities. Those pupils who are unable to attend, enjoy a week of interesting and varied activities in school. Extra-curricular activities are plentiful, regularly attended by many pupils and are well coached by experienced teachers and parent

helpers. There are good links with local sports clubs who regularly provide expert coaching in basketball, rugby and cricket amongst other sports. Assessment and recording procedures of pupils' attainment are currently in draft form and, because of this, assessment does not inform curriculum development or teachers' planning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Standards in Year 6 and 7 are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards met expectations. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Throughout the school all pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are involved in their work well, make good progress and many achieve above average standards. Those pupils who are from minority ethnic groups are included effectively in all aspects of religious education. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and make effective progress so that a significant number work at average standards.
109. Pupils have an above average knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. The majority of Year 4 pupils know a considerable number of stories from the Bible. Most Year 6 pupils record the features of a Christian church well and the majority of Year 7 pupils retell the story of St. Christopher accurately. A significant strength of pupils understanding is in the beliefs of other faiths. They know that Muslims go to mosques to pray and that Muhammad worked as a messenger of God. Most Year 7 pupils analyse the meaning of the Star of Islam effectively. They use charts well to compare the differences and similarities between the rituals of the Hajj and a pilgrimage to Mecca. Good links exist between the subject and geography, when pupils record the key religious places of Sikhs on a world map. The majority of Year 7 pupils record the life of Buddha well using cartoons and writing. Literacy skills are utilised well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions. A more able Year 7 pupil makes a good evaluation of a Buddhist's life when she writes, *'They only think of good thoughts and are always aware of everything that is going on in and around them. They will always be calm people and see things as they are, not how they want them to be'*. Spiritual development is well provided for when pupils evaluate and explore others' feelings. For example, Year 4 pupils reflect that throughout our lives we all have some times that are happy and that these are important to us. Furthermore, most Year 6 pupils have a deep understanding of how Muhammad might feel when he realised what Allah had done during 'The Night of Power'. There is very good provision for moral development. Year 5 pupils begin to realise that decisions are made through our beliefs and that this has consequences. Pupils also have a very good awareness of others' feelings. This was seen when Year 6 pupils consider the effects of discrimination on children and reflect on how to stop it. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are used satisfactorily to publish their work and conduct research.
110. The quality of teaching and the learning is good overall. Teachers have good levels of understanding of many faiths. As a result, pupils learn about our multi-cultural society and other people's beliefs in depth. Effective teaching of basic skills means that pupils learn to understand the significance of symbols from several faiths. Teachers have high expectations of pupils to make decisions for themselves, which allows them to discuss moral dilemmas. Good teaching methods are used when pupils act out stories and consider problems which mean that pupils learn about events and people's feelings more deeply. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning as a result of the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. They behave well and concentrate in lessons because of the good management skills of teachers. The subject gives pupils very good opportunities to develop social skills when they work together in groups. For instance, Year 5 pupils act out situations where important decisions are made in groups. Teachers develop pupils' numeracy skills and religious education knowledge satisfactorily when they analyse data.

Less effective teaching, however, does not ensure that more able pupils consistently achieve the extension activities planned. Some teachers do not include extension activities in their planning. Additionally, teachers' marking does not consistently explain to pupils how they could improve their work.

111. Management of religious education is satisfactory overall. The new co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future but has not drawn up an action plan. Good improvements have been achieved since the last inspection. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject has been improved so that planning, teaching and pupils' books are analysed satisfactorily. Religious education lessons make a very effective contribution to the provision of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' multi-cultural awareness has been developed and the spiritual development of pupils in religious education lessons has been improved to give pupils many rich opportunities to reflect on ideas and their learning. The co-ordinator has recently developed a good assessment sheet but it is not in use.