

# INSPECTION REPORT

## CAISTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Caister-on-Sea  
Great Yarmouth

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120795

Headteacher: Mr M O'Reilly

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston  
20704

Dates of inspection: 25-28 November 2002

Inspection number: 248176

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8 – 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Maurice Sendall
Date of previous inspection:	July 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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Libby Dickson 19653	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Andy Howe 23870	Team inspector	Design and technology History Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Michael Raven 3961	Team inspector	Science Physical education	
David Mylroie 28069	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Caroline Robinson 21597	Team inspector	English Geography	
Marianne Harris 23288	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education Pupils with English as an additional language	
Robina Scahill 27654	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a middle school of average size with 437 pupils, situated in the small seaside village of Caister. Few pupils enter or leave the school at other than the normal times. Under 12 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is a little below the national average. Around 23 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, mostly with moderate learning difficulties, and five pupils have statements of these needs; these figures are broadly in line with those found nationally. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority families, and none has English as an additional language. The attainment of pupils on entry is average. The school is a member of the local Education Action Zone (EAZ) that provides support particularly for the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

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

This is a good school, much appreciated by parents, where improving standards have led to two Achievement Awards in the last two years. Very strong leadership by the headteacher and consistently good teaching are important reasons for these successes. Relationships are very good, which explains why pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy school. The curriculum is planned well, extra funds are used very well to raise standards, and the school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher is a very good leader with a clear view of how to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Standards are above average in mathematics, speaking and listening, music and French.
- Pupils' attitudes to work are very good and enable them to get the most out of lessons.
- The quality of teaching is good and ensures that pupils learn new skills quickly.
- Very good recording and tracking of pupils' personal development helps teachers support pupils well throughout their time at school.

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

- The shortage of computers means that pupils are not able to develop fully their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in all subjects.
- In reading, the shortage of fiction books and weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' levels of attainment are hampering further improvement in standards.
- The school's improvement plan does not provide a sufficiently long-term view of future developments to meet the challenges ahead.

*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 improvement since it was last inspected in July 2000. The school has addressed the main issues from that report well, and standards in writing have improved significantly, assessment procedures are now sound and provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is now satisfactory. The school now has clear and appropriate targets for future developments, but lacks a long term strategy of where it wants to be in three or four years time. Other significant improvements include higher standards in mathematics, better curriculum planning and quicker

progress of pupils in Year 7 who now attain the standards expected of them. In view of the strengths in the leadership and teaching, the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards are improving in all three subjects in the national tests, and at a faster rate than is found nationally. The school achieved its challenging target in mathematics this year but fell short in English. The school does well when compared with similar schools. This inspection finds that the school has maintained these standards in all three subjects. Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics because of the good planning of lessons and rigorous use of assessment to see where pupils need to do better. The school's recent focus on developing pupils' speaking and writing skills is now showing dividends and standards are improving in both. Pupils' reading skills are average, but too few develop the more advanced skills to enable them to gain information quickly from texts. Pupils' work is above average in music and French because of the high quality of the specialist teaching provided, and average in all other subjects. In ICT, pupils' standards are average, but their further development is hindered by the shortage of computers in classrooms; this means that ICT is not used enough as an everyday tool for learning. These standards represent sound achievement given pupils' attainment on entry. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well in lessons and by specialist work in small groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very proud of their school, enjoy their work and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, both in class and outside in the playground. Pupils know the rules well, and acts of bullying are rare.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, work independently when required and are quick to show initiative. Relationships are very good; they have a very good impact on pupils' behaviour and the progress they make.
Attendance	Satisfactory, although too many parents take their children on holiday in term time and this affects the progress of those involved.

## 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.*

Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good and meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers are good at teaching numeracy skills so that pupils are confident with number. Literacy lessons are planned well, with a good focus on developing pupils' writing, speaking and listening skills. Nearly all lessons have a brisk pace and teachers make learning fun for pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and they respond well by working hard and listening carefully to the teacher. The joint planning of lessons mostly works well, and ensures consistency of teaching and learning across each year group. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach; this ensures that pupils learn the correct skills and have the confidence to ask questions. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants focus clearly on pupils' particular needs, and they make good progress as a result. The school uses specialist teachers very well, whose expertise accounts for above-average standards in French and music. The school's involvement in the Challenging Education project<sup>1</sup> has improved the way teachers get pupils to solve problems and work closely together.

Strong features of pupils' learning include:

- their confidence to take risks;
- their keenness to learn from mistakes; and
- the effort they put into their work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well organised, with a good focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Insufficient use is made of ICT skills across the curriculum. A good range of activities after school enriches the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good. Pupils are supported well, have clear targets set for them and their progress is monitored systematically. Pupils with statements are fully included in all activities.

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<sup>1</sup> This project is an EAZ initiative aimed at improving pupils' team work and helping them reflect on their own learning.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Sound spiritual provision encourages pupils to think deeply about important issues. Very good provision for pupils' social development is reflected in pupils' respect for others in the school, and good moral provision gives them a clear sense of right and wrong. Sound cultural provision, with some good opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of cultures in Britain and other countries.
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Sound assessment procedures, but those in English lack the accuracy to raise standards further. Very good monitoring of pupils' personal development helps teachers provide effective support.
The school's links with parents	Satisfactory, and parents speak highly of the school. However, there is not enough informal contact between parents and the school.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Very strong leadership by the headteacher who has a clear view of how to raise standards of teaching and learning. Good support from the deputy head and senior staff who share the headteacher's high expectations of pupils and staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They do this well and are led well by a knowledgeable chairperson. Governors take a keen interest in the school, and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored systematically, and teachers benefit from good guidance as to how they can improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes very good use of EAZ funds to raise standards. Sound procedures to ensure the best value from the school's spending. The forward planning has appropriate targets but is only for the year ahead and does not provide a long-term view of what the school needs to do.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good quality of teaching</li> <li>• Their child's good progress</li> <li>• The high expectations the school has of their child's work and behaviour</li> <li>• The headteacher's very good leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like more everyday contact with the teachers</li> </ul>

The inspection team endorses parents' very positive views, and agrees that there is too little informal communication between the school and parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has worked hard and successfully to raise the levels of pupils' attainment over recent years. Better monitoring of the quality of teaching, teachers' higher expectations and a clearer focus on developing pupils' basic skills have all contributed to this improvement; this has been recognised by two Achievement Awards in the last two years.
2. Standards are improving in all three subjects in the national tests, and at a faster rate than is found nationally. In 1999, standards were well below average in mathematics and below average in English and science; in this year's national tests they were above average in mathematics and average in English and science. The school achieved its challenging target in mathematics this year but fell short in English. The school does well in mathematics and science when compared with similar schools. Looking at pupils' progress from their Year 2 national test results, it has been good in science, average in mathematics but below average in English. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
3. This inspection finds that the school has maintained these standards in all three subjects. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, particularly numeracy, because of the good planning of lessons and rigorous use of assessment to see where they need to do better. The school has worked hard recently to improve pupils' speaking and writing skills, and standards are improving as a result. Standards in reading are average, but:
  - too few pupils move on to develop more advanced reading skills that enable them to gain information quickly from texts;
  - the lack of sufficiently challenging fiction books holds back pupils' progress; and
  - teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not always accurate, and does not provide enough guidance on how pupils can improve their reading.
4. In science, while standards are average, pupils' progress is sometimes held back by teachers relying too much on pupils recording their work on worksheets; these ask too little of pupils and do little to develop a deeper scientific understanding. Pupils' work is above average in music and French, where specialist teaching develops their skills and confidence well, and average in all other subjects. In ICT, pupils' standards are average, but their further development is hindered by the shortage of computers in classrooms; this means that ICT is not used enough as an everyday tool for learning.
5. Given their standards on entry to the school, pupils achieve sound standards overall. In mathematics, however, they make very good progress; in relation to their weak mathematical skills on entry to the school, they achieve very well to reach standards that are above average by Year 6. In the last report, the standards attained by pupils in Year 7 were too low. The school has stepped up the pace of teaching in these classes, and teachers now have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, these pupils now make good progress and teachers at the High School speak very positively of their standards.
6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Good teaching of basic skills with a clear focus on pupils' individual targets ensures that these pupils grow in confidence, and by the time they take the national tests in Year 6 all attain or come close to national standards in all three subjects. More able pupils generally attain the high standards expected of them. In the latest national tests, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 that attained the higher levels was above average in mathematics and

average in English. In mathematics, the very good planning of challenging tasks enables gifted mathematicians to achieve very high standards in the national tests.

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

7. Pupils look forward to coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning. They are eager to learn and keen to contribute. For example, there is no shortage of volunteers to answer questions in lessons or assemblies. Throughout the school, pupils exhibit a good level of interest in the work they are doing. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils settled quietly to the task of converting a piece of prose into a script. They worked well in pairs, and were justifiably proud of their finished pieces of work. Pupils are very good at collaborating with each other, making the best of each other's expertise to produce good standards of work. In a geography lesson, for example, Year 5 pupils were comparing Caister and London; they worked well in groups, listened carefully to each other's ideas and respected ideas different to their own. Their work by the end was of good quality, and had gained much from the pooling of their knowledge.

8. Behaviour is generally good in lessons, and often very good. A few pupils become restless and misbehave, but teachers manage them well and disruptions are minimised. In a small number of lessons observed, usually when the teaching was uninspiring, the poor behaviour of a number of boys affected the rate of learning of the whole class. In most cases, however, pupils follow instructions, work well together with their peers and develop very good relationships with one another. Pupils' behaviour is good around the school, for example, when pupils move from one classroom to another, in the playground and in assembly. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying, sexism or racism, and parents and pupils feel that if bullying occurs it is taken seriously and dealt with effectively. There were two fixed term exclusions over the past academic year, but no permanent exclusions.

9. Pupils' personal development is very good. This is a direct response to the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. When they are asked to carry out tasks in lessons, they show initiative and work responsibly. They have well-developed social skills and think carefully about their own learning. For example, following a recent 'geography challenge' one pupil wrote, *I think it is good that we all communicate well and everyone gets a part of the job in the group.* Pupils are at ease expressing their feelings to the class teacher and in front of their fellow pupils. This was particularly evident in a Year 4 personal, social and health education lesson, when the teacher asked pupils about their experiences of feeling 'left out', and one pupil said, *I felt really sad that no one could see me.* Pupils like and have confidence in their teachers. When a group of pupils, in discussions with inspectors, were asked what they felt were the strengths of the school, one pupil said, *it makes you feel special* and another said *I enjoy school because teachers try to make the lessons fun and you get responsibilities.* One pupil particularly valued the school because pupils have a right to say things. Pupils enjoy the responsibility of being a member of the school council, which has a very good impact on their social development by showing them how to work together as a team and develop skills in consulting and negotiating. They also relish opportunities to take on any day-to-day responsibilities to contribute to the school community.

10. Pupils' moral development is good. In their religious education lessons, Year 4 pupils showed a very good understanding of important issues in a sensible discussion on fear and jealousy, and a Year 6 class showed a deep respect for religious objects. In their daily lives, pupils show they have developed a strong sense of right and wrong. During the inspection, one boy found a £1 coin on the floor and without hesitation handed it to the teacher. Pupils' spiritual development is sound; in poems they have written, Year 7 pupils show a sense of reflecting about the world beyond themselves; for example, on the theme of 'Gifts', one pupil wrote, *I have brought you freedom so you'll never be trapped,* while another wrote *I have brought you laughter, so you will always be happy.*

11. Overall, attendance is satisfactory, at 94 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence at 0.2 per cent is less than half the national average. In this resort area, a number of parents take their children on holidays during term-time, which has an adverse effect on attendance figures. Already, this academic year, 18 per cent of pupils have had absences due to term-time holidays.

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

12. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and of a higher standard to that reported in the school's previous inspection. Overall, nearly two thirds of lessons were good or better and more than a fifth were very good or excellent. Parents speak highly of the quality of teaching, with 96 per cent of those replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire saying that it was good. The quality of some teaching in the Year 7 classes was criticised in the previous report, and the school has responded well by raising teachers' expectations of pupils' work, managing pupils' behaviour more effectively and planning lessons more carefully.

13. This inspection finds that teachers' planning of lessons provides a good structure to pupils' work, with clear statements of what different groups should learn. Teachers plan lessons together in year groups; this mostly works well and ensures consistency from class to class. It does, however, occasionally cause problems when the plans are not appropriate for a particular group of pupils and the teacher lacks the experience to change them. This happened in a history lesson when pupils came into the classroom in a very lively mood and were clearly not keen on completing a routine task producing booklets. The teacher stuck to the planning and pupils soon became restless, behaved badly and few completed the task by the end. In the main, though, teachers manage classes well with a firm but kind approach, and parents see this as an important reason why their children are so enthusiastic about school.

14. Teachers' expectations are generally high, and challenge pupils to produce their best work. In science and history, however, teachers give pupils too many tasks that are repetitive, and more able pupils in particular are held back.

15. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, and teachers display a thorough knowledge of the national strategies. Teachers are particularly skilled at teaching mathematics, and this explains why standards are above average. They make lessons interesting by working at a fast pace and using resources well; these strategies help pupils learn quickly and enjoy mathematics. In the mental warm up session, for example, they have pupils writing answers on small white boards that they hold up in triumph when they have the answer. Teachers set challenging mathematical targets so that pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and are clear about the next stage in their learning. Teachers are confident teaching literacy, and have a good knowledge of the national strategy. They teach the basic skills of reading well, and most pupils read fluently as a result. The school's recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills has paid good dividends, as can be seen in the imaginative and sensitive pieces of work displayed around the school. The teaching of reading skills is generally good, but teachers are not always clear enough about the assessment of pupils' levels of attainment. This results in pupils being given some tasks that are not challenging enough to develop the more advanced skills of inference, deduction and skimming of texts. In addition, teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to read in school. These factors help to explain why pupils' progress in English is slower than in mathematics and science when comparing their national test results in Year 2 with those in Year 6.

16. A strength of the teaching throughout the school is in teachers' knowledge of subjects; this gives pupils the confidence to ask questions in the knowledge that the answers will be accurate. This is

particularly the case in mathematics, art and design, history, ICT, French and music, and has a good impact on the standards that pupils attain.

17. The school has gained much benefit from its involvement in the Challenging Education project. This has shown teachers the value of extending pupils by setting them challenges, encouraging them to reflect on their learning and giving them clear guideline to enable them to work co-operatively. This was seen to good effect in a science lesson, when pupils were challenged to design and connect a set of Christmas lights to decorate the entrance of the school. The teacher gave pupils just the right amount of information to enable them to start their own investigation, and left them to it. Pupils were soon busy planning their circuits in close co-operation, and they were careful to value each other's contributions as is required in this project. The end of the lesson came too soon for the pupils, who worked feverishly throughout and learned much about circuits. A big factor in the project's success is the contribution of the Advanced Skills Teacher. She helps to design the challenges, teaches demonstration lessons and trains other teachers in the project's methods. Importantly, this teacher sets an excellent example by her own teaching. Her lessons have a breathtaking pace that sweeps pupils along so that they learn almost without realising they have been working.

18. At the start of lessons, teachers share the learning intentions with pupils, and this works well; it helps pupils to focus on the task, gives them a secure knowledge of their own learning and enables teachers to make accurate assessments of their progress. Teachers are good at asking the right questions to make pupils think, and all are careful to pitch their questions so that each pupil can contribute to these sessions. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and more able pupils contribute at their own level. Teachers generally use the available resources well but do not plan sufficiently for the use of ICT across the curriculum, mostly because of the lack of computers in classrooms.

19. Teachers in the Year 7 classes work hard to continue pupils' progress, and staff at the High School speak highly of their standards when they arrive, especially in French. Teachers' good planning provides pupils with demanding work, and analysis of pupils' standards by the end of Year 7 shows a good improvement from their Year 6 national test results especially at the higher levels. They manage pupils' behaviour well by taking into account their growing maturity and giving them ever more responsibility for the way they conduct themselves.

20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and ensures that pupils make good progress towards their targets. Teachers set achievable targets and provide activities that are well matched to individual pupil's needs. Pupils are clear about how their targets can be achieved and are proud when they have made that step. Specialist teaching by the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs supports pupils' literacy and numeracy work well, and explains why all attain or come close to national standards in English and mathematics by Year 6. Teaching assistants make a sound contribution to pupils' learning by careful prompting that enables pupils to answer questions with a good chance of success.

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

21. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are good overall, and have improved from the last inspection. Particular strengths are:

- the provision for the teaching of French and German in Year 6;
- the setting arrangements for mathematics so that work is well matched to the needs of pupils; and
- the very good use of outside agencies to enhance the curriculum.

22. The main weakness is that, due to the shortage of computers and lack of Internet access in classrooms, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT as a tool for learning in all subjects. The school meets all the statutory requirements with regard to the curriculum it provides.

23. The overall quality of curriculum planning is good, and the school meets all the statutory requirements with regard to the curriculum it provides. Teachers in the same year groups plan together once a week. Subject leaders provide model plans and check individual lesson plans on a regular basis. This works well in subjects where the co-ordinator encourages individual teachers to adapt their plans to the needs of the groups they are teaching. For example, in mathematics all of the plans seen had been adapted, which contributed to the overall quality of teaching and learning being good. Where this practice was not followed teachers were not able to use their own creativity and the lesson was less successful. In one personal, social and health education lesson in Year 5, the lesson was particularly successful because the teacher had built upon the generic plan that had been produced for him. The school has good schemes of work for all subjects, mostly based on national guidance, and these ensure that pupils have work that systematically develops their skills and understanding. Generally, these have been adapted to the needs of the school and are being used effectively to maintain and improve standards.

24. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual targets are generally well thought out, and are reviewed regularly. Their best targets are for literacy, and give clear goals for pupils and teachers. Pupils' targets for mathematics are more varied in quality, and while some give clear goals to achieve in terms of skills to be mastered, others are vague, for example requiring the pupil to 'master the four rules of number'. The school's provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good; teachers ensure their inclusion in all activities, and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement. The co-ordinators for pupils with special educational needs from the First and Middle School meet regularly to discuss pupils in Year 3 who will be transferring to the Middle School. This works very well, and ensures that teachers have a thorough understanding of pupils' individual needs as soon as they start at the new school.

25. Good emphasis is given to teaching numeracy and literacy in mathematics and English lessons. The extra support given to pupils in these lessons by learning support assistants and other teachers helps pupils make good progress. Teachers provide some good opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects, producing line graphs, for example in science, to illustrate their findings about materials cooling, and creating useful spreadsheets in ICT to plan an imaginary party. Teachers enhance pupils' literacy and writing skills in subjects other than English, and in-depth reading and vivid accounts of events from the past enliven their work in history. Teachers do, however, miss some valuable opportunities in subjects such as science and design and technology, where their over-use of worksheets demands too little of pupils' literacy skills.

26. The school extends the curriculum well and makes good provision for extra-curricular activities. The good range of activities provided after school and at lunch times is well attended. These activities include choir, recorders, chess, technology and engineering, football and gymnastics. Pupils are also given worthwhile opportunities to take part in residential activities at places such as Holt Hall, Hilltops and Kingswood. Both pupils and parents are appreciative of these activities.

27. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It has a well-developed scheme of work that also includes good provision for pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship. Teachers make good use of special times when pupils sit in a circle and discuss important issues such as bullying and friendship. In one very effective lesson, pupils in Year 5 were learning to accept differences between different people through a well-planned activity based on people sitting together on a park bench. This worked well, and pupils were soon acting out situations that illustrated

how people behave in different ways. The school also has a good scheme of work for sex education that begins in Year 4 when pupils begin to consider relationships between family and friends. This is developed well in Year 5 to include personal hygiene. In Years 6 and 7 pupils learn important facts about puberty, the science of reproduction and the importance of making informed choices. There is good provision for pupils in Years 6 and 7 to learn about the problems of drugs misuse, and the dangers of alcohol and smoking. The police visit the school to help with this.

28. Staff are committed to the personal development of each pupil, and this is reflected in good relationships and the very good attitudes displayed by pupils. Parents feel that the school's attitudes and values are having a positive effect on their children, helping them to become mature and responsible.

29. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are valued as individuals and they are encouraged to respect opinions different to their own. Personal, social and health education lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to explore their own and others' feelings within a secure setting. A good example of this was seen when Year 4 pupils were encouraged to consider how they would feel if they were 'left out', and gave examples of their own experiences. The teacher handled the theme sensitively and pupils responded in a mature way. Religious education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They reflect on issues such as the importance of forming relationships and why there is suffering in the world. There are generally, however, too few occasions for spirituality and reflection during other subject lessons. Planned opportunities for developing pupils' spiritual awareness are not established throughout the curriculum, and teachers miss some opportunities to develop pupils' skills of reflection through literature, art and music.

30. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development, and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Great store is placed on the teaching of moral values and on pupils understanding the behaviour that is expected of them. The school rules are understood and adhered to by pupils, and give them a thorough understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable. There is a positive ethos of respect which is promoted by staff, and the headteacher takes a clear and effective lead in this area. Pupils are actively encouraged to express themselves and appreciate the views of others. Many good opportunities are provided both within assemblies and personal and social education lessons to remind pupils how to behave and the value of right and wrong. In lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to explore and discuss moral issues such as child labour in the developing world and crime in the community.

31. Pupils' social development is promoted very well. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and form constructive relationships. The school offers a good range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. In classrooms they undertake tasks for the teacher that includes taking the register to the office after each registration. Around the school pupils volunteer to pick up litter at break and lunchtimes. For the older pupils there is the opportunity to become house captains and take on responsibility for running the school stationery shop. The school council works well. Representatives are very clear, enthusiastic and confident about their role in 'making the school better'. Personal, social and health education lessons are helpful in giving pupils the opportunity to practise responsible citizenship, take responsibility and be more aware of their actions. Pupils' social development is further extended through the various extracurricular activities, educational trips and residential visits for all year groups that the school organises. They are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves and they regularly raise money for a number of charities including the Children's Society, UNICEF and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

32. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. The historical topics of the Tudors, Victorians and wartime Britain give pupils a good insight into the cultural traditions of their own country, and these topics are supported by well-planned visits to museums and castles. In recent times the school has held events such as Viking day, North American Indian day and Medieval day and these have provided worthwhile opportunities to learn about other traditions. The school develops pupils' awareness of how other people live by its good links with a school in the Philippines, and informative visits from Swedish students. In art and music, pupils study the works of famous artists and composers, but there are limited opportunities for them to develop cultural appreciation in English lessons. Different faiths are explored well within religious education lessons.

33. The school has good links with the local community, which are providing practical benefits to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils sing to support charities, give concerts for senior citizens and have taken part in a project to consider the needs of the local community. As part of this pupils helped to clean up the local beach. The school make very good use of visitors to supplement the curriculum. For example, an RAF officer has provided good support to a technology project in Year 5, the police and fire brigade visit regularly and recently there was a visit from a local member of the community to talk to the children about Diwali.

34. The school has very good relationships with other schools and the University of East Anglia. There is a useful training each year when teachers from the Middle School, the First School and the High School get together to discuss issues to do with the planning of the curriculum. This works very well; it ensures that the work carried out at the Middle School builds upon that of the First School and prepares the pupils appropriately for the High School. Good procedures also exist to smooth the transition between pupils in Years 3 and 4 and Years 7 and 8. Membership of an EAZ is also beginning to enrich the curriculum, particularly through the Challenging Education programme; among other things, this emphasises the need to respect other people's contributions during lessons, and provides excellent Challenge Days where pupils are given exciting tasks to develop their problem solving skills. The EAZ has also provided a number of very good literacy and numeracy courses that have improved teachers' subject knowledge.

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

35. The school makes good provision for the care of its pupils. Teachers know them well and, where appropriate, work effectively in partnership with other agencies to ensure pupils' welfare.

36. Pupils' behaviour is monitored and promoted well. There is a clear and consistently applied policy, involving well-promoted rules reinforced by rewards and sanctions. Pupils understand, and are influenced by, these arrangements. A good monitoring system is in place for pupils whose behaviour causes concern, and parents are involved where necessary. The school actively discourages oppressive behaviour. Pupils are regularly reminded that there are to be 'no put-downs' against other pupils, and the personal and social education programme aims to promote appropriate attitudes and respect for others.

37. A key issue of the last inspection was to improve the accuracy and use of assessment. Much work has been done and good progress has been made. There are now sound systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and teachers make better use these assessments to help plan work for pupils.

38. Teachers make very good use of assessment information in mathematics. The information gathered is used well to set pupils according to their levels of attainment. A careful check is kept on their progress and pupils are moved between sets to meet their changing learning needs. These very

effective systems have played a big part in the school's improved national test results in mathematics. Although the use of assessment in English is better than it was, there remain some weaknesses. Teachers' assessments are not as accurate as they are in mathematics, and give too little guidance on how pupils can improve. Assessment in most subjects other than English, mathematics and science is patchy. There are no procedures for assessing attainment and progress in religious education, which is without a subject co-ordinator. In some subjects such as art and design and physical education there are good plans to try out new assessment systems in the near future.

39. The assessment co-ordinator plays an important role in the development of the school's assessment procedures, and appropriately occupies a position in the school's leadership team. In English, mathematics and science the results of national and other tests and assessments are carefully recorded and analysed. This information is appropriately used to give predictions and set targets for pupils' achievement as they go through the school. Appropriate use is made of information technology to record the data gathered, and all staff have ready access to these electronic records.

40. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and learning support assistants have a good understanding of the needs of individual pupils with special educational needs, and ensure that they have opportunities to take part in all school activities. Pupils' contributions are valued and their achievements are well recognised. This is particularly true for those pupils who have statements of special educational need, and ensures that these pupils make good progress.

41. Health and safety arrangements are good. Suitable procedures, which involve governors, to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained. The school has recently carried out a full health and safety audit, and followed this up with the necessary modifications. The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles through topics on eating healthily and its 'healthy tuck shop' that sells fruit to pupils at break times. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. There is a suitably trained person with responsibility for this area, although there has been no recent training for other members of staff. The school nurse visits regularly to offer support to those pupils who have personal difficulties.

42. The school has sound systems in place for monitoring and promoting attendance. Parents are asked to notify the office on the first day of their child's absence, and any unexplained absences are followed up promptly. Pupils with very good attendance are rewarded at the end of each term.

43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils who transfer from other schools are helped to settle in an atmosphere free from anxiety, and provided with extra support if necessary. In lessons, many teachers promote pupils' self-esteem effectively by encouraging them, praising good efforts and directing help to them when appropriate. Pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated enthusiastically in the weekly Celebration Assembly. The headteacher holds regular informal individual interviews with all pupils to discuss not only their academic work, but also their interests and achievements both in and out of school. Through these discussions he acquires a good knowledge of all pupils in the school.

44. The school has received many letters from parents and carers expressing their appreciation for all that staff have done for their children.

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

45. Through the questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents expressed very positive views of the school. They say their children enjoy being at school and see the teaching, the progress their children make and the way the school is led and managed as particularly strong areas. They feel behaviour is good, and that the school is helping children child to become mature and responsible.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. A number of parents, however, feel that the school could work more closely with them. They would welcome more opportunities to meet teachers informally on a day-to-day basis. The inspection team feel that this criticism is justified. While the school regularly canvasses parents' opinions on aspects of its work, there is scope to develop its partnership with parents further. The school acknowledges that it could do more to involve parents, both in the school and in their child's education, and has already started to seek the views of parent governors on this matter.

46. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory overall. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about what is going on in the school and encourage involvement. The prospectus contains all the required information. The governors' annual report to parents omits some detail about which parents should be informed, including the school's security procedures and arrangements for pupils with disabilities. Consultation evenings are held each term and attendance at these is reported to be high. The school makes its expectations for parental support clear and home-school agreements have been introduced and signed by nearly all parents in the school. The quality of pupils' annual reports is satisfactory, and they give parents a clear picture of their child's attainment and progress.

47. Parents' involvement in the work of the school and in their child's education is satisfactory. Several parents serve as governors, and a small number help in classrooms regularly. The school recently advertised for more volunteer helpers and has received some further offers of help. There is good support for the school from the Friends Association that arranges fund-raising and social events. The majority of parents help their child learn at home and make a good contribution towards their education by listening to them read and ensuring homework is completed.

48. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved with their child's support. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns and are consulted in all procedures. Parents of pupils with statements have indicated their appreciation of the school's support and the way teachers include their children in all school activities.

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

49. The leadership of the school is very good, and clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher has a clear vision of the quality of teaching and learning expected in every classroom and communicates this well to staff. He has developed a very positive ethos within all members of the staff team. The school's commitment to raising standards through the Challenging Education initiative has resulted in an overall improvement in the quality of pupils' learning. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff, who make a significant contribution to raising achievement, for instance in mathematics. The deputy headteacher has a good range of delegated responsibilities and sufficient time to carry them out well. The headteacher's determined focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in the good standards observed during the inspection. The monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and other senior staff has been beneficial in developing a consistent approach to classroom management. Teachers are observed regularly, and given useful feedback on their strengths and weaknesses.

50. The headteacher works hard to develop good relationships in the school, and has the skills to mix rigour with sensitivity to the needs of individuals. The staff and governors have developed a very clear set of aims for the school and these are reflected in the good relationships and high expectations observed during the inspection.

51. The governing body has a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. During the inspection governors discussed standards of attainment, behaviour and teaching with a clarity that

comes from frequent visits and a system that links governors to the subjects of the curriculum. Governors carry out their legal responsibilities in a satisfactory manner, and contribute well to the strategic development of the school through the school improvement planning process. The improvement plan is a sound tool with appropriate priorities, and strengths in areas such as professional development and premises improvement. However, it is only a one-year plan, and so there is no long-term blueprint for the school's future. In the context of possible school re-organisation this is an important omission. The governing body has developed a useful plan for its own improvement. Governors, under the experienced leadership of the chairperson, are very supportive of the school. They work hard, meet frequently and monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan at each meeting. An annual self-review procedure leads to a useful report on one aspect of the school's work being considered at every governing body meeting. As part of the self-review process a questionnaire has been circulated to parents; this was a valuable way of canvassing parents' views of the school and provided valuable information to guide future planning.

52. The school has a well-established system for evaluating teachers' performance. This is effectively delegated to senior staff who draw on the headteacher's evaluations of teaching in setting appropriate targets to improve teachers' skills and pupils' progress.

53. The school has taken effective action to deal with the issues identified at the time of the last inspection, working to a well-thought-out action plan. In particular, the school has:

- raised standards in writing;
- improved the quality of assessment procedures; and
- developed the spiritual and cultural provision.

The school is well placed to continue to build on these improvements with an effective staff team and the headteacher's strong leadership.

54. Newly qualified teachers are well supported during their first year of teaching and benefit from good guidance from experienced members of staff. The school works effectively with the University of East Anglia to train teachers.

55. The school's financial planning supports school improvement well. The headteacher and governors have a commitment to spending near to the limits of the budget on staffing and resources in order to keep class sizes down and to ensure resources are at least adequate. The employment of a full time co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs is a good use of school funds, and she supports pupils and teachers well by helping with the setting of pupils' targets and providing specialist teaching. Subject co-ordinators bid for funds for their areas, and the school has good procedures to evaluate these in line with the priorities in the school improvement plan.

56. The support of the EAZ has been very important to the school's recent improvement. In addition to the training in the Challenging Education initiative, the provision of effective ICT technical support has been invaluable. The use of the specialist computer software has been beneficial in targeting improvements in mathematics, boys' achievement and the standards attained by more able pupils.

57. Staff are well deployed and the use of subject specialists, for instance in music, physical education, French and ICT, is a significant strength. This ensures that pupils benefit from teachers' good expertise and has led to improved standards in these subjects. Resources are satisfactory overall, although there are some shortages of fiction books in English and class reading books are often in poor condition; these do little to encourage a love of reading. In ICT, the provision of a new computer suite has had a positive impact on standards, but there is still an inadequate number of computers to ensure new technology is used in other subjects. The school has plans to buy new computers in the very near future.

58. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The availability of specialist facilities supports good teaching and learning. For example, in design and technology a spacious and well-equipped room affords good storage and an ideal context for teaching the subject. However, the temporary classrooms are poor; conditions are cramped and lack basic facilities. The outdoor play area is good, with a large playing field. Recent work to improve the administrative area and staff room has been accomplished to a high standard. The school has made good adaptations to the building to enable access for those with disabilities.

59. The school has sound procedures to ensure that the best value is gained from its spending, for example, comparing its spending with similar schools, and ensuring competitive quotations are obtained for supplies, projects and services. Good use is made of national and local authority performance data to compare national test results and set targets.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

60. In order to continue the current rate of improvement, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) make more effective use of ICT by:**
  - a. increasing the number of computers to at least national levels; and
  - b. ensuring that opportunities for using ICT are written into the planning of all subjects. (Paragraphs 4, 18, 22, 57, 89, 98, 100, 108, 109, 113, 123)
  
- (2) raise standards further in English by:**
  - a. developing sharper assessment procedures so that teachers are clear about the levels of pupils' attainment;
  - b. using this information to extend all groups of pupils;
  - c. improving resources so that pupils have a good range of books to read; and
  - d. providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects; (Paragraphs 3, 15, 25, 38, 62, 67, 68, 88)
  
- (3) produce a longer term plan for the school's improvement.** (Paragraph 51)

### **Other issues the school may want to include in its future planning:**

- the development of whole school assessment procedures for all subjects; (Paragraphs 38, 51, 92, 97, 108) and
- the fostering of better informal links with parents; (Paragraph 45)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

66
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

84
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	27	24	1	0	0
Percentage	3	18	41	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents just less than two percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Y3 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	437
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	51

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Y3 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	100

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	6.1

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2
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	57	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	43	55
	Girls	43	46	49
	Total	80	89	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (76)	81 (78)	95 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	45	45
	Girls	41	47	44
	Total	76	92	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (71)	84 (82)	81 (80)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
420	2	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
4	0	0

No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0
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*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: Y3 – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	27.3

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	909683
Total expenditure	905065
Expenditure per pupil	2062
Balance brought forward from previous year	8856
Balance carried forward to next year	13474

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	437
Number of questionnaires returned	103

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	53	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	56	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	2	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	51	9	0	2
The teaching is good.	43	53	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	46	7	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	46	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	51	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	44	14	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	42	51	2	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	50	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	41	7	4	4

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

### **ENGLISH**

#### **Strengths:**

- Good teaching with well planned lessons;
- Good speaking and listening skills.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Inaccurate assessments of pupils' standards in reading and writing;
- Too few opportunities to develop pupils' writing in other subjects;
- Unsatisfactory quality and range of books, particularly fiction.

61. Standards in English have improved in recent years faster than the national trend. In the latest national tests, the standards attained by pupils in Year 6 were in line with those found nationally and those of pupils from similar schools. Pupils in Year 7 are making satisfactory progress towards achieving the higher levels. These standards represent sound achievement given pupils' average levels of attainment on entry

62. Standards in reading by Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected nationally but few pupils move on to develop the more advanced skills of inference, deduction and skimming and scanning text for information. Pupils' choice of books is not always well matched to their ability. While most have a sound range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words some still struggle with simple words such as *stripy* and *expect*. Teachers create enthusiasm for reading with a range of posters advertising new literature, records of pupils' book reviews, individual reading diaries and a reading achievement ladder. Teachers provide too few opportunities for pupils to read in school and their progress is not accurately monitored in order that appropriate support can be provided. At the end of Year 7, some pupils are achieving the higher levels and can read with confidence, expression and due regard for the audience

63. Standards in writing by Year 6 are in line with national expectations. This represents a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection, and reflects the work done by the school on the basic skills of spelling and handwriting. The school works hard to develop pupils' love and enjoyment of writing, and provide some good opportunities for extended writing in history, geography and religious Education. They miss other valuable opportunities, however, particularly in subjects such as science and design and technology. The celebration of pupils' achievements in writing is a strong feature of the school. By the time they reach Year 6 pupils have good handwriting skills and their work is well presented. They produce lively and interesting pieces of writing and show good developing knowledge of a wide vocabulary. In writing a recipe for a happy day one pupil began *take a sunny morning and blend it with a smile*. In Year 6, pupils write quite complex sentences and are good at writing in the form of reports and newspaper articles. They write confidently and discuss writing with partners, which helps them to evaluate their own progress. In Year 7, pupils are making good progress. They analyse and redraft poetry and discuss reasons for their choice of vocabulary. They talk with each other about the best way to structure their poems, and this does much to develop their writing skills.

64. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above national expectations. A strength in most lessons observed was the development of pupils' spoken language and the emphasis on new vocabulary. Teachers plan lessons to include the vocabulary needed; this works well, and gives pupils many

opportunities to experiment with new words. Talking with a partner is a regular feature of the best lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils discussed the learning intention for the lesson, which was to plan a report together about the dangers of smoking, and they spoke with confidence about the strategies that would interest the reader of their report. The teacher paid excellent attention to individual pupils so that they all had the appropriate language and strategies to help them to succeed with the task. Pupils then moved on to using their skills very well to plan a report about public health in Victorian London. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were encouraged to read their work to the class and receive feedback from other pupils. Pupils discussed the strengths of each other's work and offered suggestions of alternative vocabulary that might improve the writing. This is good practice, and gives pupils the confidence and skills to talk to an audience.

65. Pupils' listening skills are well developed. They listen well in lessons to the teacher and to each other. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' attention in lessons with the result that they know what they have to learn and what activity they have to complete. They are also secure in the knowledge of how to go about it.

66. Overall, the quality of the teaching in English is good and teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Lessons are well planned with clear targets for pupils' learning, and so they know what they are expected to learn. Teachers are confident with the three-part lesson, with a stimulating whole class session, well planned group work and effective summing-up session to assess pupils' learning. This ensures that pupils learn important skills, develop them at their own level and then evaluate how well they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support and make good progress towards their targets. Effective guidance from teaching assistants ensures that these pupils have the confidence to answer the teacher's questions, and they are fully included in lessons. Homework is used very well to extend the work done in lessons, and pupils value the extent to which it helps them improve.

67. A significant weakness that holds back the further development of pupils' attainment in English lies in the school's assessment procedures, because:

- the assessments of pupils' standards in relation to national levels is not sharp enough to be of real help to pupils or teachers;
- they are not completed frequently enough to assist teachers in their planning; and
- the tracking of pupil's progress is not rigorous enough to show how they can improve.

68. Changes in the subject's leadership over the past two years have slowed down the development of the subject. The current co-ordinator took up her post in September. She has already identified the areas to improve and plans are in place to work more closely with all staff in the accurate assessment of pupils' writing.

69. Classroom resources are well used in the teaching of English. Regular use of overhead projectors is very helpful in ensuring that all pupils understand the lesson's introduction and take part in the shared text work. The provision of fiction books, however, is unsatisfactory and pupils do not have sufficient access to a wide enough range of literature to develop their reading skills to the full. The graded books are old and there are insufficient group readers to fully support the guided reading in literacy lessons.

## MATHEMATICS

### Strengths:

- standards are above average by Year 6 and 7;
- ability sets work very well;
- very good assessment procedures are closely linked to planning;
- pupils are skilled in explaining their own strategies;
- the quality of teaching and learning is good;
- The subject co-ordinator supports teachers very well.

### Weaknesses:

- Some inconsistency in marking across sets and year groups;
- ICT not used sufficiently as a tool for learning.

70. Results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were above the national average when compared with all schools as well as with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in the tests was also above the national average. This is largely due to the fact that the work set for pupils is well matched to their needs through the ability groupings. Pupils in Year 7 continue to produce work that shows that they are achieving above-average standards. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when pupils underachieved in Year 7. This improvement has been achieved by more effective evaluation of teaching and very good use of assessment to see where pupils can improve their skills.

71. These results are better than those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with standards below the national average. Taking this into account, the work observed in lessons and the national test results show that pupils achieve very well. Pupils who have special educational needs also achieve very well, and most attain national standards by Year 6.

72. During the year, pupils complete a good amount of work in order to develop their understanding of number and algebra. By the end of Year 6, pupils are good at ordering decimals according to size using at least two decimal places. They work easily with large numbers when carrying out addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. Nearly all pupils confidently use fractions, percentages, ratio and proportion, and their work with negative numbers is of a high quality. Pupils make a good start with their number work in Year 4, quickly improving their basic skills, and, by Year 5, they are quick at doubling two digit numbers and explaining how they have carried out the task.

73. Pupils also develop a good grasp of shape, space and measures. By Year 6 they use the appropriate formulae well to calculate the area and perimeter of shapes. They identify and name two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe them accurately with a good knowledge of their properties. Year 4 pupils calculate the perimeter of a rectangle, talk knowledgeably about the properties of triangles and tell the time accurately. These skills develop well in Year 5, where pupils convert centimetres to different measurements and have a good knowledge of capacity as a way of measuring liquid.

74. In all year groups teachers give pupils good opportunities to collect data and display their findings on graphs and charts, and they develop these skills well. The nature of the data and type of chart used becomes more complex in each year group.

75. In Year 7, pupils build well upon the work they have carried out in previous years. They develop a good understanding of how to use fractions, decimals and percentages in everyday situations and use them skilfully to solve problems. They solve more complex algebraic equations very well. They plot co-ordinates confidently in all four quadrants and use the correct vocabulary to describe rotation and translation. During the inspection the most able pupils were seen moving shapes using vectors; this work was well above national expectations for pupils of their age.

76. Pupils in all classes are confident in manipulating numbers and enjoy using them. They are particularly good at explaining the strategies they use when working out answers; for example, in one Year 5 group a pupil explained that she doubled 56 by doubling the 50, then doubling the 6 and adding the two numbers together. They have limited opportunities, however, to write down these explanations in order to practise the skill of using precise language. Some good examples were seen of how the computer can be used as a tool for learning in mathematics; for example, pupils in Year 7 used a decision tree to identify materials containing metal. However, many opportunities are missed because of the shortage of computers, and this aspect of teaching mathematics is weak.

77. Teachers plan well to develop pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects. In French, Year 6 pupils were learning to count to 20. This was developed in Year 7 to counting to 100. Another class produced accurate pie charts to illustrate where they had been on holiday and for how long.

78. The quality of teaching and learning seen was good overall, with many important strengths. It ranged from satisfactory to very good in Years 4 to 6 and from satisfactory to excellent in Year 7. In lessons where teaching is most successful, teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject gives pupils the confidence to ask questions to clarify their understanding. Lessons are well planned and organised, and teachers use resources well. For example, individual white boards were used effectively during a Year 5 lesson in which pupils were working out square numbers. Pupils wrote their answers on the board and held them up which meant that the teacher could see immediately who had the correct answer and who needed further help.

79. Particularly good teaching and learning takes place in lessons where the teacher shares the lesson's aims with the pupils and returns to them frequently during the lesson; this is very effective in helping pupils assess for themselves how well they are understanding the work. Teachers use a summing-up session well to reinforce what has been learnt during the lesson, and also to develop learning further and prepare for future lessons. A very good example was observed in Year 7, when pupils who were using vectors to translate a shape in all four quadrants were shown how this was to lead to rotating and enlarging shapes. Teachers ask carefully worded questions which challenge pupils and encourage them to think for themselves. In almost all lessons observed, the challenge and pace of learning were good because teachers used different activities and frequent reinforcement to ensure pupils' understanding of the work. Explanations are always clear and relate well to pupils' learning in previous lessons.

80. Teachers are good at setting targets to help pupils improve further. These are the result of useful discussions between teachers and pupils, and represent very good practice. Pupils know what these targets are and are clear about how they will improve their work. The overall quality of marking, however, is inconsistent across the school. Homework is set in all year groups; this is of good quality and builds well on the work being carried out in class.

81. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons; they are well behaved and are keen to answer questions. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the help given by experienced support staff and teachers and make very good progress. However, some targets set for them are too broad; for example, on one plan the target was 'to learn, understand and use the four operations in maths'.

82. The subject is very well managed. The subject co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths in the subject and areas for further development. She has effectively evaluated the quality of teaching and learning in the subject, and the improvements made have been an important factor in the raising of standards. She has given effective support to both new and more established teachers. She provides plans for lessons, but encourages teachers to adapt these using their knowledge of the pupils in their groups. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully as they move through the school, and this information is used well to match the level of pupils' work to their needs. The school has an adequate range of resources for teaching mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Strengths:**

- Teachers' good scientific knowledge;
- Teachers' good planning, and preparation of resources.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Too much repetitive work;
- Too little challenge for more able pupils;
- Insufficient use of ICT;
- No systematic monitoring of standards or teaching.

83. Standards in science are average by Year 6 and by Year 7. This finding is consistent with the finding of the last inspection and of the most recent national test results for pupils in Year 6. In these tests, standards were average when compared with schools nationally, and above those of similar schools. These standards represent sound achievement, and well over one third attained the higher Level 5 in the tests. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and all attain, or come close to, national standards by Year 6.

84. As they study life and living things, pupils in Year 6 develop a clear understanding of food chains. They understand the terms *producer*, *prey* and *predator*. Pupils plan and carry out good investigations to see if plants need light in order to grow. They have a sound understanding of the need to change some variables and maintain others. For example, they changed the amount of light the plants received whilst keeping constant the amount of water. They predicted what was going to happen and observed and recorded the outcomes of their investigations. They have a sound knowledge of how organisms adapt to their environment. For example, they are clear about how wading birds have long thin beaks so that they can probe in the mud for food. They have a good understanding of micro organisms, and know that while some helpful others can be harmful. They know that harmful micro organisms can be spread in a variety of different ways, for example on our hands and by flies.

85. In their work on materials and their properties, pupils investigate separating the components of a mixture by filtering and evaporation, and most do this well. They know that you can separate insoluble materials by filtering and soluble materials by evaporating the liquid. Most understand that evaporated water does not cease to exist but becomes water vapour.

86. Pupils in Year 7 have a sound understanding of the solar system, and know that the sun, earth and moon are spherical. They understand how day and night are related to the rotation of the earth on its own axis, and know that gravity is a force that pulls us towards the centre of the earth. They have a good understanding of some of the contributions that modern technology has made to our understanding of the solar system.

87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and this results in pupils making sound progress in their learning. An important strength of the teaching is teachers' good management of classes. Lessons are well prepared and interesting, and so pupils pay careful attention, behave well and are enthusiastic in their learning. This was seen, for example, in a good lesson in Year 6 when the teacher effectively demonstrated the separation of materials by filtration and evaporation. Pupils paid close attention. They enjoyed the demonstration and were fascinated to see the salt sediment left when the water was heated and it evaporated. In such lessons the teachers' own enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils. It helps to promote their positive attitudes to learning.

88. There are some weaknesses in teaching, mostly in Year 6. Here, although whole class teaching is generally clear, interesting and stimulating, the independent work that pupils are set is sometimes undemanding. When not enough is asked of pupils they do not achieve as well as they might, and higher attaining pupils in particular are held back. Too often pupils in Year 6 are asked to complete simple work sheets that involve filling in missing words or answering simple straightforward questions. Pupils are given too few opportunities to write about what they have done and learned in their own words. The work set does not encourage pupils to think hard enough nor does it contribute well enough to the development of their literacy skills.

89. Pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to promote their learning. No evidence of the use of ICT was seen during the inspection. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 had no recollection of having used ICT in science lessons. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use research skills including using the Internet and reference books. In all year groups, too little is expected of the most able. Teachers pitch most of the work at the middle ability group.

90. The subject co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject, but does not make the most of her skills by rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in other classes. This explains some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

### **Strengths:**

- Making skills are taught systematically;
- Teachers build well on pupils' previous learning;
- The curriculum is planned well.

### **Weaknesses:**

- No formal assessment procedures.

91. There were few art lessons seen during the inspection, and judgements have been made by talking to teachers and pupils and by looking at work done previously. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are in line with national expectations. They talk knowledgeably about famous artists and are clear about how artists work in various styles. They make good studies of artists such as Mondrian, complete close observational drawings of plants and shells and use clay skilfully to model pots and dishes. By Year 6, pupils produce some thoughtful cross-stitch 'samplers'. Pupils in Year 7 develop their skills steadily, and draw careful self-portraits, making effective use of tone and shading. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their attainment on entry. Pupils with special educational needs often do well in art and design, and work hard to overcome their problems with concentration, for example, or hand control.

92. The teaching of art and design is satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and expect the pupils to achieve a lot during a lesson. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson, work was planned well

to extend the skills learnt in the previous lesson. Pupils colour-washed a piece of paper and then made striking silhouettes of the London skyline to complete the composition. The teacher linked this task effectively to the work they had been doing in geography about London. Work carried out in Year 4 was also linked well to that done in mathematics when pupils effectively imitated the symmetrical painting style of Mondrian. Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to discuss their work, and this helps them find ways of improving pictures and paintings. However, there is little formal assessment in art and this restricts the further development of pupils' skills.

93. The co-ordinator for art and design is knowledgeable and well organised. She has provided some good learning resources that support art well in the school. The co-ordinator teaches classes other than her own, and this makes good use of her subject expertise in the school. Work is displayed well in the school and pupils are able to enjoy the work of others.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Strengths:**

- Good teaching and learning in ceramics lessons;
- Effective use of specialist teachers.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Little formal assessment;
- Not enough use of ICT.

94. Pupils' work in design and technology is in line with national expectations by Year 6 and above expectations in Year 7. This represents sound achievement given their average standards on entry. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; for instance a visually impaired pupil was well supported in a textiles lesson by a support assistant who had thoughtfully adapted the task so that the pupil was able to stitch competently. The most able pupils in Year 7 produce work of a high quality.

95. In Year 4, pupils produce simple design sketches of vehicles and come up with some good making techniques to build their cars. They demonstrate a good awareness of hygiene and use sound cutting skills in food technology lessons. They capably record results of pupils' preferences on a computer database, and produce accurate graphs of their findings. In Year 5, pupils make good musical instruments, working from useful designs. In Year 6, pupils' recorded work on structures and bridges shows a sound ability to carry out an investigation methodically, with the teachers making good links to mathematical skills when getting pupils to measure mass and calculate averages. Pupils use pneumatic power effectively to make models of moving monsters, and then evaluate their work well, considering possible improvements. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked from labelled sketches to sew textile coin-carriers, using a range of fabrics. The overall standard was satisfactory but some pupils struggled to use needle and thread, because of the lack of direct instruction and the inappropriate thread. In Year 7, pupils show good skills when they work with a range of tools and components in making a model fairground ride. Pupils learn different joining techniques and teachers encourage them to consider the design and limitations of each method in doing so. However, the quality of designs shows little progression from work in younger classes. In a ceramics lesson, pupils made good progress, developing good ways to join clay and quickly appreciating its strengths and limitations as a medium.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The use of teachers with specialist skills in many lessons ensures that pupils benefit from teachers' very good subject knowledge that develops their skills quickly. For example, in a Year 7 lesson the teacher's very clear introduction introduced new skills effectively, and pupils were soon clear about the different methods for joining an electric motor to a model. The teacher made good references to previous work so that pupils could build on

their skills and develop their technical vocabulary. The lesson was so interesting that all pupils were absorbed. Teachers' good control of classes and efficient organisation make the most of the time in lessons. In one lesson seen, the use of knowledgeable support staff ensured that work with food could take place safely and productively. Teachers make good interventions when pupils are struggling, and this helps to develop the skills of all groups. Where some teaching has shortcomings, there is insufficient direct teaching of skills and pupils make slow progress. Teachers do not develop pupils' planning abilities sufficiently, so that designs show insufficient progress over time. The practical and challenging emphasis in most lessons engages pupils' interest and they generally work hard and show persistence in overcoming problems.

97. The curriculum is well balanced and offers a good range of experiences. Pupils learn a good range of making skills, but there is not enough planning to develop their design skills. There are no effective procedures to assess pupils' work, and this restricts the further development of their skills.

98. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. He is enthusiastic and forward thinking. He has a clear view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and has produced a useful development plan. However, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning lacks the rigour that would raise standards further. The subject has a good range of resources. The use of specialist facilities, such as the well-equipped design and technology and clay rooms, enhances the range of experiences that the school offers. ICT is used in some lessons to record information and stimulate design ideas, but insufficient use is made of computers in areas such as recording designs, or control technology. Participation in local competitions and involvement with the Education Action Zone and the Protrain initiative (which has resulted in weekly visits from a consultant engineer) are very positive developments. The Junior Engineers Club also provides additional opportunities for able and enthusiastic pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

### **Strengths:**

- Geographical work is interesting and relevant to pupils' lives;
- Good links are made to the teaching of English, particularly writing, speaking and listening.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Marking does not always show pupils how they can improve;
- Research skills through the use of ICT are not developed well enough.

99. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations, with some examples of work of good quality. In Year 7, pupils make satisfactory progress, and some are developing a good geographical understanding.

100. Pupils have a sound knowledge of their immediate locality and places further a field. They develop their research skills and extend their knowledge about climate and weather patterns by using a good range of resources, such as travel books, atlases and CD ROMs, but opportunities for research using ICT are limited by shortages in computers in classrooms. In Year 4, pupils identify their own homes on a map and accurately chart their route to school. They discuss with confidence the features of their route and offer alternative ways of getting to school. By Year 5, pupils responded very well to a geography challenge as part of the Challenging Education project, and produced a very good brochure that accurately compared the advantages of living in Caister to living in London. Their evaluations of the two areas were perceptive and showed a clear understanding of important geographical issues to do with population, employment and the quality of life. By Year 6, pupils show

a good understanding of mountain environments and the effects of climate change. Pupils express their findings well in written work and hand-drawn graphs and charts.

101. By Year 7, pupils effectively use the knowledge they have gained well to record in their own words the route from Great Yarmouth to London. They write well-informed letters to international manufacturers expressing concern about employment practice and the resulting effects on standards of living in poorer countries and overall world economy. More able pupils draw clear diagrams and bar charts to produce good illustrations of the result of their investigations. Links with literacy, writing and speaking and listening, are good throughout the school.

102. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons, and they make good progress in their geographical understanding. Opportunities for assessment are satisfactory, and identified clearly on the lessons plans. One very good lesson was seen in Year 5 where pupils were introduced to a new geography challenge. The teacher's very good questioning skills challenged individual pupils to express their own opinions and ideas, and all learned much about the importance of location. Teachers are knowledgeable about geography and are good at explaining difficult work to do with map reading, for example, and this ensures that pupils develop sound geographical skills. Some teachers' marking is clear and helpful but, too often, advice is more linked to improving the pupils' writing skills than how their geographical understanding could be moved on.

103. Recent changes in the subject's leadership are yet to have an impact on achievement. The previous post holder ensured that all requirements of the National Curriculum were covered, and the schemes of work in place are good.

## **HISTORY**

### **Strengths:**

- Teachers' good historical knowledge;
- Some good use of pupils' literacy skills to write historical accounts.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Limited use of ICT;
- Not enough challenge for more able pupils.

104. By Year 6, standards in history are in line with national expectations. By Year 7 standards are also average. This represents sound achievement for the great majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs who are well supported in lessons.

105. By Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of the past, and how lifestyles have changed over a period of time. In one lesson, pupils were led effectively through a detailed comparison of a Victorian classroom with their own classroom. They were required to observe carefully and to think analytically about the timetable, equipment and punishments used in schools in 1880. The teaching skilfully enabled pupils to empathise with children in the past. It was further enhanced for a group of pupils who had been on a residential visit to Holt Hall where they has taken part in a re-enactment of a Victorian school day. In Year 7, pupils write at length about the events of the Battle of Hastings and present their work in imaginative ways, such as cartoons or newspapers. They work well from historical sources such as the Domesday Book. In Year 5, pupils show a clear understanding of the main characteristics of Tudor street life. They benefit from a good range of teaching and learning styles, such as challenging and co-operative group work, reference to relevant information texts and use of video programmes.

106. The quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory. Strengths include teachers' good subject knowledge, clear explanations, and carefully planned links with literacy work. Thus, pupils in Year 6 produce historical work through a good range of writing genres including diaries, drafting reports, letter writing and writing dialogue. Teachers' planning is detailed, although insufficient attention is given to matching activities to the more able pupils. In some lessons, where the same lesson plans were used in all of the classes across the year group, teachers ran out of time, or struggled to maintain pupils' interest with tasks that were unsuited to that particular group. Teachers use questions well, requiring pupils to justify their ideas and explain their thinking. This works well, and helps pupils to develop a deeper historical understanding. Teachers work hard to involve pupils, through lively presentation and challenges that require teamwork. Marking seen during the inspection was detailed and gave pupils very useful feedback on their work. Interesting displays support pupils' historical learning well. In one Year 7 classroom, a useful timeline helped pupils put the medieval period in chronological context. In other rooms, teachers used pictures and portraits as very good sources of evidence about the past.

107. A good range of events and visits support pupils learning well. Year 4 pupils gain much from their study of Roman Caister, and the special days to look at how people lived in Tudor and medieval periods help to bring the subject to life.

108. Teachers use a satisfactory range of resources to help pupils understand the past. Work based on historical sources seen during the inspection included some challenging questions on a Victorian census and useful observations of pictures of monarchs and town life. Very limited use is made of ICT to find out about the past or record history work. The curriculum is sound, and based on national guidelines. This provides a secure basis for teachers' planning. The school is in the process of introducing a system to assess pupils' standards but there has been little until now.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### **Strengths:**

- Good facilities in the new computer suite;
- Teachers' good knowledge of ICT.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Too few computers; and
- Insufficient use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.

109. By Years 6 and 7, standards in information technology are in line with national expectations. Evidence from pupils' work shows that these judgements represent sound achievement, and a significant improvement in standards this year since the computer suite has been in operation. The school has worked hard this year to develop teachers' expertise and improve the supply of resources. Nevertheless, with few computers compared with other schools, teachers are not able to use ICT as an everyday tool to support pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and enjoy the success computers give them in their written work and reading activities.

110. By Year 6, pupils use information technology competently to organise, reorganise and edit text to ensure their writing is clear and well presented. They use their word-processing skills to edit their writing completed in literacy lessons, and correct the punctuation in text provided by the teacher. Pupils make some use of CD-ROMs and the Internet to conduct their research, and have extracted useful information on rivers in geography and animals' habitats in science. They use web browsers confidently, and in some of their best work, produced excellent evaluations of the user-friendliness of

web sites. Most pupils combine text and graphics well to produce, for example, articles about themselves. Pupils have a clear understanding of how computers are used in everyday life. For example, their work planning traffic light sequences was of a good standard as was their use of spreadsheets to plan an imaginary party.

111. By Year 7, pupils have refined their skills and produce interesting news reports with columns, headlines and pictures. They use a graphics program effectively to produce food chains in science and conduct some good investigations on the Internet on predators and prey.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well so that pupils learn new skills and immediately have the opportunity to put them into practice in the computer suite. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the computers and software being used; this is important because it maintains the pace of lessons as pupils' questions are quickly answered and most problems with the machines are fixed at once. Teachers use the computer projector very effectively to demonstrate techniques to the whole group. This is good practice and ensures that all pupils are clear about what to do when they move on to computers. As an example, Year 4 pupils had to use a graphics program to design an Islamic pattern, and the teacher's excellent slide presentation quickly showed pupils how to create symmetrical patterns. Pupils' very good learning was evident when they tried the techniques on their own computers, and they were soon designing patterns for themselves. Those who encountered problems were quickly supported, and one pupil exclaimed triumphantly, *I've got it!* By the end, all had achieved the lesson's objective and many had gone on to the next stage of learning and created a non-symmetrical shape.

113. Information technology is a major element in the school's development planning. The school is well aware of the need to upgrade the computers, and has plans to do this in the near future. A team of teachers who have good expertise manage the subject. This works well and ensures that good practice is spread effectively across the school. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work and this is used well to support the teaching of the subject. Currently, assessment is linked to this scheme, but the school is experimenting with a good system whereby teachers assess pupils' standards during the lesson. Early signs are that this provides teachers with an accurate picture of pupils' skills and shows clearly what they need to do next.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **Strengths:**

- Above average standards in French;
- Good, knowledgeable teaching;
- Helpful marking.

114. French and German are taught to pupils in Years 6 and Year 7. Pupils in Year 6 have a one hour lesson a week and Year 7 pupils have two lessons. They learn French for the first half of the year and German from February onwards. They make good progress in both languages and exceed the standard expected for their age by the time they leave school. At the time of this inspection, pupils had been learning French for just over half a term.

115. Year 6 pupils have made sound progress, especially in spoken French. They understand simple classroom directions, answer simple questions about themselves and are confident in greeting each other in French. They are building up basic vocabulary of numbers and colours, and write about their families and pets. Year 7 pupils build on what they have learnt the previous year. They answer questions confidently and their written work is accurate and well presented.

116. French teaching is good because the teachers have the necessary knowledge and understanding to teach the subject effectively. They are good at introducing new vocabulary, and help pupils to practise with a variety of activities and games until it is secure. In Year 7 lessons, individual pupils were involved in asking the class questions and others in the class were keen to answer. In pairs, they practised asking each other for objects out of their pencil cases. The teacher conducts lessons entirely in French; this works well because it increases pupils' familiarity with the language and encourages them to respond with good pronunciation and speed. By frequent repetition, pupils are encouraged to respond without translation, as the phrases become more familiar. Teachers use written work well to support learning, and homework does much to reinforce what has been learned in class. Marking gives useful guidance on how the pupils can improve. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is conveyed well to the pupils who, as a result, respond enthusiastically, work hard and enjoy the lessons.

117. The wide range of resources includes a good supply of textbooks, reading books and posters. Television programmes, videos and tape recordings are used well, and the school is building up a selection of computer software to enrich the curriculum. The lively displays in both teaching rooms include maps, pictures and familiar objects that are suitably labelled.

118. The subject is well managed. Both the teachers are well qualified, with their main qualification being in German. They work closely together and know the pupils well both informally and through good assessment. The very good liaison with the High School ensures the transition is as smooth as possible and pupils continue to build on their good start in both French and German.

## **MUSIC**

### **Strengths:**

- Above average standards;
- Teachers' good musical knowledge;
- Good extra-curricular activities to raise standards further.

### **Weakness:**

- Insufficient musical recordings and instruments from other cultures.

119. Standards in music by the end of Year 6, judged on both samples of recorded work and lessons seen, are above average. Pupils achieve well overall, developing from basic rhythmic understanding in Year 4 to the ability to play rhythmic lines from notation well in Years 5 and 6. Standards in Year 7 are in line with those expected of pupils this age. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, and do well when they are involved in challenging group activities in which they can take a leading role.

120. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and a good awareness of tempo. In one lesson seen they made good progress with composing a Christmas carol; this was the result of the high expectations of the teacher who gave very helpful demonstrations and examples to stimulate pupils. Pupils are good at reading music and play rhythms accurately by sight, including rests. They record rhythms accurately in formal notation and fit their musical ideas together well in groups. This is due to the good subject knowledge and confidence of the teacher. In Year 6, pupils produce exciting compositions for various events and themes, combining rhythmic, melodic and textural ideas well to evoke moods of, for example, the sea. They record and perform their ideas well from notation. In Year 7, pupils are developing their technical musical vocabulary well, but they lack opportunities to apply their understanding and develop their skills further.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Where teachers have specialist musicianship, expectations are high and pupils make very good progress. Teachers have considerable enthusiasm and are often able to communicate this to the pupils who clearly enjoy music lessons. Teachers use positive strategies well to promote co-operation and good listening. They set time targets for lessons and also give lessons purpose through clearly stated goals. In some of the best lessons, the teacher gave a demonstration of how to play a note or sing a line; this proved very effective, and gave pupils a clear idea of what they have to do. Where pupils' progress is slower, activities are insufficiently demanding and allowed to continue for too long. Pupils are very responsive in lessons, work hard and co-operate well. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their work and to understand the reasons behind the rules that govern effective group work in music. Teachers cater well for more able pupils in lessons, giving them challenging opportunities to play instruments they are learning, such as the recorder.

122. Extra-curricular provision is strong. A very active choir of over 40 pupils is a very positive feature of school and community life. The co-ordinator runs this with considerable expertise, focusing on good posture and breathing and developing two-part singing. Good instrumental tuition is also provided for pupils who wish to play strings, woodwind or brass instruments. The music co-ordinator also runs an instrumental group that performs in school.

123. The music curriculum is planned well. Pupils have good opportunities to sing, play a range of pitched and unpitched instruments, compose and perform music and listen to a range of musical styles. Some opportunities to listen to music from African and Chinese cultures are offered. However, the school acknowledges that the provision of music from different cultures is an area that requires further development. Resources are sound, but musical recordings and instruments from other cultures are insufficient. No evidence of the use of ICT in the subject was observed during the inspection. Assessment systems are very basic and are currently being reviewed.

124. Music is a strength of the school and this is in part due to the use of staff with considerable expertise who take most classes. The subject co-ordinator has great enthusiasm, experience and expertise and provides very positive leadership. She has a sound grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of musical provision. The school's involvement in Education Action Zone is helping to raise standards; the co-ordinator runs the zone's choir and the school has participated in a steel band workshop. There are also good links with the local high school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

### **Strengths:**

- Good, enthusiastic teaching;
- Good support of colleagues by the co-ordinator;
- Good extra-curricular activities.

125. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected in Year 6 and in Year 7. Lessons in dance, games and gymnastics were observed during the inspection. A good, broad curriculum includes swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities outside lessons. These include cross-country running, football for boys and girls, gym club, netball and cricket. There are good opportunities for pupils to play in teams and take part in competitions with other schools.

126. Pupils get off to a good start in Year 4. They are given good opportunities to learn games skills that will fit them to play competitive sport. They handle hockey sticks carefully and safely,

learning to send, receive and control a ball. Pupils dribble a football skilfully in and out of the cones. They have good ball handling skills in netball and rugby.

127. In Year 6, pupils enjoy dance. They work well together to build and perform a fluid sequence in response to swing music. This links well with some of their work in other subjects, for example, on twentieth century communications. Pupils in Year 7 work together to plan and perform a movement sequence which includes a balance, a roll and a leap over a partner. Pupils generally work and co-operate sensibly together in mixed-gender pairs and groups.

128. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers are lively and enthusiastic and their positive attitudes encourage pupils to work hard, try their best and enjoy the subject. They set a good example by changing appropriately for lessons and expect pupils to do the same. Teachers create plentiful opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their performance to others. This encourages the pupils to think about their own performance and work hard to try and improve it. Pupils are managed well so that behaviour is good and they work safely. Teachers establish a good working atmosphere and promote good relationships so that pupils feel confident and relaxed and can do their best.

129. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has an appropriate specialist background and has provided some good guidance for teachers. She has produced good plans for development and improvement in the subject. These include good plans to try out a new system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Strengths**

- Marking is generally good;
- Well planned curriculum;
- Good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

### **Weaknesses**

- Too little coverage of Christianity
- No formal assessment

130. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in RE that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. During their time in school, pupils learn about a wide range of religions and develop a good understanding about the beliefs and customs of others. In work seen, pupils discussed various religious practices knowledgeably. A good example of this was seen in Year 6 where pupils had a clear understanding of the reasons why a Sikh man wears a turban. Pupils in Year 7 make sound progress, and teachers plan well to build on the skills and knowledge gained earlier in the school. There is, however, little work on Christianity throughout the school. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards given their attainment on entry. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress although they sometimes struggle with written work.

131. The teaching of RE is satisfactory, with some good elements. Teachers emphasise the need to treat religious customs with respect, and pupils understand about a wide range of beliefs. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn about Jewish religious laws and how this could affect everyday lives. Teachers have high expectations, and this explains how pupils in Year 4 were able to discuss maturely why Herod wanted to kill all male babies. This is further developed as pupils get older and, by Year 7, they are able to reflect on their own views of God and the importance of forming relationships. Teachers' marking is generally good, and pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Some pupils make thoughtful responses to teachers' comments and correct their work to make it better. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils work well together.

132. There is no co-ordinator for RE at the present time. Resources are sufficient and are used well to teach RE. Pupils are taught to handle religious items with respect. There is currently no formal assessment for RE and pupils' achievements are not tracked in sufficient detail to help raise standards further. RE makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, as they are encouraged to think about the beliefs of others and relate this to their own experiences.