

INSPECTION REPORT

SPROWSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sprowston, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120852

Headteacher: Mrs M A Massey

Reporting inspector: Jane Schaffer
23698

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 December 2002

Inspection number: 248186

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 - 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Recreation Ground Road
Sprowston
Norwich

Postcode: NR7 8EW

Telephone number: 01603 425150

Fax number: 01603 416581

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Tims

Date of previous inspection: 13th June 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23698	J Schaffer	Registered inspector	English Geography History Physical education Education inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? Schools results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9843	S Drake	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?
21893	V Brittain	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	

28200	P Stevens	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education	
-------	-----------	----------------	--	--

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	21
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	22
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	25
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated on the outskirts of Norwich in the residential district of Sprowston. It admits pupils between the ages of eight and 12. More than three quarters of the pupils have previously attended Sprowston First School with the remainder joining from a number of different nearby schools. Currently there are 129 boys and 108 girls at the school. Since the previous inspection the proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals has increased to 15 per cent which is similar to the national average. Four pupils speak English as an additional language, but nearly all speak English fluently. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs, mainly for learning difficulties but a few have problems with social and emotional development. One pupil has a Statement of Special Need. The number of pupils who join the school after the general admission time at the start of Year 4 is greater than for most schools. Currently the attainment of pupils entering the school is average but in previous years it has been below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sprowston Middle School is an effective school. It is working very well towards fulfilling its aim to help all its pupils obtain the best possible skills in literacy and numeracy, and those needed to become valuable citizens. Very good leadership and good management have generated a momentum that is taking the school forward so that standards are rising. Pupils' achievements are good and standards are similar to the national average. Pupils receive a good standard of teaching in Year 7 and in Years 4 to 6 it is very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Successful teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in English and science, and very good progress in mathematics.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to their work, an enthusiasm for their school and very good relationships with each other.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership in all areas of school life.
- A very positive ethos is established through the spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- A wide range of activities in addition to lessons enrich the experiences of pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in religious education are below those expected.
- Planning in literacy in Year 7 does not always provide well for those pupils who learn more slowly than others.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement has been very good since the school was inspected in 2000 by Her Majesty's Inspectors. Standards in English and mathematics have risen. The pupils in Year 7 are confident and their achievements are good. All pupils are given good opportunities to formulate and express their own ideas. Teachers share with pupils what it is they are expected to learn and this motivates pupils to do their best. The role of subject managers has been greatly strengthened. They now make a good contribution to improving the standards in their subject and they enthusiastically promote it through the example of their own good teaching. The quality of teaching has improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	C	A
Mathematics	D	C	D	B
Science	D	C	C	B

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

The school's results started to improve in 2000 and they have continued to do so in the ensuing years. In 2002, results in mathematics were lower than in English and science but the difference was not very much. The pupils' performance missed the national average by a very small margin. The school did very well in English in comparison to similar schools and in mathematics and science standards were above average for these schools. The school met the target it set itself for 2002 in English but fell short in mathematics.

In their current work in English, mathematics and science, pupils in Year 6 are attaining a standard similar to that of the past two years, except in mathematics where they are above average. Overall pupils' achievements are good as they started in Year 4 with attainment below expectations. By Year 6, pupils are attaining an average standard in information and communication technology, history, geography, art and design, music, physical education and, design and technology. In Year 7, pupils are attaining the standard of work in all subjects that you would expect for their age, except in religious education where standards are below average. Standards in religious education are also below average in Year 6. The achievements of pupils in Year 7 are notable in mathematics, science, history, geography and information and communication technology.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their own targets and the achievements of those who speak English as an additional language to the one they speak at home are good. In previous years, school data showed that boys did not made as much progress as girls. Teachers used good strategies to address this, and currently there is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls. In Year 7, pupils who learn more slowly than others make satisfactory progress in literacy but sometimes the work is too difficult and this slows them down. Pupils of higher attainment are given work that challenges them and their achievements are good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils appreciate all the school has to offer and they participate with enthusiasm in school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils listen to their teachers well and conduct themselves sensibly around the school at most times. Occasional lapses occur through high spirits. Pupils are courteous to each other and to adults.
Personal development and	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the examples set by teachers.

relationships	They have a growing understanding of their responsibilities to each other, to society and to the environment.
Attendance	Good. Pupils like coming to school and are late only occasionally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The school's focus on improving methods of teaching and learning for the past two years has been successful. It has led to many good features in the work of individual teachers and in the school team as a whole. Teachers explain to pupils what it is they expect them to learn and this encourages pupils to try their best. All teachers have high expectations of pupils in nearly all subjects. In addition, the main strengths of teaching are:

- Planning together in year groups and evaluating the effectiveness of plans;
- Strong subject knowledge and the use of specialist teachers;
- Explanations that are well focused on the objectives for the lesson;
- Lively presentations that make good use of stimulating resources;
- Good teamwork with teaching assistants to help the learning of those with special educational needs.

The few areas for improvement are:

- Teachers' knowledge of the different elements of religious education;
- Planning in literacy in Year 7 for those of lower attainment to ensure that they learn the skills that they may have missed earlier in their education;
- The wider use of information and communication technology and mathematics in other subjects (both are already identified in the school's own planning).

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects contribute well to pupils' knowledge and understanding. The range of stimulating activities offered outside of school time add effectively to pupils, interests and personal development. Planning for pupils in Year 7 is good and has benefited from the school's links with other Year 7 teachers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The identification and assessment of these pupils' needs is very thorough. Staff, including teaching assistants, have a good level of understanding of how to support their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Although very few in number, care is taken to provide for the needs of these pupils, and they benefit from the effective school system of checking on pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for all aspects is inter-woven successfully into lessons and highlighted in assemblies and the other activities. A very positive ethos of caring for others and working together has been established. Year 7 pupils are given very good opportunities for the personal development appropriate for their age.
How well the school cares	All staff work very effectively to support the individual and general needs

for its pupils	of the pupils in their care.
----------------	------------------------------

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has an exceptionally clear understanding of how to improve the quality of education provided by the school. Aply supported by the deputy headteacher and key members of staff, she has developed a hard working and effective team that includes all staff members.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a strong determination to see that the school moves forward and they fulfill their statutory duties and other responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes a realistic approach to identifying its own areas for improvement and evaluating the effectiveness of its actions. It compares its performance to other schools regularly and is using the information from data to good effect.
The strategic use of resources	There is efficient use of resources based on secure financial planning that takes good account of future needs.

The school has a good number of teaching staff who are deployed effectively. Teaching assistants are well trained and their contribution to pupils' learning is very good. The school benefits from more specialist rooms than is usual for schools of this size and this together with good resources is a benefit to pupils' learning, especially those in Year 7.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school. • Their children make good progress. • The school expects children to work hard and to behave well. • They are very comfortable to approach the staff with any queries or concerns and they are pleased that this has changed significantly in recent years. • The strong leadership of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents were not happy with the homework set.

The overwhelming response of parents was that they were completely satisfied with the school. The inspection confirms parents' very positive views. The few parents not satisfied with homework did not explain their reasons for this. The inspection found that homework was used very effectively to support the work done in class.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since 1999 when standards were well below average in mathematics and below average in science and English, the school has steadily improved its results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6. Average standards in all three subjects have been attained for the past two years, except for mathematics in 2002 when they fell below average. The school sets itself challenging targets and strives hard to achieve them. In 2002 it achieved its target for English for the number of pupils attaining the expected level or above. It was not successful in mathematics.
2. Although the pupils who start in Year 4 are currently attaining average standards when they leave the First School or other schools that they may have attended, this was not the case in previous years. When the pupils who sat the tests in 2002 took the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, many attained below average and well below average results. They had to work hard in years 4 to 6 to gain the average results in their tests at the end of Year 6 in English and science. Even though they did not attain the national average in mathematics, their achievements were good in comparison to how they had done in Year 2. This is illustrated by the fact that their performance compares well to that of pupils in similar schools.
3. In English mathematics and science in the 2002 tests, pupils of higher attainment achieved well and a similar number to the national average attained the higher level. The numbers here included pupils who had not done well in the tests in Year 2. The numbers attaining a very low level in English were greater than in most schools but this was because a few pupils joined the school with special educational needs part way through Year 6. At this late stage, it was too late for the school to make a difference.
4. The school has analysed its results in national tests very carefully over the past two years and used the information obtained from its analyses wisely. Analysis showed that boys were not performing as well as girls in English. All pupils were doing better at reading than writing. The school took steps to improve the attainment of boys and focused particularly on improving the teaching of writing. Methods and resources to interest and motivate boys have been introduced with good results. Boys are as keen to write as girls and throughout the school they are achieving as well as girls.
5. Currently the standard of pupils' work in English in Years 6 is average and overall their achievements are good. Standards in Year 7 are similar to the expectations for this year group. Reading is still a strength in both years with standards above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs have a good knowledge of books and authors. They have clear preferences and can give reasons why they prefer one author to another. For instance a pupil of average attainment explained that she liked the books by J. Wilson because the author made the characters 'believable'. Pupils in Year 7 have made good progress in their reading through tackling the difficult ideas presented in the poems and play scripts they have studied this term. In a lesson in which they studied a poem in depth they learnt to annotate it showing where the poet had inferred her indecision.
6. Overall pupils' skills in speaking and listening are average. Pupils speak with confidence in formal and informal situations and generally structure their speech properly when they do so. However, quite a number are not as fluent as you would

expect for their age and have to think carefully to ensure that they use the correct terminology. The good quality provision for speaking and listening has benefited those pupils who speak English as an additional language and those pupils with special educational needs that are related to language difficulties. These pupils gain in confidence and fluency when talking in paired and group situations.

7. The standard of pupils' spelling is average but in Year 6 and Year 7 pupils' work shows that this has not always been the case and some pupils continue to miss-spell simple words and to forget spelling rules they have previously learnt. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, have a firmer foundation with regard to spelling and can write without giving too much thought to spellings. The strength in pupils' writing in both Year 6 and Year 7 is their good grasp of how to choose words to match the style or purpose of their writing. Short punchy sentences are produced for newspaper reports while in a lesson on setting the scene for a ghost story pupils chose evocative words to create the right atmosphere. In Year 6, pupils of average and higher attainment make use of paragraphing properly and most aspects of punctuation. Pupils of lower attainment attempt to use complex sentences but often opening phrases or clauses are not followed by one that completes the sentence.
8. Standards in mathematics in Year 6 are above average and pupils' achievements are very good. In Year 7 standards are average, pupils having made good progress since the below average results in their tests in 2002. Pupils of average and higher attainment, in Year 6, work accurately with numbers at a level beyond that expected for their age and overall standards are above average. Pupils of higher and average attainment can calculate quickly a subtraction or addition using a three digit number with a two digit one while those of lower attainment can add or subtract in tens with speed. Pupils in Year 7 work well with decimal figures and fractions and can convert from one to the other. In a fast moving lesson introducing the translation of shapes in Year 6, pupils of all levels of attainment could read and plot co-ordinates in four quadrants by the end of the lesson.
9. Standards in science in both Year 6 and 7 are average and pupils' achievements are good. Pupils work well together on investigations. Those of higher attainment have a good grasp of the principles behind setting up a fair scientific test in whatever area of study they are involved. Those of average and lower attainment understand that the planning of an investigation involves making an hypothesis and systematically recording results. In Year 6, pupils have good knowledge of the work they have carried out recently on electricity but knowledge from previous projects such the properties of material is not as secure. In a good lesson in Year 7 on observing changes in chemicals when heat or water was applied, pupils understood at a level expected for this year group the nature of reversible and irreversible changes.
10. Because teaching and resources have improved since the previous inspection, in information and communication technology, pupils are now attaining the standards expected for their age by Years 6 and 7. In Year 7, pupils make good progress building quickly on the skills and knowledge they acquired in Year 6. They have tackled the work in their studies of multi-media very well and can, for example, explain the procedures involved in using animated graphics and some of higher attainment can incorporate sound.
11. By Year 6, pupils have not gained enough knowledge about Christianity or other world faiths to attain the standards expected for their age. In Year 7, this picture is repeated. Their knowledge of terms generally used in religious studies is below average. Teachers' expectations are much lower than in other subjects and this has had an

effect on pupils' achievements throughout the school. In all other National Curriculum subjects, pupils are attaining the standards expected by Years 6 and 7. However, in history and geography, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in Year 6, as work has not been planned well enough in previous years. Current planning and teaching in Year 7 is good in these two subjects and pupils have made up good ground to attain the standards expected for this age range.

12. Work is generally well planned to match the needs of pupils at different stages of learning within each class. Consequently those of higher attainment are given work that takes them on further than others in the class. This was well illustrated in a gymnastics lesson in Year 7 when pupils of higher attainment were asked to perform headsprings from the box while those of average and lower attainment were given the task of using shoulder balances on apparatus. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them when they are withdrawn from class for special activities to help them catch up with others. In class their progress is similar to others. In Year 7 in literacy, on occasions the work provided is more suited to those of average and higher attainment and, as a result, pupils of lower attainment need extra explanations from an adult or extra resources. They are well motivated and so try their best but while their achievements are satisfactory overall their work shows that they do not make as good progress as others. Those very few pupils who speak English as an additional language are given extra help from learning assistants and teachers to help them understand what work they should do and to learn English. However, the school has had no formal training for staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and what it has to offer them; they behave well, are confident about offering their ideas and form very good relationships, all of which has a positive impact on the quality of their learning and the progress that they make. These good levels of personal development were noted at the previous inspection but at that time comment was made that Year 7 pupils did not play a sufficiently active part in their learning. This has improved considerably for this year group. Throughout the school pupils respond well to teachers' enthusiasm and are happy to become involved and work hard, except on the few occasions when they are expected to sit listening to the teacher for too long and so become bored or reluctant to contribute.
14. Pupils enjoy being at school, as is demonstrated by their punctuality in the mornings and attendance levels which are well above the national average. They settle well at the start of lessons and show interest in what their teachers say, listening well and eager to volunteer answers. Large numbers take part in the many and varied activities outside lessons, for example over half of the pupils in Years 6 and 7 are currently giving up two evenings a week to rehearse for the school Christmas production. At lunchtimes many pupils choose to involve themselves in music practice or the computer club or reading and games in the library, quite apart from energetic games outside, so that the atmosphere throughout the school is purposeful and happy.
15. Pupils behave well and the majority demonstrate a mature level of self-discipline and 'inner control', which is one of the main aims of the school's behaviour policy. In the past year, two boys were excluded for a very brief period on different occasions for entirely appropriate reasons and to good effect, however the norm is for the school to operate as an orderly community in which pupils can be trusted to behave sensibly. They respond very well to the many opportunities provided for them to work together, developing strong, supportive relationships which help to move their learning on.

Teachers often invite pupils to have a quick discussion with their neighbours about the topic being covered and they do this well, immediately focusing on specific points, listening to and valuing each other's thoughts. Pupils with special educational needs feel valued in this way and are keen to contribute with others. In a Year 4 science lesson the very good relationships meant that pupils covered a lot of work because they were swiftly able to come to amicable decisions about how they would test the heat conducting efficiency of different materials. Year 6 pupils collaborated very well to compose a successful piece of music and, on another occasion, when designing quiz cards to develop a multi-media game on the computer.

16. Pupils have a good understanding of an individual's contribution to the community, taking care to dispose of litter thoughtfully or use resources economically. Those of all ages acting as school council representatives had democratically sought their classmates' views before relating them at the meeting and also came up with constructive ideas about how to improve the learning environment. Pupils show good respect for other people, automatically opening doors or offering help, and they are confident when speaking with visitors. They are prepared to be impressed by others' efforts, such as a detailed design portraying an Islamic pattern, and also by their own improving skills, such as their ability to create interesting shapes out of resistant materials. Although they occasionally demonstrate insular views about, for instance, others' beliefs, this is more due to lack of experience than ill-will; throughout the day they fully include those of different gender, ethnicity or ability in all activities and show a friendliness and openness which creates a lively working environment. Parents and pupils both report that there is little bullying in the school and that on the rare occasions when it does occur it is dealt with promptly and properly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 4 to 6 and good in Year 7. This is an improvement on the previous inspection in 2000. The school has focused its attention in the last two years on improving methods of teaching and learning. This has resulted in teachers carefully evaluating the effectiveness of their lessons and looking for ways in which to help all pupils learn more quickly. Many of the staff team are new or in a new age range. In particular, the teachers in Year 7 have not been working together for long and are still evaluating the effectiveness of their planning. Teaching in Year 7 was never less than satisfactory and more often good, but fewer very good lessons were seen than in Years 4 to 6. Despite the high number of very good lessons in Years 4 to 6, there were a very small number of unsatisfactory lessons in Year 5; this again involved planning in the main and teachers who were unfamiliar with the age range, together with some aspects of weak subject knowledge.
18. The headteacher has established an ethos of high expectations for all year groups. This has led to teachers providing stimulating and good quality tasks that teach the pupils facts and skills while providing them with the confidence to think things out for themselves. In science in Year 7, for instance, pupils experience the thrill of experimentation because the teacher plans work and provides excellent care for safety so that much of the pupils' work is done through investigations they have carried out independently. Work in many lessons challenges pupils not only in the level of the subject matter offered, but also in the manner of their thinking. Questions such as 'Why do you think?' and 'How has this come about?' are often asked. For instance in a Year 5 history lesson, the teacher asked the class to try to come up with their own explanations as to how the Greeks managed to build their mighty temples without the aid of modern machinery. In Year 7, understanding of the plight of earthquake victims was evoked by the use of an emotive poem dealing with the complex thoughts and

emotions of a victim buried alive under rubble. In Year 4, the task in geography asked the pupils to imagine that they were a Viking leader and had to make the decision as to where best to build their settlement using a simple map. The pupils improved their skills in map reading while learning to justify their decisions through their knowledge of history. The only two subjects where teachers' expectations are not high enough are religious education and design and technology. In these subjects tasks and teachers' explanations sometimes lack challenge.

19. Stimulating resources are used, including visits to the locality and visitors who can offer special experiences or knowledge. A talk by a senior citizen, for instance, about life in war time Britain engendered a great deal of interest about World War II for the pupils in Year 6. The topic was further developed by a very attractive classroom collection of artifacts, pictures and books. Displays in other classrooms and on corridors are also eye catching and help to promote learning. Some provide pupils with the opportunity to interact. For instance, a display on electricity that asks pupils to make the clown's eyes light up and a science display that asks pupils to see if they can stretch a piece of wire held between two vices. Some teachers use information and communication technology well to help pupils learn in other subjects. In a literacy lesson in Year 5 for example, the teacher used computers effectively to show pupils how to change a simple account to an instructional text. However, computers are not made enough use of for research and to support the learning of different groups of pupils.
20. Teachers have a good understanding of the need to promote strategies that allow pupils to express their ideas orally. This is often done by a short paired activity, sometimes using a board that the pupils can write on with a felt tip pen and then wipe clean. Occasionally, teachers' explanations are too long with too many reminders of what pupils have to think about when completing their work and as a result, they tend to 'switch off'. Similarly, the strategy of targeting specific questions to different groups or individuals that helps to keep pupils attentive, is not always used as much as it could be. In the summer term, teachers learnt of new methods of classroom management that has some unusual features such as providing a 'brain break' activity after a period of work when the teacher feels that pupils are beginning to lose concentration. This sometimes involves the pupils in very active, on the spot movement, for two or three minutes that effectively provides a short moment of refreshment from sustained concentration. In a literacy lesson in Year 5, pupils worked really well on the written task in the second part of the lesson after a short 'dance' involving quite strenuous bounces.
21. Pupils go to their lessons ready to learn. This is because they know that lessons are going to be interesting and that teachers provide good quality activities. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils. In almost all lessons, teachers manage pupils in a friendly but firm manner. Pupils understand exactly how their teachers expect them to behave. In some classes humour is used to great effect. Very occasionally, a slow pace to the lesson results in pupils becoming inattentive and restless.
22. Lessons and tasks are planned so that pupils build on their previous knowledge and use and develop skills they have been taught before. Teachers assess pupils' learning well during lessons and when work is marked. At the start of lessons, teachers share with pupils what it is they want them to learn and this involves them in checking for themselves how well they are doing. Pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy to which teachers refer, when appropriate, during lessons. When checking how well a pupil was completing a task, for example, one teacher remarked to the pupil that he had

achieved his target of writing with a joined hand. Pleased with this recognition, the pupil was keen to make further efforts.

23. Planning identifies how work is to be provided for different groups of pupils. Planning and teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants are effective in helping with a group, either those of higher or lower attainment who need to work on a task at a different level to others in the class. They also work very well when individuals or groups are withdrawn from class to look at a specific skill that needs some extra practice or explanation. Teaching assistants know pupils well and develop very good relationships based on mutual trust. Resources are often adapted to help those who learn more slowly than others complete tasks. Computers are used in a similar manner, but only occasionally, and more use could be made of these to provide a different level of work for both those of higher and lower attainment. In Year 7, pupils who learn more slowly than others sometimes fail to finish tasks in literacy, or they complete them, but not in the way the teacher planned. The reason for this is that the half termly planning does not take enough account of the fact that these pupils sometimes need different work, with different objectives, to others. The teacher provides support through resources or extra explanations from an adult to help them tackle the same texts and written tasks as others. These are effective strategies, but if provided too often pupils become dependent on them. Teachers encourage the pupils and tell them that they have 'tried hard' but on too many occasions they do not experience the thrill of attaining at a really good standard on the task set.
24. A real strength in the school is the use made of teachers' specialisms. In all year groups, science is taught by one teacher while the other teacher is responsible for history or geography. The deputy headteacher has very good knowledge of physical education and takes many of these lessons throughout the school and this raises the quality of teaching in all year groups. In Year 7, music is taken by the teacher with the most knowledge and skills in this subject and her experience is shared with other staff. Teachers have very good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills for reading, writing and mathematics. Mental arithmetic sessions are conducted at a good pace and use a range of strategies that make mathematics fun. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher skilfully helped pupils see how authors lay clues in the early part of the story in order to 'hook' the reader into the plot. The pupils studied the text carefully to look for these clues and in addition learnt to recognize and read new words. However, occasionally teachers lack knowledge in a subject, or part of a subject and lessons are not well planned. This occurred in design and technology lessons in a unit of work on making musical instruments in Year 5. Teachers failed to plan the lessons so that pupils had enough knowledge and skills to make a good quality product.
25. The school has a good policy for marking work. Teachers mark work well. Praise is given and pupils are encouraged by it to try their best. References are made to pupils' targets which is very helpful and other comments suggest ways for improvement without daunting the pupil by pointing out every mistake.
26. Teachers make good use of work done at home. Tasks are set to carry forward the work being done in class. For instance, in a week of lessons in which the Year 6 pupils studied a ghost story, the teacher set homework on Monday in which the pupils would think up their own list of ways in which a person might first notice the presence of a ghost. This was to help them start writing their own ghost story the next day. In other lessons work was set that would help pupils practise the skills they had learnt that day. Reading books are sent home with letters to parents explaining how to help with reading. Parents are informed of their child's reading targets and are asked to make

comments in their homework books but not very many take up this opportunity to assess how well their child is progressing.

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

27. All subjects contribute well to pupils' knowledge and understanding and their experiences are enriched by a very good range of opportunities offered outside of lessons. Good care is taken to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the interests and stage of maturity both for pupils in Years 4 to 6 and for those in Year 7. Although standards are not high enough in religious education, appropriate topics are covered in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. For both age ranges, there has been improvement in curriculum planning since the inspection in 2000, and in particular by providing effectively for pupils' personal development and experiences over and beyond those of the legally required curriculum. Pupils in Year 7 follow well planned programmes of work in French and citizenship. Planning for both subjects is appropriate for their age and benefits from the school's links with secondary schools.
28. Subject co-ordinators make certain that planning matches the National Curriculum requirements. Nationally recommended schemes have been adapted thoughtfully in many subjects with care taken to link work to other subjects or to the particular needs of the school. There is a good level of subject specialism. Accommodation that is well adapted for the specific needs of different subjects allows teachers in Year 7, in particular, to plan a greater range of work than would otherwise be possible; there is a science room, an information and communication technology suite, a room for food technology, one for art and design, and design technology, a music room and a well-stocked library. Literacy is planned for in other subjects, for instance pupils write up reports of investigations they have carried out in science. However, planning does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use mathematics and information and communication technology in other subjects.
29. Provision for developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good overall. Planning in Year 7 is from documents that are especially intended for mixed ability classes for this age group. The planning in both literacy and numeracy in Year 7 is from the national strategies for this age range and is well matched to pupils' needs, with the exception of some planning for those of lower attainment in literacy. Planning for this group of pupils does not make enough use of the guidance from previous years and, as a result, pupils do not sufficiently revisit work or aspects of grammar that they have had difficulties with in the past or have missed.
30. The school is successful in ensuring that those pupils with special educational needs and other groups, such as those few who speak English as an additional language, have the same opportunities as others. Pupils with special educational needs are well looked after. Good links with First schools ensure that those pupils already identified as having special educational needs receive support as soon as they join the school. Other pupils with learning, physical or behavioural problems are monitored before being more formally assessed. Individual education plans are well thought out and pupils are supported effectively by teachers and learning support staff. Progress in group work is evaluated and fed back to the class teacher. Staff work in close liaison with the co-ordinator and monitor the progress of these pupils continuously as they move through the school. A carefully planned programme of work is provided for pupils with special educational needs in Year 7, when they are withdrawn from class. It makes good use of nationally recommended support materials for this age group. The school has not had a great deal of experience in helping pupils who are at an early stage of learning to

speak English. Their needs are adequately met through the school's assessment procedures but the school does not have any specific systems in place to assess their knowledge of English.

31. Through many links with the community, and through the wide range of clubs and activities offered after lessons, the school provides a very good range of learning and opportunities for personal development. Pupils may choose from a wide range of activities held both in the lunch hour and after school. There is, for instance a stamp club at lunchtime, a cookery and art club after school and opportunities to practise skills in the computer suite both during lunchtime and after school. There is a wide range of activities that develop skills in sport and physical education. Pupils develop instrumental skills with lessons from visiting teachers, and are given the opportunity to join in school productions and the choir. The pupils in Year 7 learn about environmental issues through the up-keep of a small wild garden area and the expert tuition of a specialist teacher who takes small groups in turn for one afternoon a week. Projects such as 'architects in school' that involved pupils in understanding the process of design, and a local re-cycling challenge help pupils understand some issues of modern day living.
32. The school makes the most of the proximity of the First school. In the summer term, pupils from the First school who are transferring to the Middle school at the end of Year 3 visit and become familiar with their new teachers and school so that they are ready to settle confidently into their new surroundings in September. There are similar arrangements for those transferring at the end of Year 7 to the local high school. There are good exchanges between all three schools to help with curriculum planning and information about pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
33. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, especially with respect to cultural development.
34. Provision for spiritual development is very good. The school has a very caring atmosphere in which every individual is valued. There are well planned opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum. In religious education, for example, pupils complete statements such as 'I should like to thank my parents for...' and 'I should like people to think that I am...'. In history, they explore the beliefs of Ancient Greeks and learn to empathise with war evacuees. One pupil wrote an imaginary letter to her mother as an evacuee describing some bullying, "Two girls kept on shouting 'Vakkies, vakkies,' but we ignored them". Similarly, in geography, pupils take the part of earthquake victims, expressing the contrasting feelings of claustrophobia and hope. In science, teachers arouse wonder when pupils see the effect of heat on magnesium. This led to one pupil writing a particularly sensitive poem which was spontaneously applauded. Thirdly, assemblies create an appropriate atmosphere for reflection and singing, often in relation to a particular event such as Remembrance Day. They also draw attention to the lives of historical figures such as Saint Lucia of Sweden. As a result of the school's teaching, pupils are well aware of their own strengths and weaknesses referring to such characteristics as being funny and being stubborn. They realise that people in the world are not all treated fairly, and also speak sincerely about what they find beautiful, such as the Grand Canyon.
35. Provision for moral development is very good. The school has a clear set of rules, including a policy regarding bullying, but pupils also contribute to their own classroom code of conduct. The school's high expectations of behaviour are reflected in pupils' attitudes towards one another and adults. School assemblies appropriately refer to moral issues such as treating one another equally. Pupils have a good opportunity to

discuss moral issues in their lessons on personal, social and health education (PSHE). Consequently, they have a strong sense of right and wrong, and speak maturely about moral dilemmas such as those illustrated in the story of 'The Good Samaritan'.

36. Provision for social development is very good. Within lessons, the teachers encourage pupils to work together in pairs, small groups and as a class. Discussions are particularly beneficial to music. In one lesson, the teacher asked pairs to discuss how to achieve a ghostly atmosphere on instruments. This ensured that all were included in thinking about it, and resulted in some very good suggestions. Another activity in pairs is where pupils in Year 7 act as 'reading buddies' to those in Year 4. However, this activity needs to be more structured if pupils are to be fully aware of its purpose. Pupils have an excellent opportunity to participate in a democratic approach to decision-making through the school council, and thoroughly discuss social issues in PSHE. Residential courses at Kingswood and elsewhere give pupils a very good opportunity to learn to live and work together. Pupils develop a sense of what it means to be a member of a wider society through the school's links with the local community and work for charities. As a result of their social experiences, pupils are well aware of the benefits and difficulties arising from working in groups, whatever their size. Moreover, they have good strategies for dealing with the latter. They are also able to make sensible suggestions about what action they would take if ever elected a town councillor.
37. Provision for cultural development is very good. There are well planned opportunities within the curriculum, such as in music, where pupils hear examples from Europe and other cultures well beyond. In art, teachers acquaint pupils with the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh to help them be aware of their different styles and use of symbolism. In English, pupils learn to appreciate poetry. The school places high importance on the arts, and holds special 'arts and creativity days'. It also invites theatre groups to perform. The school welcomes parents and visitors from different religions and other countries such as India, Egypt and Arabia to introduce the pupils to cultures other than their own. French teaching adds an important dimension to pupils' understanding, and extra-curricular activities include a number of visits to places of cultural interest.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. All staff work together highly effectively to support the individual and general needs of those in their care. Parents are full of praise for the way in which, for instance, those who have specific medical needs or who join the school at times other than the start of Year 4, are welcomed and catered for. The arrangements to help Year 4 settle, for example, enthusiastic letters from current pupils sent to them while still in Year 3 and the provision of Year 7 buddies, mean that they quickly feel part of the middle school. Parents speak highly of how well their older children are supported before they move to high school. This genuine concern for pupils is apparent throughout the day, from the good care for those who have had an accident or feel unwell to the provision of the library as a 'bolt hole' for those feeling lonely at lunchtimes. Teachers take the time to talk with pupils and grow to know them well, using opportunities provided in personal, social and health education, as well as other lessons to understand their enthusiasms and concerns. As yet, they do not monitor pupils personal development on a more formal basis.
39. The arrangements to ensure child protection are good, with all staff showing a suitable awareness of how to act should they have concerns, and appropriate confidential recording of any worries. The procedures relating to health and safety are very good,

with suitably trained and experienced staff and governors conducting risk assessments and acting on the findings. The site manager is constantly alert to potential hazards and throughout the day teachers also show good awareness of health and safety in lessons. The school values highly the contribution that all staff make to pupils' wellbeing and, for instance, provides regular meetings and training for midday support assistants as well as involving them in classroom activities so that they grow to know pupils as individuals. Playground supervision is good although occasionally staff are, in some ways understandably, too trusting of pupils to behave sensibly without direct supervision.

40. Pupils' good levels of attendance are the product of the school's good actions to promote this. Registers are well kept and the administrative assistant is swift to make contact with the parents of those whose absence is unexplained. The school does sanction the extended holidays of a very small number of pupils but also keeps a close eye on their overall attendance and consults with the education welfare officer when necessary. Staff, pupils and governors have given much recent thought to the development of the current behaviour and anti-bullying policies and procedures, which are put into very effective action. Pupils understand that everyone in the community has rights which can be achieved only if everyone behaves responsibly and with consideration. On the few occasions when this does not happen, the school works closely with the pupils and parents, regularly monitors individual's behaviour and, when necessary, seeks the help of outside agencies with the result that the school operates as a happy and harmonious community.
41. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. The systems in place for mathematics are particularly effective and are helping to raise standards. In English, there are good systems in place to assess pupils' writing and those for reading are satisfactory. The school has appropriate plans to develop the day-to-day assessment of reading. There has been good improvement made in this area since the previous inspection.
42. Progress has been made in all subjects on the use of assessment to aid planning. Learning objectives are clearly identified on lesson plans and are almost always shared with pupils. Teachers evaluate progress related to these targets and, in many cases, good use is made of this information for future planning. For example, planning for a Year 6 science class was changed because, in the previous session, pupils were unable to use their knowledge of reversible and irreversible changes in new situations.
43. Pupils' individual progress is monitored well in mathematics and in English. Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress against lesson objectives and identify pupils who need targeting for extra support or challenge. Formal records of achievement in numeracy are completed each half term and pupils' reading and spelling progress is recorded termly. This term individual targets have been set in mathematics and group targets for writing but these have not yet been in place long enough to evaluate their effect on standards. Staff meet to discuss work samples to ensure their assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate and guidelines have been drawn up to help in the assessment of writing. Samples of graded written work are kept in pupils' files. Records are kept of each pupil's attainment in English and mathematics from their first school, enabling the tracking of progress through school. This allows staff to identify and support pupils whose achievement is less than expected.
44. Assessment procedures in science need to be tightened and formalised. Teachers keep their own records of pupils' significant achievements above or below the expected level at the end of each session. These are then used to make a judgement about

National Curriculum attainment at the end of the year. There is no systematic assessment or recording of pupils' acquisition of science skills; this is a weakness already identified by the co-ordinator who is trying out a system in his Year 7 class.

45. The assessment of foundation subjects is similar to the system used for science. As yet these do not provide an overview of how pupils' skills are developing as they move up the school. Assessment systems for information and communication technology are good and are enabling teachers to see at a glance what pupils can do. A training day at the end of the summer term is used to enable the staff to discuss the achievement of the pupils above and below expected levels for the age group, in each subject, before they transfer to the next class.
46. National tests are completed in accordance with statutory requirements at the end of Year 6 in English mathematics and science. Use is also made of the optional Years 4, 5 and 7 tests from the nationally recognised authority for mathematics and English. Information collected from these is analysed and this enables the identification of areas of weakness which can then be addressed when curriculum plans are reviewed. Test results are also analysed by gender and the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups is checked.
47. Marking of pupils' work has shown a good improvement since the last inspection. Guidelines have been introduced so that teachers follow a similar format. Teachers often make useful comments which help pupils to improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The previous inspection report noted that the partnership with parents had improved over recent years and it is evident that this improvement has continued. Parents and carers now hold very positive views about the school and all those spoken with during the inspection were full of praise for what it offers their children. Those who have known the school for some years say that it is now much more open to parents and that the pupils seem much happier, while those whose children have arrived recently comment on the friendliness and support which have helped them to settle well and develop an enthusiasm for learning. Parents are particularly pleased that the school expects their children to work hard and behave well. They feel comfortable approaching staff with queries or concerns and one commented that, 'it is now a listening school'.
49. A few parents do not consider that the school works closely with them, but it is clear that it works very hard to do exactly that. The prospectus and governors' annual report are welcoming, easily read and contain useful information, as do the 'Helping Hands' booklet for volunteers and 'Welcome to Year 4' leaflet for new parents and pupils. The school issues regular, lively newsletters that keep parents up-to-date with events, and also provides information about what pupils will be learning in the coming term. Parents are invited to, for instance, meetings to find out more about numeracy or to sing carols round the Christmas tree, and they are beginning to attend these in increasing numbers. The administrative assistant is unfailingly welcoming to visitors and those making telephone calls. Teachers complete brief mid-year reports as a basis for discussion at the spring term parents' meetings as well as full reports on pupils' progress at the end of the year. These have been improved in the last year and make very clear to parents how much effort their child is making in different subjects. However, other than in English and mathematics, they do not yet give sufficient information about the standard of pupils' work, and the suggestions about what the pupil needs to do in order to improve, for example 'Continue to read regularly', are

sometimes too vague to be really useful. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved throughout the process of providing extra support for these pupils. They appreciate the manner in which the school keeps them closely informed and involves them in their child's learning.

50. All parents are automatic members of the Friends of Sprowston Middle School, which organises a variety of events throughout the year that raise useful funds. Recently these have been used to attract local authority 'Seed Challenge' grants to help with the setting up of the 'studio' and playground refurbishment as well as to provide, for instance, library books, audio-visual equipment and crackers for the Christmas party. Parents are also willing volunteers on school visits and some offer regular help in the classroom. They ensure that their children attend school on a regular basis and are supportive if the school has concerns about an individual's behaviour or overall effort. Most parents ensure that pupils complete their homework, including listening to them read. Overall, it is clear that the school now has a good partnership with parents which is rapidly improving and makes a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a clarity of vision that has resulted in the swift improvement of the school. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher who has established her role in helping to evaluate and develop teaching and learning very effectively. Areas of management are good overall with key members of staff chosen well for the roles they carry out. Governors have contributed well to the advancement of the school and are determined to see that it continues in this positive manner. At the time of the previous inspection, the school's leadership was going through a period of change: the current headteacher had been appointed but had yet to take up her post and a caretaking head been in place for one year. The school had had just one year of effective leadership after an inspection that had identified the need for special measures. The improvement in both leadership and management has been very good.
52. Parents chose the openness and very positive ethos of the school as the aspects of improvement they appreciated most. Pupils are keen to come to school. They enjoy their lessons and have a good understanding of how they learn and how they can improve. This is the result of good quality teaching that has come about because the headteacher has placed teaching and learning at the forefront of the drive to raise standards. The school's management plan reveals that over a two year period, action to improve the school and raise the standards of pupils' work has been exceptionally well directed. Literacy and numeracy were given high priority and the issues identified at both inspections were considered with great care. In the current plan all improvements are built on purposefully. Timescales for developments have been well thought out, with realistic expectations of what can be achieved.
53. There have been many changes of staff over the last two years. Newcomers are given good support so that they are quickly absorbed into the school team. Good appointments have been made and the headteacher is regularly making adjustments to the organisation of the school to get the best from the staff. People's strengths are valued and areas of weakness recognised and given the support needed. The monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and other members of the senior management has been perceptive and supportive. This has motivated staff. They are prepared to give of their best and to acknowledge that they need help when this is made clear. The process of performance management is making a very effective contribution to the professional development of staff. It is appropriately linked

to school development but also provides well for teachers to address their own needs and interests.

54. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' performance and has developed a good system to track pupils' progress as they move up the school. A great deal of data is analysed and used to understand where improvements need to be made. It resulted, for instance, in a clear agenda for raising the achievement of boys and in identifying that the school needed to focus on improving writing. The importance of using assessment information in planning work for pupils has been well understood by staff.
55. At the time of the 2000 inspection, the school was asked to strengthen the role of the subject co-ordinators. Currently, nearly all co-ordinators are very effective in promoting their subject and are clear about what needs to be done to raise standards. They have a good understanding of what their job entails. They have an enthusiasm for their subjects and very good knowledge and expertise so that they can offer good guidance to others. A linked governor for each subject has meant that co-ordinators have built up a good relationship with one member of the governing body. Subject action plans are good and some are very good. They identify the work and improvements intended over a yearly period. The headteacher is now looking to change the timing for development planning so that there is a more manageable system taking into account the start of the financial year. At present, all staff are fully involved in identifying the school priorities. They have good opportunities of making known the needs of their particular subject. They see teachers' plans, evaluate pupils' work and have informal discussions with teachers. However, except for the literacy co-ordinator and deputy headteacher they have had few opportunities for lesson observations. This is the next step in developing the effectiveness of co-ordinators to the full.
56. There has been very good improvement in the management of the provision for pupils with special education needs since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has promoted the understanding of the varying needs of these pupils exceptionally well. This has resulted in all staff being knowledgeable about the purpose and use of the pupils' individual educational plans. There is effective communication between the learning support assistants, teachers, the co-ordinator, the governor and parents for the benefit of pupils. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' progress and is able to target support where and when it is most needed. The headteacher sets a very high example of care and concern for the inclusion of all pupils in the school's provision, and has ensured that there is a good agenda to challenge racist views or stereotypes. The one area where some improvement could be made is that there are no formal means of identifying those with special gifts and talents to help promote their opportunities.
57. Governors know the school well. They are determined that it is going to move forward. They use working parties, rather than committees, and this allows for the efficient and effective use of people's time. They make appropriate checks to see that statutory duties are met and that the health, safety and welfare of pupils is a high priority. The headteacher keeps them well informed, but this is a governing body that is not afraid to ask questions. They understand that they provide an 'outside' view to help the school with its self-evaluation. A number of the governors are new and are prepared to undertake training in order to become effective in their support.
58. The school budgets very efficiently and effectively, thereby ensuring that its finances are properly directed towards its priorities for improvement. The administrative officer makes best use of the school's computerised resources to enable her, the school and the governing body to monitor expenditure. Her work enables teachers to get on with their job. Expenditure is appropriately directed towards both enhancing the school

environment and providing what is needed for teaching and learning. The school makes proper use of its financial resources, directing them, where appropriate, to specific groups such as pupils with special educational needs. It also seeks extra funding where it deems it to be necessary. Governors, the headteacher and staff work closely together in seeking to give pupils and parents value for money. They not only examine costs in relation to developing human and physical resources, but also find out how the school compares to others in its achievements. There is scope for more involvement of parents in decision making, but pupils participate, via their school council, in such developments as playground improvement.

59. The school has a good number of appropriately trained teachers. Teaching assistants and those who support pupils with special educational needs are well trained. Staff are deployed with care so that their time is used to best effect. There is a good sense of all who work at the school contributing to the whole staff team. All are seen to play an important role.

60. The school's accommodation is maintained to a high standard and the site manager takes a great deal of pride in this. The accommodation includes a number of rooms devoted to subjects such as music, science and food technology with ample space and good resources. As well as benefiting pupils' learning, these rooms prepare Year 7 for their transition to high school. There is also a spacious, comfortable and very well equipped library and sufficient rooms for small group work. The governors, headteacher and staff make very good use of the school's current buildings. They have maintained a rolling programme of improvements which reflect care for the pupils. Pupils have access to gardens, extra playground facilities and environmental areas, all of which contribute to their learning. However, they do not have access to a sports field for their own exclusive use.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to continue the good improvements the school has made and to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should now address the following key issues:

- (i) Raise the standard of pupils' work in religious education by improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and the planning;
(Paragraphs 11, 18, 118, 119 and 120)
- (ii) Improve the planning in literacy for pupils of lower attainment in Year 7.
(Paragraphs 12, 23, 29, 68 and 70)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor areas for improvement should be considered by the governors for inclusion in the action plan:

- Pupils' annual reports do not give sufficient information about the standard of pupils' work in subjects other than mathematics and English, and the suggestions about what the pupil needs to do in order to improve are sometimes too vague to be really useful;
(Paragraphs 49)
- Develop the use of mathematical investigations and information and communication technology in other subjects as already planned by the school.
(Paragraphs 19, 28, 69, 71, 78, 90 and 101)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	13	20	7	2	0	0
Percentage	5	30	45	16	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	237
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.3

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	29	28	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	19	25
	Girls	25	20	27
	Total	44	39	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (71)	68 (77)	91 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	25
	Girls	25	22	26
	Total	43	41	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (70)	72 (79)	89 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	230	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y4 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	495,185
Total expenditure	489,475
Expenditure per pupil	2,195
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,198
Balance carried forward to next year	25,908

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
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	237
Number of questionnaires returned	120

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	50	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	54	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	65	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	57	13	1	2
The teaching is good.	46	51	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	58	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	40	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	43	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	56	8	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	50	46	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	53	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	39	3	1	1

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

ENGLISH

62. Since the previous inspection in 2000, the school has successfully developed the quality of teaching in English and, as a result, standards have steadily improved. Literacy has rightly been a focus for school improvement for over two years. Standards in reading have been higher than in writing and boys have not done as well as girls in National Curriculum tests. The school focus on raising the achievement of boys, and the co-ordinator's well managed plan of action to improve writing have both had a beneficial effect so that currently boys are working hard in lessons and pupils' writing is adventurous, punctuated accurately and most pupils spell as well as you would expect for their age. Currently, pupils in Year 6 and 7 are attaining a standard beyond that expected for their age in reading. The standard of writing has not quite caught up yet: it is average with some pupils needing to improve the structure of their written and spoken sentences to match their standard in reading.
63. In order to address the key issue of improving pupils' confidence in formulating questions and expressing their own ideas, pupils are given good opportunities to talk in paired, group and whole class activities. When they start in the school, many pupils do not have clear diction or well structured means of expressing themselves orally. Because they have been given good opportunities to answer questions that need a full response or to talk together about their opinions, they make good progress and most attain the standard expected for their age. The school provides good opportunities for drama role-play is often used in lessons to encourage an understanding of a text in literacy. In history and religious education, it is also used to help pupils visualize events and empathize with emotions that are foreign to them. All teachers speak clearly and accurately but in general there has not been a focus on the need to model spoken English very precisely, on occasions, in order to raise the level and complexity of sentence structures that pupils use as they speak. This was most apparent in literacy lessons when good teaching inspired pupils to write using powerful imagery and words, but gave pupils little oral practice in structuring their sentences.
64. A few weeks before the inspection, the school had held a book week, an event that many pupils thoroughly enjoyed. The library is well stocked and pupils in Years 6 and 7 understand how to use the library, its organisation and purpose. In Years 4 and 5, some pupils of average and lower attainment are not competent at locating books. Each week there is a library time when Year 7 pupils help their 'buddies', those pupils they supported in transferring from the First School to use the library. This good strategy has not been operating for long and Year 7 pupils are still at an early stage of understanding how to instruct their younger friends. A real strength of the teaching throughout the school is the teachers' inspirational use of texts. They communicate a love of stories and poems and an interest in non-fiction texts with vigour. By the time pupils are in Year 6, pupils of higher and average attainment read with fluency and can add expression when reading aloud to bring the text to life. Those of lower attainment enjoy reading and have clear likes and dislikes. They sometimes stumble over unknown words but have a good range of strategies such as re-reading to gain meaning when the going has become difficult. These strategies were used very well by pupils in Year 7 when faced with a poem requiring level of understanding of imagery and inference that many adults would find difficult. All pupils in Year 7 have made good progress in developing their knowledge of different forms of literature, and their skills in reading. Those of lower attainment tackle complex words, such as 'claustrophobia', with confidence and with a little help can give examples of other words that use 'ph' in a

similar way. Pupils make good progress in reading in all year groups because of the good teaching in whole class sessions and because of the support parents give when pupils take books home to read. However, currently teachers are not keeping records of pupils' achievements in group reading sessions and using these to set objectives. This would help to focus on provision for those of average attainment in Years 4 and 5, some of whom still need help with using a range of strategies to work out unknown words.

65. Pupils with special educational needs have good support for reading, spelling and writing from teaching assistants. Pupils follow a good programme of work and develop their skills at a very good rate. The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language have a similar structure of support. Those at an early stage of English acquisition, make good progress in learning to speak English and others improve the fluency of their use of English. These pupils benefit from the school's good focus on teaching speaking and listening.
66. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they have a good understanding of the need to plan their writing. They are taught well to use a simple method to map out their ideas. It provides good help in structuring their work into paragraphs. In one class, pupils of higher attainment and average attainment in Year 5 already use paragraphs in some of their pieces of writing. In the other class, they have had fewer opportunities to do this type of planning and consequently, they often write interesting and imaginative pieces but without the benefit of breaking it up into paragraphs. In Year 6, pupils are taught well to appreciate the range of styles and writing open to them. For instance, after studying some of the techniques of the newspaper reporter, one pupil wrote a splendid tongue-in-cheek 'news report' of a spider's accident "...As we speak Incy Wincy is recovering in hospital from a fall down a drainpipe. It seems that he broke two of his legs." Poetry and imaginative texts are used very successfully to inspire and pupils' response is very good. In a display of poems it was hard to pick out this poem about a Tiger as others were of the same standard:
- "Hunting alone by night, prowling, pouncing, pursuing
The Jumbo Jet of the jungle
With the roar of a chainsaw
He's a rare raging creature
Largest of all cats."
67. In Year 7, pupils continue to benefit from the high quality of texts that the teacher uses to develop their depth of understanding of the content of poems and their appreciation of the feelings and emotions aroused. This was most noticeable in the pupils' study of the World War I poet, Wilfred Owen. Taking a difficult poem, they learnt to express the ideas contained within it in the form of a diary. This entailed careful and correct interpretation of the poem. In their study of some unusual techniques in poetry writing average, and higher attaining pupils made good progress in using these techniques themselves. They worked well, for instance at understanding the rhythms of such forms as the nonsense rhyme:
- "Does he keep pencils or rubbers or pens?
Does he wear glasses or have a contact lense,
or NOT
The Akond of Swat"
68. Pupils of lower attainment sometimes make good progress with their writing. A good example of this could be seen in a pupils' writing about the World War I poem. The writing lacks appropriate punctuation at times, but abounds with ideas and well chosen vocabulary "While stomping through the sludgy trenches getting infected with all

(cinds) of diseases. Owen and his soldiers lost many boots.” However, on occasions pupils work for the current term showed that they make less progress than they should because they had been confronted with a text that was too challenging. Although receiving support from the teaching assistant they only produced short or unfinished pieces of work.

69. The quality of teaching is never less than good and often very good. Methods recommended in the national strategy for literacy and other guidance materials are used effectively. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the importance of allowing pupils to talk through their ideas before writing them down and this is extended to work in other lessons when writing is to be done, for instance in history, which happened in a good lesson in Year 5 where pupils talked at length about different Roman gods before writing enthusiastically a description of their own modern day ‘god’. Good methods are used to teach spelling, particularly the use of personal notebooks for pupils to jot down any word they have spelt incorrectly or found difficult. The opportunities provided by computers for pupils to learn about planning and editing are exploited satisfactorily as are its uses for presentation. In some lessons computers are used effectively to support those with special educational needs or to give greater challenge to those of higher attainment. However, opportunities are missed to use computers more, particularly in respect of supporting those who read more slowly than others and those with difficulty spelling accurately. A good range of work is given for pupils to carry out at home and reading books go home regularly. Some pupils in Year 4 whose reading is not at the expected level for their age do not take home enough information to help parents contribute fully.
70. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and leads the subject very well. Over the past year she has made good use of classroom observations to provide guidance and support to colleagues. She has a clear view of how well pupils’ are achieving and how to develop the subject further. She is responsible for the planning of the curriculum and the assessment procedures in Years 4 to 6 while the deputy headteacher oversees these in Year 7. This is a satisfactory arrangement but on occasions assessment processes in Year 7 do not make enough use of all information from Year 6. As a result, planning is not always appropriate for those pupils who have achieved well enough on the Year 6 programme of work by the time they start in Year 7. Good procedures for assessing pupils’ writing are effective in helping teachers develop the quality of pupils’ written work, and most recently, the introduction of targets for pupils has been successful. The pupils know their targets and are keen to achieve them. Some teachers refer to them in lessons and when marking work although, because the initiative is recent not all teachers are using them as well as others.

MATHEMATICS

71. There have been good improvements in mathematics since the last inspection. These result from very good co-ordination, a high standard of teaching and improved systems for monitoring individual pupils’ progress. Pupils are now more aware of lessons’ objectives and more adept at explaining their mental and written methods, both of which have become more efficient. However, pupils have few opportunities to make mathematical investigations. They rarely apply mathematics in other subjects, or use computers. Some planning lacks clarity in how the input of the lesson will meet the different needs of the pupils.
72. Pupils in the current Year 6 attain above average standards. This is good improvement since the last inspection, and represents very good achievement by the pupils. It includes pupils with special educational needs. The majority of pupils confidently work

on translations of shapes using co-ordinates in four quadrants. They identify the co-ordinates which a shape will have when it is translated. Pupils' mental skills are above average. All pupils, except those of lower ability, are working accurately with number at a level above that expected for their age. They convert miles to kilometres and metres to decimal kilometres, for example. Pupils accurately draw conversion graphs for kilometres and miles and interpret them. They understand the difference between the mode, median and mean, and interpret pie charts.

73. Pupils in the current Year 7 are achieving well. The standard of their work is similar to what you would expect for this year group. They calculate advanced division of numbers and add decimals. Pupils convert fractions to decimals and confidently deal with negative numbers. They produce and interpret scatter graphs, such as of lung pressure against height.
74. The quality of teaching is good. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent, with over eight out of ten lessons being good or better. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise in helping pupils learn new skills in a way which they enjoy. Lively and sometimes humorous questioning sharpens pupils' mental agility. Teachers expect pupils to use correct mathematical terms in discussions and they are proud to do so. Teachers are flexible in lessons where they detect that pupils are not grasping a new idea. For example, in a lesson on approximations, the teacher changed his method in order to ensure that all pupils were included in understanding the new skill. Assistants also help the less able to be included by supporting them individually or in small groups. Teachers often include pupils by targeting questions at those who are reluctant. Most importantly, they expect pupils to explain their answers, for example to justify their approximations of numbers. This also stimulates good speaking in front of an audience and thereby enhances pupils' use of English. Teachers always expect pupils to think hard, and make good use of their suggestions, such as in one lesson where one of them eagerly put forward a quicker way of subtracting. Pupils' work shows examples of using computers for data handling but few of their use for improving skills in calculation and investigations. Teachers make good use of homework to consolidate learning.
75. There are other factors which have contributed to rising standards. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. He closely monitors the development of the subject and strongly supports the staff. He bases his priorities on a thorough evaluation of where improvements are needed. Provision for pupils with special needs is good, with assistants giving close tuition to small groups. Extra explanations are given to the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language to help them make good progress in their calculations and knowledge of mathematics. The school tracks the progress of these and all the other pupils, using a clear system of assessment and providing pupils with targets for learning. The school is purchasing a bank of attractive games in order to give pupils another way to consolidate their skills.

SCIENCE

76. National test results for eleven-year-olds in 2002 were in line with the national average and above those of similar schools. Standards at eleven have risen faster than the national trend over the past four years. Inspection findings are that standards of pupils in Year 6 are average. Their attainment on entering school was below expected levels and this makes their achievement good.
77. Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of work they have covered is satisfactory and sometimes good; for example, their knowledge of the human body and electrical circuits. They can explain how the brightness of the bulbs is affected by the number of

bulbs in the circuit or the number of battery cells powering it. Some can explain the difference caused by connections in parallel compared to those in series. They are weakest in their understanding of materials and their properties. None could explain 'material' as a scientific term. Only higher attaining pupils showed some understanding of phase change as applied to water and steam (water vapour) but could not apply this to the cycle of evaporation and condensation. Pupils carry out investigations regularly in all year groups and by Year 6 higher attaining pupils are confident in knowing how to structure a fair test. In Year 7, pupils build on their good experiences in Year 6 with regard to understanding the process of scientific investigation. The standard of their work is similar to expectations for this year group. They covered work on forces thoroughly earlier in the term and most gained a good understanding of what is meant by upthrust in the investigations they carried out using different liquids. In their current topic on chemical change, most pupils have begun to use and understand the importance of chemical symbols.

78. Teaching is good overall. In half the lessons seen it was very good. Most lessons were planned in good detail and the learning intentions were shared with pupils so that they knew what they had to learn. Some teachers evaluate learning from the previous lesson and use this to clarify understanding before moving pupils on. In a Year 6 lesson, planning had been changed to take pupils back a step when the teacher realised that their understanding was weaker than anticipated. Lessons in all age groups were investigative and this ensured that all pupils were involved in their learning. Care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs can carry out their investigations successfully, either because of extra support from an adult or because they are working within a well-organised group. In Year 4, pupils were encouraged to predict which materials would be the best conductors of heat and to explain their answers. They discussed their ideas in groups and half were able to suggest that the handles of metal spoons get hot when the tips are in hot water. Planning formats are beginning to provide good structure in Year 4 to help pupils plan, carry out tests and record their results. In a well-organised and resourced lesson, Year 6 pupils were able to function independently, choosing their own resources to decide the best way to separate sand, rice, pasta and water. This was also seen in Year 7 where pupils used Bunsen burners safely, heating pieces of limestone and recording their results and observations, clearly aware of the need to be accurate in their records. Other factors in the most successful lessons were a good pace, good classroom relationships and very good class management. Pupils are generally very enthusiastic about science; they want to learn and participate fully in activities. In one lesson, planning was good but the lesson lacked pace and pupils began to lose concentration. Homework is used very effectively by all teachers to relate science to everyday experience. For example, Year 4 pupils showed their understanding of thermal insulation and conduction by collecting a range of household items, including a 'cool bag' and both metal and plastic cooking spatulas.
79. Good cross-curricular links have been made with other subjects. Science is used well to consolidate writing skills because pupils in all classes record their own work. Pupils use mathematical skills regularly for measuring and for recording their results using appropriate charts, tables and graphs. In Years 4 and 5 they use sensors to measure heat and light. However more use could be made of CD ROMs for simulations and of the Internet for pupils to carry out research.
80. The co-ordination of science is good. Planning is thorough. Since the last inspection a new scheme of work has been put in place, based on national guidelines, and this has improved the provision for investigative science for younger pupils. However this is less effective than it could be because assessment procedures need to be tightened and

formalised. Teachers keep their own records of pupils' significant achievements above or below the expected level at the end of each session. These are then used to make a judgement about National Curriculum attainment at the end of the year. There is no systematic assessment or recording of pupils' acquisition of science skills. This reduces the effect of good investigational work going on in class because teachers do not have a precise record of pupils' science skills as they move through the school. This is a weakness already identified by the co-ordinator who is trying out a system in his own Year 7 class which involves pupils in the evaluation process.

81. The co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge and provides very good support and guidance for staff in organising and planning activities. He monitors teaching and learning and gives useful feedback to staff which has obviously been accepted and implemented. An example is the use of focused questions and finding ways to relate science in school to the outside world. The results of pupils' attainment in the national science test papers for eleven-year-olds have been analysed and the findings used to enable the Year 6 teacher to target revision on areas identified as weak. The science room provides good accommodation for science teaching, particularly for older pupils. It enables resources to be organised centrally and to be easily accessible.
82. In order to raise standards further the school could improve the recording of pupils' science skills so that they can be developed systematically and develop the use of targets in the same way as those used in mathematics and literacy.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Standards for pupils in Years 6 and 7 are average. Only two lessons were seen, in the same year group, but other evidence has been gained from pupils' sketchbooks, displays of work and teachers' planning. The school has recently adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work which covers all the elements of the art curriculum and develops pupils' skills. However, it is too early to see the impact on standards. Achievement over time for pupils is at present satisfactory.
84. Work seen throughout school suggests pupils make good progress in lessons in the acquisition of skills and their understanding of art as an expressive medium. Pupils draw from observation and they are encouraged to look closely at themselves and the world around them. Drawings of shoes in Year 4 show that pupils are beginning to consider light and shade and to attempt to reproduce them. Observational drawings of chairs in Year 6 have good attention to detail and the confident use of pencil line and shading to represent accurately what pupils see. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are beginning to use perspective to show distance. Sketchbooks begin in Year 4. They show pupils' acquisition of drawing skills as they progress through school, but as yet not many pupils use them confidently to explore and experiment with different media and techniques. Three-dimensional work is not well represented. The work of artists is used well in all age groups as a starting point. By studying the work of Kandinsky, pupils in Year 5 have looked at colours and shapes to explore how moods are created. They have mixed 'happy' and 'sad' colours and decided that rounded shapes reflect 'happiness' and angular ones 'sadness'. Some older pupils in Year 7 have found creative ways to project their self-images, collecting together photographs and pictures and presenting them as collages to reflect their personalities.
85. Teaching is good overall. It was very good in the lessons seen in Year 6. A series of lessons has been planned with Vincent van Gogh's paintings as the stimulus to develop the pupils' understanding of his work and the symbolism expressed in it, at the same time developing their own use of colour and brushstroke techniques. In both lessons

objectives were shared and this focused pupils on what they were to learn. Teachers ensure that pupils understand key words such as symbolism by giving relevant examples. In one lesson, there was a mystical atmosphere created when a presentation of Van Gogh's painting was given on a laptop computer to the accompaniment of mood music. Pupils were asked to consider the questions "What is the painting trying to say to us"? Concentration was intense and, at the end, pupils wanted to share their feelings. Effective questioning and other strategies, such as 'talk partners' enabled pupils to share their ideas and put their feelings into words. A letter from van Gogh to his brother about the 'Sunflowers' was used well to enable all pupils to make a good attempt at understanding his painting of chairs. For example one pupil wrote, "I'm drawing a plain, simple chair because it shows I am 'moneyless' and poor." Another wrote, "I am going to hang them on two different walls because it symbolises the different directions of our lives". In the other Year 6 class pupils' understanding of Van Gogh's and Gauguin's chairs was seen to very good effect in their own drawings of chairs to reflect their own personality. Drawing techniques were well taught. In both lessons, the quality of teaching ensured that the pupils were enthusiastic and fully involved in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs were fully involved and their ideas valued. This had a positive impact on the progress made. Teachers in all classes make good use of computer programs to develop painting and drawing skills.

86. Art and design is led and managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator who took on the role a year ago. She is co-ordinator for all the Creative Arts and much of her work until now has been focused on developing an overall policy and organising the Creative Arts studio. Teachers assess pupils' work but there is no formal system for recording the development of skills. Sketchbooks are used to show the development of drawing skills but as yet pupils are not given enough guidance to improve in areas of weakness. At present the co-ordinator has not been able to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning although she does sample pupils' work. Resources are well stored in art and craft areas and children are encouraged to choose appropriately. Artwork is displayed well in the school corridors and halls, producing an attractive and stimulating environment. The subject leader ensures that staff have a range of tools and materials and this contributes to the attainment of pupils. An after-school art club enriches the provision for some pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

87. Standards are at expected levels for pupils in Years 6 and 7. Their achievements are satisfactory over time. Curriculum planning, resources and accommodation have been reviewed and improved since the time of the previous inspection, but the co-ordinator has not yet had enough time to review the development of skills in order to make an impact on the standards achieved by pupils.
88. In Year 4, pupils have studied the way commercially manufactured containers are made by evaluating them in terms of design, construction and fitness for purpose. They have used this knowledge well to design and make their own purse or wallet, some of which show good detail and creativity. For example, pupils produced purses in the shape of animals and, in one case, a pair of sequined jeans, thus fulfilling the design brief to appeal to children. Their designs were clear and labelled and they itemised the materials and tools they would need. Pupils' cutting and sewing skills vary but are generally satisfactory. Year 6 pupils have made models of shelters. Before designing them they practised ways of joining materials to see which methods gave the strongest joint. By experimentation, they found out that triangular shapes make for strength and stability and have incorporated these into their designs. Some designs are well drawn and detailed. Making skills are average. In Year 7, pupils' skills in making up their

designs improve as the teacher has good subject knowledge and sets high expectations for their work. For instance, pupils successfully used files to produce a well finished key fob cut from a resistant material. They had a good understanding of how to use a vice safely.

89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall although some good and very good teaching was seen. It is satisfactory because not all teachers are secure in the design and technology process and activities are sometimes planned which do not develop pupils' skills. Where teaching is good or very good, staff fully understand the design and technology process. In these lessons planning is thorough with well-organised activities to enable pupils to achieve well. The teachers' secure subject knowledge results in tasks being explained clearly and simply so that pupils understand what to do. They know which pupils need extra help and this is targeted well to ensure that all pupils are successful. Good links with science were developed in a Year 7 lesson by effective questioning that tested pupils' understanding of friction when drilling acrylic material: some knew how to solve the problem by creating a rough surface. In a lesson where teaching was very good pupils' independence in selecting and using appropriate materials was well developed. Techniques to sew on press-studs were shown and pupils encouraged to try themselves. However, the teacher missed the opportunity to encourage those with well-developed sewing skills to try more complex stitches. In this lesson, teachers used the end of the lesson well to develop pupils' skills of evaluation, helping them to decide how to improve their work.
90. In a lesson where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory the nationally recommended scheme had not been translated into detailed planning to ensure that specific skills were taught. Unclear instructions were given to pupils and, as a result, pupils did not have the skills to complete the tasks successfully. Teachers did not ensure good working practices: for example, checking their models against their designs, using the most appropriate fastener for the job or cutting before painting. As a result, many of the finished products did not meet the design brief and were unsuccessful. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and show good attitudes to the subject and this has a positive effect on their learning. Where teaching was good or better, pupils worked with good concentration and there was a very harmonious working atmosphere. They were keen to explain their designs and how they had overcome problems.
91. Cross-curricular links have been identified and work in design and technology provides sound consolidation for learning in other subjects, notably literacy, mathematics and art and design. As yet the school has no computer aided design programs. Design and technology is led and managed satisfactorily by the co-ordinator who took on the role a year ago as co-ordinator for all the Creative Arts. Much of her work until now has been focused on developing an overall policy and organising the Creative Arts studio. Pupils' learning is assessed but there is no formal system in place to record the development of skills. The new studio provides pupils with space to work and is especially beneficial for lessons requiring benches and specific tools. Resources have been improved and are well matched to the topics taught in each year. Good use was made this term of experts to help pupils in Year 6 with their construction topic.

GEOGRAPHY

92. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are expected for their age, although there are some gaps in their knowledge. Pupils' achievements from Year 4 to 6 are broadly satisfactory, although the pupils of higher attainment are not given enough different work to attain the higher standards of which they are capable, except in Year 4. The

achievement of pupils in Year 7 is good. Their understanding and knowledge of world geography and their understanding of the physical aspects of geographical features have been developed very well through their study of the earth's crust and volcanic activity, so that they have achieved a standard expected for this age group. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. They work in the same groups as others but are given targeted help from adults who know their needs well.

93. A project on rivers earlier in the term had provided pupils in Year 6 with a good understanding of the main features of a river system and how this links to the water cycle. Teachers had enlivened their interest in this topic with the fascinating question: 'Could you be drinking the same water as a dinosaur?' Pupils know the three parts of a river's course and most could remember some geographical terms related to them such as 'meander' and 'tributary'. The topic built on the learning done in Year 5 relating to the water cycle. However, with two such similar blocks of work in Years 5 and 6, it leaves little time for other aspects of geography to be covered. Map reading skills and the use of atlases and globes are satisfactory but pupils had clearly not had many opportunities to study maps and to realize the difference made by the scale in which they were drawn.
94. Although pupils in Year 6 produce work of a satisfactory quality with some good attention to the production of graphs and labeled diagrams, pupils of higher attainment have not had enough opportunities to carry out investigations and draw conclusions. They consequently found it difficult to compare the features of a short river course to that of a longer river and to deduce that the longer river might end up carrying a greater body of water to the sea.
95. The topic on earthquakes and volcanoes in Year 7 had provided pupils with a very good range of knowledge about these phenomena and made them keen geographers. It had extended their understanding of world geography through the consideration of fault lines on the world map and through pinpointing the countries where earthquakes are most prevalent. They could relate to the terror that earthquakes bring to people's lives and those of higher attainment saw the links between the amount of destruction and the poverty or otherwise of the countries in which the tremors occurred. An investigation to find out the correlation between damage caused and the size of the quake as measured on the Richter scale was a very effective teaching tool that provided challenging work and one which benefited all, including those of special educational needs who could participate in the practicalities of the investigation.
96. Only two lessons were observed but taking into account the work of previous weeks, the quality of teaching is good. In Year 4, a very good lesson promoted the understanding of map skills, and the importance of geographical features in man's choice of settlement areas and pupils' achievements in this year group are good. In this lesson, the teacher provided good support for those with special educational needs to successfully complete the same work as others. There are few examples of computers being used in pupils' work. A careful piece of recording in Year 5 on the pupils' daily use of water provided a good chance for them to use their knowledge of calculating quantities.
97. The co-ordinator, who has only been in post since September, has identified the need to improve the planning so that there is a more even spread of skills and knowledge taught in the topics chosen for each year group. She also identified the need to improve resources and planning for different levels of attainment. Her audit identifying how to improve standards in the subject is good as is the action plan drawn up to address these issues. Currently assessment identifies strengths and weaknesses for

individual pupils but does not provide an effective overview of how well groups of pupils achieve year on year.

HISTORY

98. Pupils in Year 6 were full of enthusiasm for their current topic on World War II. Their interest had been aroused and they were keen to talk about what they had learnt of this period of time in the history of the British Isles. They attain standards similar to those expected for their age. Pupils' achievements from Year 4 to 6 are satisfactory. Although teaching is good, there are often long gaps between topics, and planning does not always provide a clear focus on the development of historical skills. In Year 7, history is taught more frequently and with good teaching pupils achieve well. They have tackled the difficult period of Medieval Britain this term with gusto and attained standards that you would expect for this year group.
99. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils have learnt to name, and place in a proper time frame, some of the well known historical periods. The use of a line to represent the passing of time is developed well in the school, especially in Year 4 where the pupils' time lines include such interesting dates as 'the day I got my cat'. Pupils in Year 7 discussed the relevant dates of the Medieval period with some confidence, particularly those relating to the battle of Hastings and the kings who ruled before and after it.
100. In all classes, pupils show an interest and have empathy for the people living at the time they are studying. In Year 6, pupils' writing from war-torn Norwich made use of some of the language of the time, as this example of a letter shows: "Mary's house got a direct hit two days ago – now all you can see is bricks, but at least she was in a shelter." In Year 7, pupils' could explain why it would be difficult for a woman to rule as queen in Medieval times as they really appreciated the difference of a woman's lot in those times to their own.
101. In Year 7, pupils' understanding of how history is interpreted and how facts may vary according to the viewpoint of the person reporting them was strengthened by their knowledge of the role that monks played in recording events. In contrast, this is a weaker area in the understanding for the pupils' in Year 6. They found it difficult to give reasons why an event such as a bombing raid might be described in different ways by different participants.
102. The quality of teaching is good. Planning in individual topics gives an appropriate emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to research and learn how historians work. Explanations are lively and engender a love of historical enquiry. In Year 7, for instance, the teacher began the lesson with a challenge "Can you name five famous women in history." When the pupils agreed that it was difficult it brought home to them the bias contained within the reporting of history over the centuries. In Year 6, an attractive display in the nature of a classroom museum with tin helmets, gas mask and ration books and coupons stir pupils' imagination and they set to work to discover for themselves a number of questions such as what was the 'black market' in a range of books and resources. Visits and visitors are used well and are well remembered by the pupils. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology, particularly with regard to research. Pupils with special educational needs are given help through specially adapted resources and adult help.
103. There has been satisfactory leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator is currently absent and the deputy headteacher is temporarily managing history. The curriculum is planned using the nationally recommended guidance and assessment follows this

planning. However, plans need to be modified to dovetail more with other subjects, to include more stimulating activities in some topics and to identify how different historical skills can be developed systematically year on year and how much progress each year group makes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards are average for pupils in Year 6. Provision is now good and has improved significantly since the last inspection when some aspects of the curriculum were not taught. Pupils are making good progress in developing their skills throughout the school. However the improvements recently introduced have not yet had time to make an impact on attainment in Year 6. Lessons seen during the inspection were all related to word-processing and associated skills. Other evidence has been gained from planning, sampling pupils' work and talking to Year 6 pupils, who also demonstrated their skills.
105. In Years 4 and 5, pupils are able to use most of the functions of the word-processing program 'Textease'. They use icons and menus to change the size, style, alignment and paragraphing of text. They know how to introduce colour. Year 4 pupils are beginning to incorporate pictures with text and in Year 5 they alter the page layout using cut and paste functions. Pupils in Year 6 have begun work on multi-media presentations and most are now able to create a series of cards for a mathematics quiz, using text and graphic frames, introducing background colour and patterns. Their work shows an understanding of the intended audience.
106. In Year 7 pupils' attainment is as expected for their age. They are confidently working on a multi-media presentation, 'This is my school,' and have produced slides using digital photos, text, graphics and animation. Pupils with special educational needs receive support and work on similar projects as others, although more slowly on occasions. Pupils explain the process involved, using some of the correct terminology. Some higher attaining pupils use their own CDs to incorporate sound. Their work shows good development from Year 6. By the end of Year 6 pupils will have experienced all aspects of the subject at an appropriate level. Many pupils are competent independent users. They know the usefulness of information and communication technology in their work and in the outside world. In mathematics and science lessons, they collect and input data to create line graphs. They have used spreadsheets to work out the cost of food for a party. However, in mathematics teachers do not use computers enough to help pupils improve their skills in calculations and it is not used widely in geography and history. Pupils are able to use search engines to access websites on the Internet, locating and collating information which they download and use to write their own versions. For example, in art and design they have gathered evidence to find out about the life and work of the artist Vincent van Gogh. All pupils in school have an email address and they know how to send and receive mail. In control technology pupils have learned to control devices to operate traffic lights. They can use sensors to measure light over a period of time.
107. Teaching is good throughout the school and this is having a positive effect on raising standards. Teachers plan their lessons well and the learning objectives are made clear at the outset. In the most effective lessons pupils are given the opportunity to discuss what they have learned. Good use is made of the computer suite, where all teaching takes place, allowing teachers to instruct all pupils directly. Correct emphasis is placed on the development of relevant technical vocabulary. The pace of lessons was good. Teaching was effective because the correct balance was achieved between the time devoted to teacher instruction and demonstration of skills and the time allowed for

pupils to practise them and this resulted in pupils making good progress. In one lesson reminder sheets were provided to enable most pupils to work independently. This allowed support to be targeted at those who needed it most. All teachers have good subject knowledge, enabling them to teach with confidence. Teachers used assessment well to provide a starting point for follow up work. Relationships between staff and pupils are good with relevant use of praise to emphasise achievement and to enhance self-esteem. Positive attitudes and good behaviour are also important factors in pupils' achievement in lessons. They are keen to learn; most listen attentively during the teacher's instruction and show their understanding by their eagerness to answer questions or demonstrate their skills. This contributes to their progress when working on the computers. Working in pairs, most show good cooperative skills when composing documents and wait patiently for their turn to use the keyboard.

108. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator provides strong leadership and direction for the subject and there is a detailed action plan to enhance provision in order to raise standards further. Cross-curricular links have been identified and computers are now used in most subjects. However, there is room for development in its everyday use in other subjects, particularly to extend the learning of those of higher attainment or to support those who learn more slowly than others. The nationally recommended scheme of work has been well adapted to suit the present needs of pupils and this is being changed over time as standards rise. The co-ordinator checks planning and pupils' files and offers advice and support to staff. A good assessment system has recently been put in place and this will help teachers to develop skills systematically. The school has its own website which features work from Years 6 and 7. Older pupils are involved in updating it regularly. Pupils have daily access to computers at lunchtimes and in the after-school club and this allows pupils to practise their skills.

MUSIC

109. Three lessons were observed, and singing was also heard in assemblies. Two practical instrumental sessions were held with groups from Year 6 and Year 7. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and manages the subject very well. Her support is gradually raising standards by giving teachers more confidence.
110. Pupils in Year 6 are currently attaining standards in line with expectations. This includes those with special educational needs. They listen well to and appreciate a wide variety of music, including some from countries beyond Europe. They satisfactorily identify how composers create effects. They know many of the names of orchestral instruments. In performing, they sing with good volume and rhythmic accuracy, but some of their intonation needs refinement. Pupils are somewhat inhibited in improvising. However, they produce a satisfactory range of rhythmic phrases and maintain a steady beat. Pupils in Year 7 have achieved satisfactorily. They have progressed to confident improvisation using more complex rhythmic phrases.
111. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Over time, pupils experience a variety of teaching not all of which produces work of high quality, because not enough time is given to practising and refining skills. However, some teaching is better than satisfactory. In one excellent lesson, pupils achieved above average standards. The teacher included all her pupils in collaborating in pairs to share ideas for a composition so that they all had time to think about the quality of their work.

112. The school supports the strong leadership and management of the co-ordinator. She has enabled the generalist teacher to deliver the music curriculum by providing detailed guidance and lesson plans. She has also gradually built up a very good range of instruments including keyboards and a wide variety of rhythmic and melodic percussion. The co-ordinator also regularly reviews the scheme of work in order to meet the needs of the pupils in this particular school. There is scope for more in-classroom support of teachers and a more formal system of assessment. Teachers have made good use of music to broaden the curriculum. For example, in history, pupils have learnt Tudor chants, and in religious education they have learnt Islamic music. Many pupils take advantage of the wide variety of opportunities to learn to play orchestral and other instruments. The school includes all pupils in singing and playing in productions, and in the spring term they can join the choir or the orchestra. Pupils sometimes perform to members of the local community, which incidentally benefits their social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. During the inspection, gymnastics was the only area of physical education observed except for one lesson of dance in Year 7. Teachers' planning indicates that a full range of experiences are offered to pupils throughout the year. Although pupils' skills in gymnastics have not been developed systematically over the past few years, the expertise of the current co-ordinator, who teaches physical education in all year groups, has raised the standard of pupils' work and their interest. Overall, standards in Years 6 are as you would expect for this age range. Although pupils' are currently learning at a good rate in each lesson, this was not always the case in the past and so, overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In Year 7 the picture is similar; pupils have some ground to catch up in both gymnastics and dance. They are interested and try hard so that overall, their attainment is average.
114. Teachers, in all year groups, give good clear explanations about what is happening to the body when exercising. As a consequence, pupils have a good understanding of how to increase their heart rate through short and strenuous actions and the need to perform stretching exercises with care and increasing difficulty to warm up their muscles.
115. In Years 4, 5 and 6 pupils were being taught how to perform the same shoulder balances and to use the correct technical terms to identify the type of balance. This was because the co-ordinator had identified that pupils in previous years had not developed enough skills and knowledge in various aspects of gymnastics. In all three year groups the pupils were taught to maintain a shoulder balance, using hands to sustain a still and upright back. In all three year groups, pupils successfully performed shoulder balances, sometimes with legs tucked up tight, sometimes with them in the straddle position and sometimes piked. Although all three year groups worked on the same movement they were all appropriately challenged by the methods of working. In Year 5 pupils worked on a sequence in pairs; in Year 6 this was extended to a group sequence and in Year 7 the balances were performed on apparatus. Pupils in Year 6, linked their movements together well. They mirrored or copied each others' movements and were proud to present their finished work to the whole class at the end of the lesson. There was good co-operation in the groups and towards the end of the lesson pupils attained the quality of movement that you would expect for this age range.
116. Pupils in Year 7 worked very well on the apparatus, particularly when using the climbing frame. Many achieved good balances on the narrow bars and those of higher attainment incorporated balances with controlled swings on the bars at some height.

Pupils of higher attainment performed good headsprings from a box. In the main vaulting was a weaker area with nearly all pupils content to land on their knees, rather than feet when jumping on to a low table. In a good dance lesson, in which the teacher's knowledge of dance movements inspired even the most reluctant dancers, pupils performed short dance sequences celebrating the vigour of dance from Latin America. Most developed a sequences of steps and movements at a level you would expect for their age and a few were at a standard beyond this.

117. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers make it clear to pupils how they are expected to behave. Firm control with pleasant touches of humour keep up the pupils' interest and a good pace of the lesson. The deputy headteacher who leads physical education in the school, has been successful in guiding teachers in their planning and in seeking to enthuse them in the different aspects of the subject. Lessons followed a good pattern including an explanation of what the teacher expects the pupils to achieve. Ample time is allocated for practice and investigation and for a performance at the end of the lesson. Demonstrations both by the teacher and by pupils who had attained well were used effectively to encourage greater efforts. The only area for development was that nearly all teachers allowed too much chatter which did detract from the quality of the work.
118. There are a very good number of clubs offering a range of sporting and physical activities outside of lessons. Staff give of their time generously. Pupils attend enthusiastically and the school is beginning to take part in a number of local inter-school matches and competitions. The clubs provide very good opportunities for pupils to extend their interests in physical education and for pupils' social development

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. Four lessons were observed, pupils' work was scrutinised and pupils from both Year 6 and 7 were interviewed. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 is below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus for local schools. This is a decline in standards since the last inspection. Pupils have little knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They recall very little about the Bible or of Jesus' life and teachings. With prompting they give an account of one Bible story and explain the meaning of Easter. Their knowledge of the other faiths that they have studied is equally limited. Again, with prompting, they explain the purpose of meditation. Their knowledge of the sacred buildings, books and practices of Christianity and other faiths is poor. They are only beginning to understand the symbolism of water, bread and wine, for example. Pupils are reluctant to ask questions and cannot explain how religion affects the way people live and behave towards others.
120. Pupils are under-achieving in Year 7. Although they know some Christian beliefs, their overall recall of other aspects of the faith is below expectations. Their knowledge and understanding of other faiths are as limited as those of Year 6 pupils. They also find it very difficult to discuss how religion affects people's lives.
121. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. This is because it is ineffective in establishing pupils' long-term knowledge and understanding. Teachers cover the expected syllabus, but have low expectations as is shown in pupils' written work. This lacks depth of thinking, except in Year 6, where, for example, teachers make good use of pupils' literacy skills to enable them to explain Jewish symbols and practices. Elsewhere, pupils' work is very short and cursorily marked. Consequently, pupils do not learn well enough. In lessons, teachers sometimes enable pupils to learn well in the short-term. Half are satisfactory and half are good in this respect. Where class teaching is good,

teachers work at a fast pace and stimulate pupils' thinking. This sometimes produces thoughtful responses such as 'I should like to be inventive, honest and careful because I am clumsy'. In some lessons, teachers do not capitalise on pupils' comments or questions, and there is too much listening and not enough activity. Consequently, pupils lose interest.

122. The co-ordinator has established herself as a source of advice and support, gaining knowledge and expertise from in-service training. She has provided a scheme of work that meets the needs of this school, demonstrating opportunities for ways to enrich the curriculum. However, monitoring of teaching and learning is not currently raising standards. Both evaluation of the subject's performance and assessment of pupils' progress are not leading to clearly focused priorities. Resources are good, but are not being used in a way which helps teachers to establish long-term learning. Nevertheless, the subject makes a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual development through studying and appreciating different faiths and their impact on people's lives.