

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MULBARTON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Mulbarton, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120991

Headteacher: Mrs B Chatten

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Maxwell  
8798

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 March 2003

Inspection number: 248205

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Common Mulbarton Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR14 8JG
Telephone number:	01508 578242
Fax number:	01508 578893
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Maureen Horth
Date of previous inspection:	20 October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	Design technology Information and communication technology Physical education Mathematics English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1112	Peter Oldfield	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design English Modern foreign languages Personal, social and health education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32180	David Sleightholme	Team inspector	Geography History Music Religious education Science Educational inclusion	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Mulbarton Middle is a community school for pupils aged 8 to 12 years. It is smaller than most middle schools, with 207 pupils on roll. It is situated in the centre of Mulbarton, on the village common, and serves the local and wider community. The proportion of pupils leaving the school other than at the usual time is higher than usual as a result of local authority reorganisation for schools. The socio-economic circumstances of the community serving the school are similar to those found nationally and the pupils' attainment on entry at Year 4 is broadly average. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few children have English as an additional language and two are at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is close to the national average and most of them have specific learning needs. Seven pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is above average. The school has been an active participant in the Norfolk Well-Being Project since June 2000 and gained the Investor in People Award for the second time in March 2002. It is taking part in the Norfolk Healthy Schools programme.

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

The school provides a very good standard of education. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Teaching is good throughout the school and the well-chosen activities enable most pupils to achieve well. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall in Year 7. The school includes everyone well in all aspects of its life and work. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Together with all members of staff, she has an especial concern for the personal care and development of the pupils so that they may learn confidently. The senior staff gives very good leadership and management, directed towards an understanding of the wider issues of the world as well as high academic standards. There is a very open attitude towards self-evaluation in order to make improvements. The school is currently engaged in the Norfolk Thinking Skills project, which matches its active approach to teaching and learning. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average by the end of Year 6, and the pupils achieve better than expected.
- Children take a very good interest in the activities and they behave well. Their personal development and relationships are a strong feature for most pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and is often very good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), with many interesting and challenging activities.
- Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very good, supported by high quality management. The school places a high priority on pupils' welfare.
- The provision and support for pupils' moral and social development are very good; and for their spiritual and cultural development are good. The headteacher sets very clear expectations of how the children should be in their behaviour.
- There are strong links with parents, who have a very good opinion of the school that is well justified.
- The headteacher and senior staff give very good leadership and management. With the governing body, they give thoughtful consideration to school developments, especially the approach to learning for pupils.

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

- At times there is insufficient emphasis on opportunities and some skills for pupils' independent learning.
- The role and influence of subject leaders in some areas need further development.

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



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997 and it has made good improvements since then in tackling the identified issues and in making further progress. The trend in standards over the past four years has been broadly in line with the national trend. The quality of teaching shows good improvement since the last inspection. Standards in ICT have improved and are now good at Year 6. Assessment information is used constructively to set targets and track pupils' progress. Subject leaders have extended the range of their responsibilities, although there is further work to do in checking provision and in preparing those who have been appointed recently. There are good systems in place for senior staff to check on standards and the quality of provision. In addition, the school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies very effectively. The positive behaviour management promotes good self-discipline in pupils. The school is actively engaged in projects to promote good learning opportunities for pupils.

## 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	B	B	D	E
Mathematics	A	B	C	E
Science	A	C	C	E

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

Present standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The pupils have made good progress from Year 4 through to Year 6. They achieve well as a result of the good learning opportunities provided for all pupils and the good teaching. This represents a better picture than that seen in the national tests last year because fewer pupils in the present Year 6 experience learning difficulties than was the case last year. Standards overall are below average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 7, which relates to the lower percentage of those pupils exceeding the expectation in the national tests last year. By Year 6, current standards in art and design, design and technology, ICT, music and physical education exceed the expectation. Standards in geography, history and religious education meet the expectation. By Year 7, standards in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, religious education and French meet the expectation while standards in physical education, and personal, social and health education exceed it. It was not possible to form a full judgement on standards by Year 7 in geography and music. In several lessons, there is good provision for pupils to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups. This ensures that pupils remain focused on the task, learn effectively and that the lesson moves forward at a brisk pace. In a few lessons the approach is over-controlled by the teacher in a way that limits opportunities for pupils' independent learning.

The table above shows that standards in the 2002 national tests were below average in English, and were average in mathematics and science. These results matched the expectations for the cohort, using information from tracking pupils' progress. Pupils made broadly the expected progress by Year 6 from their prior attainment in Year 2. In all three subjects, fewer pupils than average gained Level 5, resulting in well below average standards in comparison with schools having a similar percentage of free school meals. The trend in standards over the past four years has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school met its target for English in 2002 but not for mathematics. It has set higher, more challenging targets for the current Year 6 and is on course to meet them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good overall. Pupils are well motivated by interesting work, responding well to the good relationships and close understanding that exist between pupils and teachers, which helps them make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour by the great majority of pupils is good. This helps create a good ethos and encourages concentration and learning. The pupils understand and usually follow the expected standards of behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships amongst all members of staff and pupils are very good. Pupils enjoy taking initiative and personal responsibility. They discuss improvements to school life in the school council and are encouraged to express their opinions. They show a good developing maturity through the school.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are keen to come to school and are punctual. Many pupils take part in out of school activities, such as sports, and have a higher level of physical fitness than usual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is good so that pupils achieve well. Teaching is also good in Year 7 and here pupils achieve as expected overall since several find concentration difficult and are dependent on adult support. A significant proportion of teaching is very good, indicating a considerable strength across the school. Teachers plan carefully for all groups of pupils and take full account of their personal and learning needs, including those learning English as an additional language and the higher-attaining. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is good, and teaching over time in all classes is of good quality. Teachers have high expectations for the success of their pupils. In a minority of lessons, there is too much teacher direction and introductions are too long, which restricts pupils' opportunities to develop independence. Teachers use good strategies in teaching the skills of literacy and numeracy, so that pupils make good gains in their writing and mental calculation: this has been a recent school focus. However, the reading diary is not as helpful as it might be in providing clear comments on pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading skills. The teachers use a good range of strategies, such as asking pupils to work out a problem together, which is effective in promoting learning, particularly by the higher-attaining pupils. They often ask questions that prompt pupils to explain or reason, although this is not consistent in challenging pupils. The work for small groups of pupils with learning difficulties is highly relevant to their learning needs. They are given sensitive and thoughtful support by the classroom assistants.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school has recently embarked on a programme of encouraging pupils to develop thinking skills and to recognise the strategies they use to help them learn best. However, pupils need more chance to make their own decisions in some lessons. Taken together the strategies strongly indicate that the school offers a dynamic, interesting curriculum that challenges pupils to think. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The management of special needs provision is very good. The co-ordinator has a deep understanding of the pupils. Learning assistants provide perceptive support, and are sensitive to the changing needs of the pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The planned provision is good for the few identified pupils and enables them to make good progress at these times. Support is satisfactory overall since specific help is only available for short times, but the pupils are fully involved in the tasks.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This is a strength of the school and greatly enriches the quality of the school's life as a community. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and is promoted in many ways. School assemblies provide good opportunities for spiritual appreciation, and reflection about personal or wider issues. The school offers good cultural experiences but is less successful in promoting pupils' multi-cultural understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is very good care for individual pupils and the level of welfare is very good. There are well-established procedures to provide personal help to pupils when this is needed. Assessment procedures are very good so that work is usually matched well to the pupils' learning needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The partnership is based on mutual respect and trust, and forms a significant background to the quality of pupils' learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives outstanding leadership through her perceptive understanding of the staff and pupils; and of how to support change and improvements. The senior staff has a strong unwritten vision for the school. They provide very good leadership and management so that developments are carefully considered with children's needs and learning in mind. The role and influence of subject leaders are not fully effective in some areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors take a keen interest in the life of the school and have good oversight for school improvements through regular visits and discussions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Members of staff discuss and evaluate the quality of provision continuously, with effective learning and improving standards in

	mind.
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The strategic use of resources	Good. Teachers and classroom assistants are deployed well. Specific grants are used very well to support learning. The administrative staff and governors apply the principles of gaining best value very well in their decisions. There is a good level of staffing and of learning resources. Accommodation is very good, although two classrooms are poorly shaped. The library and the art and craft area also act as circulation areas for pupils, which disturbs some lessons.
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### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents think their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents think teaching is good and children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• They find the school is managed well and works closely with them and they are happy to approach the school about a problem.</li> <li>• Parents think the school is helping their children to mature and that behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<p>A few parents think:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• they are not well informed about their child's progress.</li> <li>• there is not a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive opinions. Inspectors find that communication is open and teachers are easily available to discuss a child's progress, although reading records do not indicate their strengths and difficulties. Evidence shows that teachers usually set an appropriate amount of homework, and what the teachers give is followed up in class. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of current work are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. This maintains the position in English and science since the last inspection and shows an improvement in mathematics. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 4 is broadly average, so these results indicate good achievement by the pupils to Year 6. By the end of Year 7 standards in all these subjects are below average, indicating a lowering in standards since the last inspection, although national test data show that the pupils achieve satisfactorily. The difference in standards between Years 6 and 7 is largely explained by the differences in attainment profiles of the two year groups. Standards are below average overall in Year 7 principally because there is a large proportion of lower-attaining pupils in the year group. Several pupils in Year 7 also find concentration difficult and have not developed the skills for independent learning. The findings of this inspection for current work in Year 7 are in accord with last year's test results that indicated a dip in standards from 2001 to 2002. The work seen in Year 6 shows that standards are set to recover to their previous good levels. Standards in lessons and in pupils' previous work in these subjects are promoted by good provision and teaching overall, which is having a positive impact on learning. Pupils achieve well in Years 4 to 6 through the effective teaching that usually gives very good attention to basic skills. The school's recent good focus on literacy and numeracy, which is a target in the development plan, is having a positive effect on learning and standards.
2. Standards in the 2002 national tests in Year 6 were below the national average in English, and average in mathematics and science. In comparison with schools in similar contexts standards were well below average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was less than usual in all subjects, particularly in science. The trend in standards for all core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend over the past five years. There is no significant difference between the three-year averages for boys and girls in all core subjects and the national averages for boys and girls, although last year boys performed rather below the girls. The school analysed the present Year 7 national tests results of 2002 and found differences in writing skills between girls and boys, and took action to address the matter.
3. By the end of Year 6, standards in art and design, design and technology, ICT, music, physical education and PSHE exceed the expectation. Standards in geography, history and religious education meet the expectation. By the end of Year 7 standards in physical education and PSHE exceed the expectation, while standards in the other subjects meet the expectation. In geography and music there was insufficient evidence to form a full judgement at Year 7. The school allocates a relatively high proportion of time and effort to the teaching and learning of English and mathematics. There is a developing recognition of the productive links to be made between subjects which is reinforcing learning, and standards have not been compromised. In English, because basic skills in writing are taught well, many pupils develop a good understanding of how to plan and craft their writing. However, the opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have acquired are sometimes limited. In some classes, teachers continue to practise exercises to improve pupils' writing when those skills are already well understood by the pupils as a result of previously good teaching. This sometimes limits the opportunities pupils have to think through their own ideas or express them at length in their own way. Across the school, writing is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as science and history. The mental task at the beginning of mathematics lessons is effective in increasing pupils' speed, accuracy and confidence. Teachers usually give thorough introductions to prepare pupils for the tasks and, for example in a lesson in Year 5, the higher-attaining pupils visualised well how to calculate the area of composite shapes. Pupils are developing good enquiry skills in science as a result of the frequent opportunities for investigative work. Pupils in Year 6, for example, set up experiments to investigate methods of preserving food and recognised that

several agents may be used, such as salt, lemon juice and vinegar. In a few lessons, the higher-attaining pupils are not fully challenged by the tasks.

4. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different ethnic groups or background or in relation to gender. Special needs provision is very good for identified pupils and in Years 4 to 6 pupils with learning difficulties make very good progress, while pupils in Year 7 make good progress, in relation to their targets. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and are helped to take part well in lessons by both pupils and adults.

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

5. Most of the pupils like coming to school and have very good attitudes to learning. A few older pupils do not always listen well to teachers, sometimes showing challenging behaviour and not being fully on task. Members of staff handle the behaviour and attitude of these few pupils very well. Generally around the school, in the dining hall and playground, behaviour is good. Pupils are generally very well supervised by adults in a firm but kindly way. The positive attitudes and strengths indicated in the last report have been maintained. Lesson observations, discussions with staff and governors, an analysis of school policies and informal discussions with pupils indicate this is a school where all are able to participate fully in school activities, whatever their background, cultural heritage or religious beliefs.
6. Pupils who were interviewed expressed the view that bullying was not present, nor were there any signs of oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism. The respect which all pupils in the school maintain is underlined in the comprehensive personal and social education programme which includes opportunities for pupils to express good or personal opinions. Support staff are treated in a respectful manner. Most pupils fully understand the important contribution they may make to their developments.
7. Golden rules, dining hall and playground rules are well displayed. Pupils fully understand these and are very happy to fully comply. Where rules were broken, pupils have an opportunity to indicate their target for future behaviour, accepting that they may have done wrong. Minor incidents are recorded appropriately. There has been one temporary exclusion.
8. Where opportunities are presented by the school for initiative and personal responsibility, pupils take these very well. However, within lessons, these opportunities are not always available which tends to restrict pupils' responses. Representatives are elected onto the school council from each class and pupils are able to express their concerns. They have the opportunity to discuss improvements to school life; their opinions are encouraged and acted upon. The headteacher values pupils' opinions. A recent questionnaire was completed by most pupils to give them the chance to express fully their likes of school life. Pupils undertake a number of daily tasks about the school, including litter picking, help with clearing the dining room furniture and collecting registers. Each day older pupils collect the names of pupils who will travel home by bus. Most year groups are pleased to be involved as library monitors.
9. Generally, pupils respond very well to these personal development initiatives because they are aware of the very strong provision of the school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme and respond accordingly.
10. Relationships in the school are very strong between all staff and pupils. As a consequence, pupils take a full part in all that the school offers. These very strong relationships occur at all levels, with the consequence that pupils are confident to talk to visitors. Those pupils who prefer a quiet area have been thoughtfully provided with areas in the playground. The quiet areas are well-used and private moments respected by all in the school playground. A very good example of these very strong relationships between pupils is seen at break and lunch playground times. Designated areas are given for different years to play games of football. Players keep to the area with the consequence that large numbers can use the grounds in complete enjoyment, and with the minimum of supervision.

11. Pupils respond very well when playtime ends. At the blowing of a teacher's whistle, they quickly file into classrooms, behaving very responsibly in the process. The school allows the children to enter the building without lining up, thus showing mature understanding of this personal requirement.
12. Attendance levels are well above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is very low. Generally pupils know they must be at school on time: very few are late regularly.
13. Pupils with learning difficulties display good attitudes to their work because they receive constant support and encouragement from staff and feel a sense of responsibility towards their own learning. For example, they are fully aware of the targets they are set because these are discussed with them once they are identified. Furthermore, for pupils with learning difficulties, the school has a clear policy of encouraging independence in learning, that motivates these particular pupils well. As a result, many of these pupils try really hard to overcome the difficulties they encounter.

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

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall through the school, representing good improvement since the last inspection, although learning by pupils in Year 7 is satisfactory overall. The good teaching has a marked effect on pupils' learning so that they make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in lessons. Evidence from pupils' previous work also supports the judgement that good quality teaching and learning have taken place over time. A significant proportion of teaching is very good, indicating a real strength to the quality and skills. Examples of good teaching were noted in all subjects and year groups, with many examples of very good teaching, indicating that the support and monitoring systems established by the school are effective. Teachers in all classes are strongly committed to the personal care of pupils, attending to their individual needs and personal development, so that they are prepared and ready to learn.
15. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, and the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very effective. English teaching across the school is good and illustrates many of the good features in other subjects. There is no marked variation in its quality in different age groups and teaching over time in all classes is of good quality. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils were constantly challenged through probing questioning to expand on and justify the answers they gave. This good practice is not found consistently in all lessons, however. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and also their assessments of the pupils. They set pupils highly relevant tasks that motivate them well. Lessons generally move forward at a good pace. Teachers mostly use a good range of strategies to maintain concentration and, as a result, pupils are well motivated to learn. In a minority of lessons, there is too much teacher direction and some introductions are too long. These lessons tend to restrict the opportunities for pupils' independent learning since the tasks and approach are decided by the teachers. Pupils across the school are almost always managed well. Homework is set regularly; this is often closely linked to the work in lessons. A homework diary ensures that parents have the opportunity to comment on their children's learning, although the reading diary is not used effectively to help analyse pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading. The teaching of those with learning difficulties is good, and sometimes very good.
16. In mathematics and science, good teaching leads to pupils having well-developed number and science skills and a good vocabulary. All teachers provide activities designed to sharpen up mental calculation and ensure pupils have regular opportunities for carrying out science investigative work, and this is a strength of the teaching and planning. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils investigated methods of preserving food and demonstrated they knew several agents that may be used to preserve it. Pupils also thought about, and discussed, all the considerations that would make the findings reliable and valid. In another lesson in Year 7, pupils made slides of an onion epidermis in the science laboratory. Then in the computer suite pupils

used a digital microscope, linked to a computer program, to magnify the slides. When the first slide was successfully projected onto the electronic whiteboard an audible "Wow!" went around the room. Pupils knew the scientific terminology but were less confident at explaining what they had found out. Teachers give good attention to building confidence with number, and the early mental starters to lessons provide good learning experience. However, most recorded mathematics is for number calculations or shows pupils' results for work on measurement or geometry. Teachers develop investigational ideas with pupils during lessons, but there are very few opportunities for pupils to write about their findings and the mathematical

relationships and patterns, for example related to the surface area of cubes linked together. There is growing confidence in making productive links between ICT and other subjects, although this is an area for further development.

17. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach most basic skills well. They give good attention within the planned lessons to the teaching of a wide range of basic skills, including reading for meaning, mental calculations and the steps needed for ICT programs. In art, for example, pupils were encouraged to prepare their work using their sketch books to try out ideas. The work of recognised artists is used imaginatively to illustrate the skills that pupils need to practise. In history the quality of teaching is good. This was shown, for example, in a lesson about Victorian schooling where pupils were using extracts from the school log books to establish the differences between schools then and now. The lesson was effective because it developed the pupils' historical skills of enquiry well by using 'real' information. In French, teaching is good overall because the teacher has thorough knowledge of his subject and offers pupils a wide range of learning activities. In music, in an excellent lesson pupils were writing words for a protest song. After familiarising pupils with the song - 'Blowin' in the Wind' - the teacher asked pupils about current events and successfully combined lines about local and world events into verses that conveyed important messages.
18. Teachers' daily assessment in English and other subjects is observant, and teachers respond positively to pupils' efforts, which helps them to overcome difficulties. Teachers pick up well on pupils' knowledge or understanding and use a good range of strategies to check pupils' progress. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and there is often the good practice of adding comments on how pupils may improve or confirming that the learning intention has been met. Teachers know pupils well and match tasks to their abilities so that all make progress in lessons. They are particularly successful at providing appropriate activities for pupils with special educational needs. In some lessons higher-attaining pupils need to be given more demanding tasks, however. For example, in a science lesson in Year 4 and 5, pupils were creating healthy and unhealthy menus. Higher-attaining pupils had a good understanding of the main food groups and the need for a balanced diet and found this work fairly easy. Good assessment systems and monitoring of pupils' progress ensure that all pupils' needs are met. Those who receive support from learning support assistants, and are identified as having special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and are fully included in all activities. Travelling pupils also receive good provision that focuses on meeting their needs well.
19. Teachers apply consistent strategies for behaviour with a good emphasis on positive behaviour management. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils are positive influences on promoting pupils' behaviour and hence their learning. Learning support assistants are frequently very perceptive in their handling of pupils, encouraging them through their quiet support to concentrate and take a good part in the tasks. Teachers are generally skilled at ensuring that all pupils are included in discussion.
20. Teachers, with very good levels of assistance from support staff, appropriately modify teaching methods and resources for pupils with learning difficulties. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties learn well alongside their fellow pupils. Children who are learning English as an additional language receive a little focused support; otherwise their fellow pupils or the teacher ensure they take a full part in activities.



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

21. The school offers a good curriculum to its pupils, indicating good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. Not only is appropriate prominence accorded to each aspect of every subject of the National Curriculum, but the school is constantly evaluating ways in which its provision may be improved. Since the last inspection, for example, the school has given greater emphasis to the provision of personal and social education. Another manifestation of this policy is the introduction of regular school and class council meetings. Allied to this, the school has recently embarked on a programme of encouraging pupils to develop thinking skills and to recognise the strategies they use to help them learn best. For example, many in Year 6 recognise that they learn more effectively when they have visual prompts, while in other situations, memorable rhymes or repetition are helpful. While it is still too early to evaluate the impact of this last strategy, taken together they strongly indicate that the school offers a dynamic, interesting curriculum that has improved even on the sound provision reported at the last inspection.
22. Teachers often create good opportunities for pupils to learn from two subjects at the same time. For example, word-processing skills are often used to enhance the appearance of pupils' written work, while other computer programs are used to merge text and art work or to blend photographic images. Design and technology is sometimes used to enhance pupils' understanding of history, and there is scope to strengthen these links still further. Art work, too, is often used well to support history, for example in Years 4 and 5. Pupils sometimes write at length about aspects of geography or to record their science experiments, although this is seldom done in mathematics. Teachers are constantly looking to strengthen pupils' learning opportunities and to use the time available in the most efficient way, so that skills acquired in one area of the curriculum are reinforced in another.
23. The curriculum promotes well the achievement of many individuals and groups. Studies of famous people, or groups, help pupils to become aware of success against a background of adversity. For example, work in history and geography includes making a living and surviving in mountainous environments, or children working in factories and mines in Victorian times. These kinds of studies raise the awareness of all, and influence the thinking of staff and pupils about the importance of valuing each other and including all in everyday activities.
24. Although lessons in some subjects are grouped together - for example art and design and technology alternate half-termly on the curriculum - this does not unduly interrupt the continuity in pupils' learning because teachers often create opportunities for them to learn simultaneously from two subjects. Only in French is there some impairment to progression in learning; this is because the visiting teacher can only offer one hour per week to each class instead of more frequent, shorter lessons. Nevertheless, the optimum use is made of time available even here, and pupils' learning is enhanced because a good introduction to the language is currently offered in Year 6. The school deploys teachers' expertise to the maximum effect, for example in providing for music, art or geography. This both enhances the quality of the curriculum and ensures that teachers' time is well used.
25. The school employs very good strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Teachers often interpret the national guidance for these two subjects imaginatively, focusing strongly on what their pupils next need to learn. This has the result that work is closely matched to pupils' learning needs and takes careful account of their aptitude and ability. The acquisition of more advanced reading and writing skills is accorded appropriate prominence, although there is scope to monitor more rigorously pupils' progress in their independent reading through informed comment in their reading diaries. Because the school recognised that spelling was an area for improvement, the teaching of that subject has become more systematic over the last two years, with the result that standards are now good in Years 4 to 6. In numeracy, pupils practise mental and written skills thoroughly, teachers allowing sufficient time for whole class and group

discussion, and for independent work. Mathematics is used effectively to support pupils' work in science and information technology.

26. The school provides very well for pupils with learning difficulties; this aspect of its work has improved even on the good standards seen at the last inspection. The arrangements to support pupils' learning in classes are very good. Teaching assistants work closely with both the class teacher and the special needs co-ordinator. They are well briefed and well trained, so that they have a good understanding of how to provide the required support, matching their questioning well to pupils' particular needs, and offering the right degree of intervention when this is needed. The special needs co-ordinator offers very good support to those pupils she withdraws to teach specific skills. A well qualified and experienced practitioner, she manages the special needs work of the school very efficiently and has an excellent understanding of the learning needs of the pupils with whom she works. Individual education plans are well maintained and reviewed termly. Most of these incorporate provision for parents' comments, and the aim is to complete the process shortly. Parents are frequently informed and consulted about the progress of their children. Pupils are set targets based on assessment of their needs; many of these are highly specific and helpful, but others are not sufficiently sharply-focused for staff and pupils to be absolutely clear about when they have been achieved. The school makes very good provision for others requiring specific teaching. For example, booster classes in mathematics and English offer very good teaching to those in Year 6 requiring support to achieve the standards expected, while pupils in Year 7 receive particular help with spelling. Good provision is made for pupils with Statements of Educational Need; these are regularly reviewed, and appropriate support is received from outside agencies.
27. The school makes very good provision for the personal and social education of its pupils, both through incidental opportunities that arise and through timetabled lessons. As a result, pupils develop a strong awareness of their responsibilities towards themselves and others, and are clear about their value as individuals and about their obligations towards others. A consequence of this is that pupils willingly recognise the strengths of others and are not afraid of constructive criticism. In Year 6, for example, pupils are regularly offered the opportunity to celebrate the achievements of others but also to reflect on areas for improvement. The overall effect is that the school is teaching its pupils well to understand their own place in society and to value fully the contribution of others. Linked to this, the work of the school and class councils regularly make recommendations for improving the school amenities and environment; these provide a forum in which pupils have the opportunity to make informed choices and exercise judgement, abilities that are being further enhanced through the school's thinking skills initiative. As a result of these and other measures, pupils are well prepared for the obligations of citizenship. In addition, the school has properly considered its arrangements for its statutory obligations regarding sex and drugs education, and makes good use of external agencies where this is necessary.
28. A very good range of extra-curricular activities is offered. These include not only sports, but also music, dancing, gardening and cycle training, so that pupils do not just improve on existing skills but have the opportunity to acquire new ones. Activities are open to all, and equitable decisions are made about attendance where they are likely to be over-subscribed. The school generally makes good use of day and residential visits to enrich the quality of pupils' learning; those in Year 6 pursue outdoor activities in Derbyshire, while pupils in Year 7 make use of facilities at Brancaster. Visitors and special events occasionally enhance the quality of the English curriculum, for example on World Book Day, while others sometimes support the curriculum in personal and social education or music by sharing their expertise with pupils.
29. The school has developed very close links with the first school with which it shares a site, each supporting the other when one needs extended facilities at its disposal. As a result, pupils make a smooth transition to the middle school at the end of Year 3. Older pupils sometimes read or write stories for those at the first school, and staff from both schools occasionally share training opportunities. Pupils are generally well prepared for their transition to the local high school. A constant link exists here because the visiting French teacher also has a senior management role at the high school. The cluster group meetings ensure that each is well informed about principal developments affecting the other; sometimes, arrangements between the schools involve wise

spending decisions that facilitate pupils' transfer at the end of Year 7. The school also regularly welcomes students from the University of East Anglia and Norwich City College for work experience or study.

30. There are sound links with the local community. The school building is frequently used by local community groups, and pupils are encouraged to take part in local sports' tournaments and village events. For example, pupils demonstrate their skills in gymnastics or dance at the summer fête, or help to remove litter from the village. Pupils, too, are encouraged to be aware of their responsibilities further afield, raising money for national charities, or collecting commodities of use to the homeless. The school takes advantage of the expertise of the police and other members of local services to enrich pupils' understanding of citizenship, so that pupils gain a helpful perspective of their place in society and of their role in supporting others.
31. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision in this area reflects well the school's aims and curriculum policy statements. For example, the school has chosen to study North American Indians as part of the history work in Year 7 because this adds to the pupils' cultural experience. The school's long and medium-term planning incorporates a number of opportunities for pupils' personal development, and these increase their awareness, and understanding of the world around them. This area is a strength of the school because the provision greatly enriches the quality of the school's life as a community, and it helps pupils to develop positive attitudes, a sense of responsibility, and become confident, well-balanced individuals. However, within lessons, while several tasks give pupils a good, clear focus on the main skills and knowledge of the lesson, these are generally decided already and give pupils little opportunity for personal development and to make choices which help to improve their independent learning skills. All pupils play a full part in school life, and this greatly enriches their opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Teachers use 'circle time' and planned curriculum activities to explore a variety of themes. In this way pupils are given opportunities to consider, and reflect on the beliefs of others. For example, in a very good religious education lesson with Year 4 and 5 pupils there were opportunities for pupils to listen to music from six major religions. When each extract of music had finished, pupils were given time for a period of reflection before writing down a list of adjectives that communicated their thoughts and feelings. The school's provision for collective worship is well-planned. These daily acts contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development through themes which provide opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of their own cultural heritage and religious beliefs, as well as others. During the week of inspection pupils were finding out about Judaism through the story of Esther.
33. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school's positive behaviour strategies are based on strong moral principles, and pupils' learning to distinguish right from wrong. The moral development of pupils commences as soon as they join the school, and is consolidated effectively as they move through each year group. Pupils are expected to develop their own framework of moral values, and opportunities to discuss class rules contribute to this. The work of the school council provides opportunities for pupils to raise issues about living and working together in school. The school is an orderly environment, founded on mutual respect, where the opinions and feelings of others are valued and respected. For example, pupils' behaviour in the dining hall is exemplary. They queue up quietly, eat their meals sensibly and clear away after themselves in a way that shows a great deal of consideration for others.
34. The school's provision for social development is very good. All adults at school provide very good role models for pupils. Good relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, ensure pupils get the most out of their work and achieve well. There are very good levels of co-operation between pupils, teachers and support staff, in most classrooms. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on micro-organisms, pupils were working in pairs, with higher-attaining pupils helping lower-attaining ones. This strategy was not only effective in supporting the learning experiences of pupils, it also conveyed important social messages about helping each other so that everyone succeeds. Levels of co-operation are not as good in Year 7 classes, because a minority of pupils disrupt the work of others. This affects the amount of progress pupils make in lessons. The school provides

a wide range of activities that take place outside the normal day, and these extra-curricular activities also help pupils to develop social skills and confidence. All pupils, whatever their social background, or cultural heritage, are fully integrated into the life of the school, and they work and play together happily in an environment that reflects very well developed social skills.

35. The school's provision for cultural development is good. Pupils benefit from many opportunities to learn more about their own culture, and cultures from the past in subjects such as history, geography and music. For example, pupils in Year 4 and 5 study the Greek civilisation in history lessons, Year 6 pupils study life in mountain environments in geography lessons, and pupils in Year 7 explore music from India, based on cyclic patterns. Assembly music is chosen carefully to reflect world music, and during the week of inspection was music for guitar and lute. Information posted on the hall wall, and given by the teaching staff, helps pupils to understand the cultural origins of the music and the composer. The school does not have many visitors to support cultural development at present, but in the past took part in exchanges with French students and Swedish headteachers. A steel band also visited the school during the last year. The school gives less attention to pupils' multi-cultural understanding.

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

36. The school is a caring community, and all staff are committed to ensuring that pupils' social and personal development is nurtured. The school's commitment to personal and social education lessons, and the use of 'circle time', contribute well to these aspects of pupils' development, although independence in learning within lessons is less consistent. The work of the school council ensures pupils have an opportunity to live and work within a democratic community where their feelings and concerns are taken seriously. The school's equal opportunities policy was created in 1997 and forms a good basis for policy and action. Statements in the policy are still relevant, especially the statement of intent, which enshrines the school's commitment to addressing barriers to pupils' learning. The school offers very good care to all its pupils. The headteacher is responsible for child protection procedures, and this is carried out with professionalism and knowledge of the requirements. All members of staff have had training in this important aspect of care for pupils.
37. Pupils' welfare has a high priority in the school. There is an appropriate number of trained first aiders; minor accidents are treated in a calm and sympathetic way, sometimes in the playground where one of the supervisors carries first aid dressings. Accidents are well recorded.
38. Appropriate testing has been done to fire fighting and electrical apparatus. Regular fire drills have been held. The governing body has the belief that this is a caring school and inspection evidence fully supports that view.
39. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, which are computer based. Appropriate procedures are in place to record late pupils or absent pupils. Parents are expected to telephone the school when absence does occur, and the greater majority are very happy so to do. Late pupils are recorded although the reason for lateness is not documented in all cases. Appropriate contact is maintained with the educational welfare services.
40. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and well understood. A good behaviour policy has appropriate rewards and sanctions. Some classes further underline these requirements. In both Year 6 classes pupils are rewarded with a raffle ticket for being helpful or considerate, taking extra effort, or showing kindness. A weekly raffle draw allows the lucky recipient to have a selection from the "Goody Bag". Throughout the school, pupils' support and the raising of their self-esteem is paramount. The thoughtful way in which pupils are supported was seen in an older class, where an "Answer Book" was displayed, which gives answers to many of the questions pupils may pose about their daily school life. Through good planning and professionalism, provision has been made, called "Plan B", so that every pupil knows to walk to another class if the teacher should be absent. This simple plan is a good example of pupils being able to be well directed and fully supported. Oppressive behaviour, harassment and bullying are not accepted. The few pupils who do not fully understand these requirements are well supported. When pupils do not readily respond, action is taken and an incident form is completed. There are clear consequences for inappropriate behaviour.
41. The school provides very well for those with special educational needs. Pupils are either taught in small groups in separate lessons or are supported in the classroom according to their need, and the quality of this provision is invariably good or very good. Good assessment procedures ensure that the school has a thorough understanding of the needs of these pupils; achievement is constantly examined, and groupings are changed to reflect the pace of pupils' progress. Well-taught booster classes are established to assist those needing support to meet the expected standards in English and mathematics. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well during specific focused times so that they make good progress, but at other times they are helped incidentally, as for all children, by adults or other children.

### Assessment

42. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects. Pupils are assessed at the end of units of work according to whether they have met, exceeded, or failed to meet the intended learning outcomes. This information is recorded, and used to build up a profile for each pupil that feeds into the annual reports, and enables staff to link pupils' attainment to National Curriculum levels. This system is very effective at providing summative statements about pupils' achievement, but less so at identifying individuals' strengths and weaknesses in a way that informs day-to-day planning.
43. Teachers use assessment information well to guide curricular planning. For example, in literacy and numeracy teachers and pupils set targets following joint evaluations of pieces of work. Targets are reviewed regularly to check progress against them, and consequently staff adapt teaching and planning to ensure there are an appropriate range and type of activities to support pupils' progress. Good evaluative marking, especially in English, mathematics and science, identifies the next steps for pupils, and enables teachers to establish where they need to modify tasks in order to reinforce, or extend learning.
44. Good procedures are in place for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. The pupils' annual reports were reviewed last year and are now written in a style that is accessible for parents and children. They now include National Curriculum levels, which enable parents and pupils to check progress from year to year. The school has been testing reading and spelling for many years, and analyses assessment information in detail in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. In the last year data handling and problem-solving were identified as needing additional teaching time and resources. By analysing the Year 7 results differences in writing skills emerged between girls and boys. This is now being addressed. Verbal and Non-verbal Reasoning tests were introduced in September 2002 for pupils in Years 4 and 5 as a senior Management decision to gain information in future on pupils as they enter the school. The assessment co-ordinator is planning to introduce more formal testing and analysis for science to support planning and teaching.
45. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Input has been received from the school support team and a local family support team, so that the full needs of individual pupils are well known. The headteacher shares many confidences from families and she has, thus, a very good knowledge of all pupils. Important steps of personal development are recorded and any concerns fully discussed by staff. During inspection week, full details were provided to the inspection team of all pupils in the school. They were seen to be well supported and encouraged, being always at the forefront of the staff's actions. School is therefore a happy place where pupils are confident, they are well supported and mature well during school life. Appropriate contact is maintained with a number of support agencies. The full development of the personal, health and social programme has added to the very good understanding of all pupils' needs. Pupils respect the school environment, there are no signs of graffiti or wilful damage, the pupils who act in litter picking duties, contribute very well to the attractive and well maintained environment, where the standard of daily maintenance is high.
46. The strong support and caring attitude stated in the last report has been very well maintained.

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

47. The school has a very good partnership with parents. In the last report parents were regarded as supportive, and that position has been developed further. The school values the support it receives from parents. It has provided an opportunity for parents to meet the headteacher, if necessary, upon a regular basis, to discuss any concerns fully. Parents attend the termly consultation evenings in large numbers.
48. A few parents had specific concerns, homework being an example. Inspection evidence indicates that homework is set in classes most nights. Although there is a good range of extra-curricular events, some are limited to older pupils. Generally parents feel they are well able to approach the school with questions or a problem. The school is successful in demonstrating its full

understanding and making responses to any concerns. A number of parents regularly help in the school.

49. There is a very good range of letters and newsletters sent regularly to parents about the many events in the school's life. These are welcomed. Pupils' annual reports of progress give very good information, where appropriate national expectancies are clearly shown to compare to pupils' results. Pupils can append comments by way of a self-appraisal; informal comments are added from class or subject leaders. The school sends out a number of documents to ensure parents are fully aware of how to access any opportunities that will support their child's personal, social or academic development. For example, there is a 'Parents' Guide to Special Needs Procedures'.
50. The very strong Friends Association has provided very good financial support to the school, allowing a good range of equipment to be purchased to support pupils' learning. The Friends Association has purchased, and meets the running costs of, a school mini-bus. The programme of social and fundraising events is well supported by the parents, teachers and local community. Senior teaching staff support the Friends' regular meetings, further underlining the very strong partnership.
51. Parents feel that the teachers are readily accessible when they require advice or support. The school values the very strong partnership with parents, who appreciate the opportunities offered to them to learn more about the subjects and work of the children.
52. The parents of pupils with learning difficulties are fully consulted on the progress of their children and on the school's proposals for their future provision and targets. Currently, parents' comments are not recorded on all individual education plans, but the school is working to redress this. There are effective informal opportunities for communication; the special needs co-ordinator regularly meets parents before or after school, and the headteacher is readily available for consultation.

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

53. The headteacher gives outstanding leadership through her understanding of staff and pupils' needs and relating them to the school's programme of improvement. The overall leadership and management by the senior staff are very good, providing clear direction for the development of the school, so that there is a very good sense of shared commitment. This indicates continuing improvement since the last inspection. The senior staff considers carefully how to make the best provision for the children as well as dealing with the practical needs of life in the school. There is a very strong commitment to including and valuing all members of staff and the children in reaching agreement. The headteacher conveys a very clear sense of purpose. Her excellent focus on thinking and learning skills is just one example of her determination to provide for all groups of pupils and their particular ways of learning.
54. The senior staff has a strong unwritten vision for the school and a common understanding of priorities, which has a clear influence on all aspects of the school's life and work. They understand and respond very well to the responsibilities delegated to them, such as establishing procedures for monitoring pupils' progress or teaching and standards. They have clear expectations for pupils' personal development and relationships so that learning is based upon a secure foundation. The performance management procedures and support established by the headteacher and governing body are very effective in ensuring that all members of staff are working towards clearly defined expectations. These procedures are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, provision and standards. The present arrangements for subject leaders to have class release time for monitoring the quality of provision is not effective because it is planned over a three-year cycle. This does not give subject leaders sufficient opportunity to keep their formal evaluations up to date, including appropriate lesson observation, and hence provide relevant support.

55. The school development plan provides a good basis for school improvements. The priorities are clearly set out and reflect the very good processes for self-evaluation which the headteacher has established. The plan enables developments to be managed within a clearly-defined time-scale, with suitably measurable success criteria. The good understanding of the governors is shown through their active contributions at committee and regular visits.
56. The governing body is strongly committed to the school and is influential in forming decisions. It fulfils its responsibilities well and is effective in fulfilling the statutory duties. The governors enjoy very good relationships with all the school staff and have good procedures to visit the school. This enables them to form an independent view of its needs and development. The procedures for financial planning are very good and bear directly on the identified priorities. These include maintaining staffing levels as the numbers of pupils have reduced and investing in staff professional development. The headteacher, finance administrators and governors have established very good procedures to plan and monitor the finances and budget. The financial control is very good. They have a very good understanding of the principles of obtaining best value in their decisions when considering improvements, purchases and efficiency, and keep standards and quality of life clearly in mind. Money obtained through the standards fund is used effectively and specific grants are used very well to support learning. The funding for special educational needs is prudently and well used, and the school adds considerably from its own funds to extend the level of support.
57. The teachers and classroom assistants are deployed well to use their experience in the best way for the benefit of the pupils. There is a good level of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The classroom assistants make a very significant contribution in supporting teaching and learning. The administrative staff are central to the life of the school and are very efficient and friendly. The school site manager keeps the school in good order. There is a good level of learning resources. Accommodation is very good and specialist rooms are used well, although two classrooms are poorly shaped which makes teaching and pupil management difficult. In addition, the art and craft area and the library are both also circulation areas for pupils. There are many attractive displays of children's work, showing that it is valued. The playgrounds and school field provide a very good space for the pupils at play and for sports.
58. The management of special needs provision is very good. The co-ordinator, a well-qualified and experienced practitioner, has a thorough understanding of the individual levels of achievement of those with special needs, and works closely with class teachers and learning support assistants to offer cohesive and clearly directed provision for these pupils. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the right degree of help. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is good for the identified pupils when specific help is given, otherwise it is satisfactory. Learning assistants are well trained and fully briefed on the nature of the support they are expected to provide for all pupils. All of these measures ensure a dynamic provision, sensitive to the changing needs of the pupils.

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

59. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following issues, which link closely with those already identified in the school's self-review:
- (1) Increase provision and opportunities to enhance pupils' learning skills and their independent skills, by:
- Phrasing questions to encourage pupils to explain and give reasons for their answers.
  - Exploring and consolidating the initiative on pupils' thinking skills, and having in mind approaches that liberate pupils to take more charge of their own learning.
  - Reviewing the purpose, time and use of plenary class discussions.
  - Extending the use of ICT in other lessons, and improving pupils' keyboard skills.
  - Encouraging pupils to put more of themselves and their experiences into their writing.



- Raising expectations for pupils to write about their mathematics, including extended writing about mathematical investigations.  
(Paragraphs 3, 16, 21, 27, 53, 64, 67, 73, 74, 75, 76, 81, 93, 127, 137)
- (2) Strengthen the role of subject leaders, particularly in monitoring provision and lesson observation, ensuring that there is careful preparation and a specific focus for the tasks, to increase its effectiveness. (Paragraphs 54, 63, 87, 93, 94, 102, 122, 137)

## **Minor issue**

The governors and headteacher should take the following minor issue into account when preparing for their school improvement plan:

- Make more effective use of the opportunities provided by the reading diaries to comment on and track pupils' progress in reading skills.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	31	7	0	0	0
Percentage	2	25	60	13	0	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 one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	6.1
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National comparative data	0.3
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	28	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	24	31
	Girls	25	20	26
	Total	46	44	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (81)	72 (76)	93 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	20	12
	Girls	20	18	15
	Total	34	38	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (79)	62 (81)	69 (86)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
198	2	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded
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0
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0
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0
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*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.02
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	29.6

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	496,717
Total expenditure	514,277
Expenditure per pupil	2,426
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,479
Balance carried forward to next year	15,919

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.28
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.24

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.24
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	207
Number of questionnaires returned	76

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	50	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	66	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	71	7	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	66	11	5	0
The teaching is good.	37	58	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	67	9	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	51	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	47	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	55	11	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	33	59	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	62	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	54	12	3	4

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

### **ENGLISH**

60. By the end of Year 6, standards in the subject are above the national average, and are broadly similar to those seen at the last inspection. Those in Year 7 are below those expected nationally, but the difference in standards is explained entirely by differences in the approach and ability of pupils in the two age groups. A number of pupils in Year 7 find concentration difficult and have limited skills for independent learning. This is not a reflection of the quality of teaching, which is uniformly good across the school. The findings of this inspection confirm last year's test results that indicated a dip in standards; this year, however, they are set to recover to their previous good levels.
61. Standards in reading and writing are above average across the school, except in Year 7, where they are just below. While standards here are a little higher than those suggested in the 2002 national tests because sustained good teaching has resulted in some good progress, they are lower than in other year groups because there are fewer higher-attaining pupils, while those with special educational needs are greater in number. Across the rest of the school, pupils' progress is also good because teachers have high expectations for their success, displaying a good understanding of their levels of achievement that helps them to set tasks that closely match pupils' learning needs. Pupils are well motivated by interesting work, responding well to the good relationships and close understanding that exist between pupils and teachers. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and their motivation clearly has a positive impact on the quality of their learning. Those with special educational needs make very good progress in Years 4 to 6 and good progress in Year 7 because they are offered very good support. This is because the teachers, learning support assistants and special needs co-ordinator have a thorough understanding of how to help them make progress, and because all work well together as a cohesive team.
62. Standards in speaking are above average by the end of Year 6, and are average in Year 7. Pupils are generally afforded sufficient opportunities to speak at length, and in some lessons questioning is used well to encourage them to explain or justify a statement they have made. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers speak for too long or ask questions that anticipate the length and nature of the answer they expect, and this inhibits pupils from articulating a sequence of ideas or thoughts. There is good provision for pupils to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups; in the best lessons, teachers challenge them to put forward views or reactions to an idea in short, sharp discussions. This ensures that pupils remain focused on the task and that the lesson moves forward at a brisk pace. There are sufficient opportunities, too, for role-play and drama, but there is scope for extending further opportunities for all pupils to debate issues at length, although these sometimes occur in school and class council meetings. Pupils listen very attentively in the majority of lessons, with the result that standards are well above average in Years 4 to 6. In Year 7, standards of listening are generally good, although in a small number of lessons teachers have to work hard to maintain pupils' concentration. Across the school, pupils generally listen carefully when others are speaking, taking careful account of their point of view and reporting the consensus of opinion in group discussions. The broad curriculum that the school offers affords better opportunities for speaking and listening than are seen in many schools. For example, a well developed personal and social education programme ensures that all pupils regularly have a forum to voice their concerns or views, or listen to those of others, while French lessons in Years 6 and 7 provide good opportunities for the rigorous development of listening skills.
63. Overall standards in reading are above average in Years 4 to 6 because the school encourages regular reading habits and actively promotes an enjoyment of books. In one good lesson, for example, younger pupils selecting library books provided sound reasons for their choice, some justifying at length a selection that they clearly saw to be a means of further enhancing their understanding of an aspect of work in another subject on which they were engaged. By the end of Year 6, many pupils read fluently from an appropriate range of texts, some offering well-developed reasons for their preferences for particular authors or genres of writing. They comment



in a reasoned way on the conduct or motives of the characters they encounter in books, and begin to predict the likely outcomes to narrated events. Standards in reading remain just below average overall in Year 7, principally because there is a large proportion of lower-attaining pupils in the year group. The evidence collected suggests that standards have risen a little in the last year because of the systematic shared reading of texts and because of the prominence that is accorded here to this aspect of English. However, across the school there is inconsistent monitoring of pupils' progress in the skills they acquire through their independent reading. While teachers record how many books pupils have read and the rate at which they are reading them, they do not always track sufficiently closely the nature of the difficulties they encounter and may not be aware of the depth of understanding pupils are gaining from the books they read. The school does much to promote an enjoyment of reading, through its celebration of World Book Day, for example, and through the way in which teachers constantly expose pupils to challenging and interesting texts and encourage pupils to share a favourite writer with others. Many teachers recommend authors liable to be of general interest to the class, although they less frequently suggest writers or books likely to challenge individual pupils. Those with special educational needs generally make very good progress in their reading because they are closely monitored and well supported.

64. Pupils similarly attain above average standards in writing by the end of Year 6, while those in the current Year 7 are just below those expected. In recent years, the school has focused closely on the promotion of writing skills, and these are generally taught well by teachers with high expectations who generally manifest good knowledge of the subject. Pupils practise writing on a wide range of themes, and teachers discuss thoroughly with their pupils the nature and purpose of the writing they expect. Pupils regularly draft their work, and receive helpful feedback from the teacher on how it might be improved. As a result, pupils acquire the habit of looking critically and objectively at their efforts and of not always being satisfied with their first attempt. Because basic skills in writing are well taught, many develop a good understanding of how to plan and craft their writing. However, there is scope to allow pupils to use still more productively the skills they have acquired. Also, the emphasis on exercises to establish correct English allows less time to encourage pupils to put more of themselves into their writing. In some classes, teachers continue to practise exercises to improve pupils' writing when those skills are already well understood by the pupils as a result of previously good teaching. This sometimes limits the opportunities pupils have to think through their own ideas or express them at length in their own way. Pupils generally punctuate their work well; more able pupils in Year 7, for example, effectively use punctuation inside sentences to clarify meaning, while almost all of those in Year 4 use full stops and capital letters accurately. While younger pupils are secure in writing instructions and in recording events chronologically, older ones use language with more sophistication to comment on motives for actions, on developing characters or in developing a secondary plot. Across the school, writing is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, such as science and history.
65. Standards in spelling and handwriting are good in Years 4 to 6, and are average in Year 7. The school has worked hard over the last two years to raise standards in spelling, and this has borne fruit. Even the youngest pupils know how to use a dictionary to check the spellings of words of which they are unsure. Pupils learn to spell systematically, and are regularly checked in their progress. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 7 learn spelling rules thoroughly and develop good mnemonic strategies for remembering families of words with which they encounter difficulty. In Year 4, pupils are already joining their writing confidently and, by the time they leave the school, most have developed a neat, cursive hand.
66. English teaching across the school is good, and there is no marked variation in its quality in different age groups. Two thirds of the lessons observed in the course of the inspection were good or better, and it is clear from an analysis of work that teaching over time in all classes is of good quality. The principal reason for this is that teachers have high expectations for the success of their pupils. In one very good lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils were constantly challenged through probing questioning to expand on and justify the answers they gave; they were expected to discriminate between the colloquial and formal registers of language within a text and to support their answers with illustrations. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. They display an equally good understanding of the level of achievement of their pupils because they

group them accurately and set them highly relevant tasks that motivate them well and lead them towards the next stage in their learning. Teachers take a real interest in their pupils' work; their marking reveals that they have read their work carefully and want to encourage them to improve. Praise is used judiciously and where it is merited, so that pupils trust the comments teachers make. Teachers usually bring the main ideas together well towards the end of lessons, although a few sessions are too short to consolidate pupils' learning effectively.

67. In lessons, teaching generally moves forward at a good pace. Many teachers use a range of strategies to maintain pupils' concentration, and adopt a bright but business-like manner that keeps them interested. The teachers frequently make good arrangements to enhance pupils' moral and social development, for example by mixed ability grouping during tasks. They also establish a climate where all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued. As a result, they are well motivated to learn. A few class discussion sessions at the ends of lessons are too short to draw out and consolidate the main areas of pupils' learning. In a minority of lessons, there is too much teacher direction, introductions are protracted, and questioning is over-focused on factual answers rather than encouraging pupils to explain or reason. Nevertheless pupils almost invariably apply themselves industriously when they are working independently. In one lesson, for example, a group of older, higher-attaining pupils completed a page of a legible, coherent draft for a story in less than twenty minutes. The teaching of those with special educational needs is good, and sometimes very good. Work offered to small groups of these pupils is highly relevant to their learning needs, and in the classroom they are well supported by learning assistants thoroughly briefed in the work they undertake. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support from adults during planned times, although on other occasions support is less effective. Pupils across the school are almost always well managed. Homework is set regularly; this is often closely linked to the work in lessons so that pupils appreciate its relevance and are well motivated to complete it. A homework diary ensures that parents have the opportunity to comment on their children's learning and progress where appropriate.
68. The English curriculum is both broad and balanced, and the national literacy guidance is used very well, being interpreted imaginatively in some classes to enhance pupils' understanding. A strong feature of the school's constant quest to improve the curriculum is its recent involvement in the promotion of study skills. Although it is yet too soon to evaluate its impact, teachers are encouraging pupils to take greater responsibility for making the right decisions about the quality and appearance of their English work and for extending their research skills. As a result, many develop a keen sense of responsibility for their learning and provide a strong rationale for the tasks on which they are engaged. Management of subject is sound and has the potential to become very good. The co-ordinator is a very good practitioner with a good general understanding of what needs to be done to develop the subject further, but is not yet familiar with the degree to which there are similarities and variations in teaching and learning across the school. Procedures for collecting and analysing information about pupils' performance are good; teachers generally have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their pupils' achievements and use this knowledge well to track likely performance and to plan future teaching and learning.
69. Resources for the subject are generally good. There are sufficient stocks of fiction books, but the numbers of action stories and those that cater for the particular interest of older pupils could be further extended. Non-fiction resources are in good supply, as are those to support the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs. The school makes good use of computers to develop pupils' word-processing skills and to introduce them to publishing. Sometimes, pupils deploy their English skills effectively in editing for their own purposes information that they have downloaded from the Internet. In Year 7, pupils devise posters with eye-catching captions, combining image and text to create a strong visual impact. The English curriculum is sometimes enriched by visits from outside speakers and theatre groups, and drama and role-play are regularly used well to encourage confidence in speaking aloud.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. Standards in current work are above average by the end of Year 6 and show an improvement since the last inspection. Standards by the end of Year 7 are below those expected nationally and represent a lowering of standards since the last inspection. The difference in standards between Years 6 and 7 is largely explained by differences in the ability profiles of the pupils in the two year groups. Several pupils in Year 7 find concentration difficult and have limited skills for independent learning. There are also more pupils with learning difficulties in Year 7. The findings of this inspection corroborate the 2002 national test results for Year 6 that indicated a dip in standards from 2001. The school's tracking procedures support the evidence of lower attainment in Year 7 and indicate that this year standards in Year 6 are likely to recover to above average.
71. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment and in Years 4 to 6 they achieve well and make good progress. For the current Year 7 pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but evidence indicates that the good progress of Years 4 to 6 is likely to continue into Year 7 next year. This is because of the consistently good teaching seen throughout the school, the very good approach to implementing numeracy and the very positive attitudes of the pupils. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys over the past three years. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress whilst those pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress.
72. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The mental starter at the beginning of the lessons focuses well on specific ideas and skills to increase pupils' speed, accuracy and confidence. For example, in Year 4, pupils recognised the method for finding the complement of a fraction to 1, such as  $7/8 + 1/8$ . In the well-chosen tasks that followed the high attaining pupils demonstrated good understanding as they were challenged to find groups of equivalent fractions. In Year 5 the teacher's careful introduction and good interactive style on how to calculate area led pupils to calculate them correctly, although a few pupils were confused about the difference between area and perimeter. The higher-attaining pupils visualised well how to calculate the area of composite shapes.
73. In Year 6 the mental starter for a support group anticipated well the numbers and calculations required to find angles in a triangle or at a point. Most pupils had the skills to make up numbers to 180, though with several slips. In the task that followed most pupils understood the steps needed and worked out the unknown angles correctly, perhaps with some help. The pupils' good effort promoted good learning that reinforced their understanding, although standards are below average for this group of lower-attaining pupils. In another lesson in Year 6, the teacher's good use of ICT to support mathematical ideas was very effective in improving pupils' understanding of angle and how to measure it. The class teacher demonstrated very good relationships with the pupils, gave very clear explanations and challenged all pupils well. She demonstrated very good practice of going to each table to check on problems pupils had and their progress because she used this information to reinforce the ideas in whole class discussion. This addressed directly the learning difficulties of the pupils and motivated them well to learn, and the classroom assistant provided additional close support for identified pupils. In a similarly very good lesson in Year 6, pupils used connecting plastic squares to form nets of cubes, having made a reasonable attempt to draw one. The teacher challenged pupils very well to explore which different layouts would fold to form a cube. The high attaining pupils were neat and methodical but did not always show greater geometrical insight than other pupils. While the session provided pupils with many opportunities for investigational work pupils did not write about their mathematical observations.
74. In Year 7, an interesting starter challenged the upper set to discover what is the least or greatest surface area when four cubes are joined together (face to face). Pupils demonstrated a few investigational skills, such as putting cubes in successive places and counting the faces, though few pupils were methodical in counting the faces. With prompts from the teacher, most pupils recognised that at each join two faces are covered/ lost but very few pupils were able to make a general statement explaining a result. Moreover, as in Year 6, pupils did not write about their findings to reinforce the methods, general results, predictions or dead-ends. In the lower Year 7 set, the teacher's good, thorough explanations and approach led to good learning and consolidation of how to read a scale for weight.

75. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour during lessons that help the concentration and efforts. A few pupils require individual support or firm handling to keep them on task. Teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in presenting the ideas, and the quality of teaching is good. There is a good emphasis on quick, accurate mental calculation. There is also a good focus on more open investigation, supported by practical work, but there is insufficient attention to recording pupils' findings and writing about their work. Teachers set a good pace in lessons. They know their pupils well and are skilled at asking questions, often to encourage pupils to explain their working. This good practice is not found consistently in all lessons, however. The pupils are placed in ability groups in Years 4 and 5, which promotes good progress, and pupils in the lower-attaining groups receive good support from classroom assistants. The teachers frequently make good arrangements to enhance pupils' moral and social development, for example by mixed ability grouping during tasks. They also establish a climate where all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued. As a result, they are well motivated to learn and achieve well. The teachers manage the pupils very well and are active around the class. Teachers plan for a good sequence of activities, and generally use time well, although a few discussion sessions at the ends of lessons are rather too short to draw out and consolidate the main areas of pupils' learning.
76. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has time to monitor and review provision for the subject, and observation of lessons is planned. The teachers plan their lessons co-operatively which ensures continuity. Daily assessment takes place during lessons and teachers use a good formal recording procedure. The school has established the mathematics curriculum well, with good support procedures to help improve standards and the quality of learning. There is a little evidence of the use of ICT to support the subject, but this is an area for development.

## **SCIENCE**

77. Standards of attainment in science are above national expectations by the end of Year 6, but below by the end of Year 7. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment were above the national expectation in Years 6 and 7. The current Year 7 has performed below expectation since their entry to the school, and whilst they have made satisfactory progress over time, this has been insufficient to lift attainment to the national expectation. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language make good progress, in relation to their prior attainment.
78. There has been satisfactory improvement in science since the last inspection when there was an inappropriate match of task to abilities in some classes. As a result, pupils made less progress in those lessons, and gains in attainment slowed. Activities are now generally well-matched to abilities, and most pupils make good progress during lessons. For example, in a lesson on creating a healthy diet, lower-attaining pupils were given a modified task to complete which enabled them to participate fully in the lesson. Improvement in setting sufficiently demanding tasks is variable, however, as there are still some occasions when higher-attaining pupils are not challenged, and as a result progress slows. For example, in a lesson where pupils were creating healthy and unhealthy menus some pupils found this work easy, and were capable of completing a more demanding task that would have ensured a greater rate of progress. The school has improved the quality of assessment information since the last inspection by assessing pupils at the end of units of work. This information contributes directly to the pupils' annual reports. As at the time of the last inspection, this system is less successful at informing teaching on a day-to-day basis, or guiding curricular planning. Some teachers informally assess pupils at the end of lessons, according to whether they have met the learning objectives, and this practice is useful in planning the next steps for pupils. The monitoring of science has improved since the last inspection as some lessons have been observed in the last year. This has given the co-ordinator an informed view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and of the effectiveness of the curriculum. An analysis of pupils' performance in the national tests is also contributing to the development of the subject.

79. The school has adopted the national schemes of work for science and devised a long-term plan that provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 and 5 complete their work in half-termly units on gases; earth, sun and moon and keeping healthy, for example. Pupils' work in Year 6 includes, dissolving; reversible and irreversible changes and forces. Pupils in Year 7, appropriately, spend a greater amount of time on science activities, compared to pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, and this includes work on solids, liquids and gases; cells; electricity and the solar system.
80. Pupils throughout the school have well-developed science skills and they use scientific vocabulary confidently. They explain well the need for a fair test, and understand the importance of making predictions. All teachers ensure pupils have regular opportunities for carrying out investigative work, and this is a strength of the teaching and planning. Pupils are developing lively and enquiring minds as a result of the frequent opportunities for investigative work. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson that illustrates the good practice through the school, pupils were setting up experiments to investigate methods of preserving food. They demonstrated they were aware of a number of agents that can be used to preserve food, such as salt, lemon juice and vinegar. The teacher provided pupils with a very good planning grid that included a series of prompts, for example: 'How will I make it a fair test?'; 'What will I change?'; 'What will I keep the same?' A number of other prompts ensured that pupils thought about, and discussed, all the considerations that would make the findings reliable and valid. Over the next few weeks the pupils will record their findings in a special booklet. The information collected will enable pupils to arrive at a conclusion about the most effective way of preserving food. Pupils' very positive attitudes contributed to the effectiveness of the lesson, and the very good rate of progress they made.
81. The quality of teaching is good, with two lessons judged very good. Teachers make very good use of the school's accommodation. For example, in a good lesson with Year 7 pupils the science laboratory and the computer suite were used. In this lesson pupils were making slides of an onion epidermis and using it to identify and name parts in a plant cell. The first part of the lesson took place in the science laboratory where pupils sliced up onions and worked with great persistence to create slides. This was a fairly delicate operation for some. For the second part of the lesson pupils moved to the computer suite where they used a digital microscope, linked to a computer program, to magnify the slides. When the first slide was successfully projected onto the electronic whiteboard an audible "Wow!" went round the room. Pupils were thrilled with the results, and had visible proof that their persistence earlier had paid off. Most pupils had an opportunity to view their slide and identify the nuclei. They were familiar with the scientific terminology of the lesson, but less confident at explaining what it meant, or what they had found out during the lesson. When not viewing the slide, pupils used computers to design the title page for their project on cells, many of them displaying good ICT skills in doing this. This lesson successfully combined scientific skills with those of information and communication technology. In several lessons there is an emphasis on questions that only require factual or straightforward answers and less focus on phrasing questions to encourage pupils to explain or give reasons. There are several examples of ICT skills being used well in other science lessons, for example, when computers are linked to temperature sensors. While several tasks give pupils a good, clear focus on the main skills and knowledge of the lesson, these are generally decided already and give pupils little opportunity to make choices about the experiments they would like to set up or to improve their independent learning skills. The teachers usually make good arrangements to enhance pupils' moral and social development, for example by sharing responsibility for setting up an experiment during tasks. They also ensure there is a sympathetic climate where all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued. As a result, they are well motivated to learn.
82. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, pupils use numeracy skills in data handling, and literacy skills when they present the findings of experiments. A few class discussion sessions at the ends of lessons are too short to draw out and consolidate the main areas of pupils' learning. The subject is well resourced, and the availability of a science laboratory supports teaching of the practical elements well. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## ART AND DESIGN

83. Although no art lessons were observed in the course of the inspection, sufficient evidence was gained from analysing work and discussions with staff and pupils. This indicates that standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 6, and are similar to those seen nationally for pupils in Year 7. The relative difference in standards between Years 6 and 7 is solely a reflection of the degree of care and detail which pupils invest in their finished work; that seen in Year 6, for example, is of above average standard overall. Although some good quality work was also noted among that of Year 7 pupils, overall standards of care here both in sketch books and in finished products are not so high. The school has broadly maintained the good standards in the subject reported at the last inspection.
84. Pupils generally make good progress in their acquisition of skills and understanding as they move through the school. In Years 4 and 5, pupils use collage techniques to depict the story of the Armada, small groups each working on panels that boldly depict the historical events. The colour and texture of different materials are used effectively together to bring the picture to life. Using similar techniques, they design head-dresses, using tissue or shiny paper and paint on a cardboard base. Pupils experiment with tone, using different densities of pencil shading to achieve tones of grey. They exercise care in their work, and much is above the level expected. Building well on previously acquired skills, pupils in Year 6 experiment with the techniques of portraying a figure in movement on an appropriate background; some, for example, represent a sportsman in action against a crowd scene. Preparatory work here is very good: pupils use sketch books to explore their observations of how muscles contract, examining the techniques of established artists such as Seurat and trying to convey the impression of movement through the use of shading or exploded shapes.
85. The range of skills taught in Year 7 extend well those already acquired. Pupils practise field-sketching, for example, using the weight of the pencil to achieve the effects of light and shade. Most sketch and paint trees using appropriate attention, faithfully reproducing the branch-work they have observed in the field. They examine the structure of the face and use the computer to make composite images using a digital camera. While some of the work is of above average standard, a number of pupils do not exercise the expected care; this is best seen in the quality of sketch-work for example, and in the perfunctory evaluation of finished products. Across the school, those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils.
86. Although no overall judgement may be made about the quality of teaching, conclusions may be drawn about some aspects of it from the evidence of pupils' work. Teachers across the school generally display good subject knowledge and teach the basic skills well. This is evident from the way in which pupils prepare their work, using their sketch books to try out ideas and to experiment with techniques. The work of recognised artists is used imaginatively to illustrate the skills that pupils need to practise. The teachers encourage pupils' moral and social development through co-operative working. They also establish a climate where all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued. As a result, they are well motivated to learn. Teachers' expectations are generally high; pupils are taught to look critically at their original efforts and to try out ways of improving upon them, and to evaluate objectively the success of their finished work. Those pupils interviewed talked enthusiastically about their work, and displayed pride in their achievements. Some older pupils are able to give detailed descriptions of the way in which they carry out their work, and successfully justify the techniques they have used.
87. Every aspect of the art curriculum is taught in appropriate measure, and the subject is sometimes used imaginatively to support learning in other subjects, such as history and information technology. The subject manager, new to the post and very well qualified, has a good understanding of how the subject should be developed further. However, there is currently no monitoring of curriculum planning or teaching, although these are scheduled to take place in the coming term. Pupils are appropriately assessed at the end of each unit of work they complete, and this gives teachers a good indication of their strengths and of where further support is necessary. The school has a good range of resources of appropriate quality, although some

equipment is scheduled for renewal. The accommodation for teaching the subject is very good. Pupils in Year 6 have visited the Sainsbury's Centre in Norwich, but there are currently few opportunities for those in other year groups to visit art galleries or museums, or for pupils to meet artists in school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Standards in design and technology exceed the expectation by the end of Year 6 and are broadly average by the end of Year 7. This maintains the good standards noted at the time of the last inspection at Year 6, and also maintains the standards at Year 7. Judgements are based on lesson observations, an analysis of pupils' previous work and lesson planning.
89. In Years 4 and 5, pupils demonstrate a basic understanding of the processes of designing and making. The teachers establish good attention by pupils, so that they listen carefully during discussions and demonstrations to prepare pupils for the practical tasks. The teachers are well-prepared and organised so that materials and resources are convenient. The clear demonstrations give good attention to measuring the length to cut and the cutting technique, although a safe standing position was not always emphasised. The pupils applied themselves well to the task of cutting lengths of dowel to size, showing good interest and wanting to produce a good product. Several pupils collaborated well with partners although some did not realise about the practical help needed when one was sawing. Most pupils produced lengths of dowel to an acceptable accuracy, with saw-cuts that were reasonably square. The pupils' skills of cutting improved during the session and pupils could explain the purpose of the task and how they were tackling it, so that standards were average. In previous work, pupils have cooked biscuits as part of their food technology experience, the teachers noting several pupils who went beyond the expectation in evaluating their work or using tools, for example.
90. By Year 6, pupils' skills and understanding have improved so that standards in the work seen exceed the expectation and are promoted by the good teaching. In making slippers, pupils have gone through a thorough design stage under the teachers' direction and have produced paper then J-cloth prototypes. Pupils were able to explain what they had learnt by making the early models and how they had tried to solve the problems encountered and adapt their design. For example, some pupils found the top of the slipper was not easy to shape so that it fitted well over the sole.
91. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and are active in prompting the pupils to make decisions and evaluate their work. This encourages good standards so that pupils make a careful choice of technique or material. For example, in Year 6 pupils made a good choice of material for the upper and the sole, even bringing in some carpet underlay from a loft as having good properties. Pupils explained well what properties they were looking for, including a match of colour and cloth pattern and style. The pupils demonstrated good skills overall to cut, shape and join their materials, although many tended to think of gluing first. In Year 7, pupils have used a variety of techniques in making glove puppets. Some pupils have used the strategy carefully of stitching two pieces of shaped cloth together around the outside then turning them inside out to hide the stitching and to show the good side. Pupils' designs included an animal and a Lucifer, and many were decorated imaginatively to produce a good finish.
92. The quality of teaching is good, reflecting the careful planning and organisation of the lessons. The teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge through their exposition, and particularly the focused questioning to help pupils think about their decisions. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The teachers are aware of the need to promote pupils' personal development and often do this by arranging mixed ability grouping during tasks. They also establish a climate where all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued, for example during discussion about how they might improve their work. As a result, they are well motivated to learn. The pupils demonstrated good levels of enthusiasm and involvement in activities, usually working well in pairs to share materials and equipment. The practical nature of the lessons enabled all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or learning English as an additional language, to make good progress.
93. The subject as planned, supported by evidence of pupils' previous work, meets statutory requirements. National guidance has been adopted appropriately and the school has a good range of resources and tools. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through having relevant tasks and requiring co-operative and responsible behaviour. The subject alternates with art at times so that the subject leader has to look carefully at time allocation for the subject and progression in pupils' learning. There is little evidence of the use of



ICT to support the subject and this is an area for development. The subject is managed well by the recently appointed subject leader, who is very keen to see it as providing significant learning opportunities for the pupils. There is a suitably systematic approach to assessment which allows teachers to track pupils' progress. He has the opportunity to monitor provision.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

94. Evidence is drawn from the observation of one lesson, an analysis of pupils' work, a discussion with the geography co-ordinator, by talking to Year 6 pupils and by looking at classroom displays. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. It is not possible to judge standards of attainment at the end of Year 7 as there is insufficient evidence to base it on. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in lessons, based on their prior attainment. There is a good match of activities to pupils' abilities, and good planning by teachers, ensuring that all pupils are able to participate fully in lessons.
95. There has been satisfactory improvement in geography since the last inspection when monitoring of the subject was underdeveloped, and assessment on a day-to-day basis was sound, but not used to inform future planning. Subject monitoring is still underdeveloped as there have been no classroom observations, or analyses of pupils' work recently. Therefore, the co-ordinator is not able to talk confidently about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Assessment systems have improved as pupils' work is now assessed at the end of units of work to establish how well they have met the learning intentions. This information is used to build up pupils' profiles for the annual reports, but there is still no system that evaluates individuals' strengths and weaknesses, informing future curricular planning.
96. The school has adopted the national schemes of work for geography. The long-term plan provides coverage in blocks where pupils work on one topic for a half term, but then may not cover it again for another six months. For example, pupils in Year 6 study rivers in the first half of the autumn term, but they have to wait until the start of the summer term to resume their geography studies.
97. By the end of Year 6 pupils are developing a good understanding of rivers. They use geographical vocabulary well, for example; 'tributary', 'meander' and 'estuary'. They are able to explain how rivers start and what happens to them as they develop. They are aware of natural, and man-made effects on rivers, and land use. Pupils are able to compare well-known rivers, for example, the Rhone and the Usk, developing the concept of similarities and differences. They follow the news carefully to find out about natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods. Classroom displays reflect this work and the contribution it is making to their geographical understanding.
98. Good links are explored with other subjects. Pupils' books include examples of data handling where they have used numeracy skills to create a graph showing the length of rivers, links to science where they have studied pollution and links to literacy where pupils produce a fact file on the River Orinoco and write poems about earthquakes. Information and communication technology is used well when pupils search the Internet for information, and use computers to support their work modelling the effects of the Richter scale. There is insufficient software to support the full geography curriculum at present. Overall, the school has an adequate range of resources to support geography teaching.
99. As only one lesson was observed it is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching, overall. However, other evidence, for example, the work in pupils' books, indicates that the teaching is at least good and that pupils make good progress in lessons. In a good Year 7 lesson, pupils were studying the characteristics of volcanoes. Most were able to use geographical vocabulary well. Pupils were less confident in locating places, for example, Mount Etna. The lesson concluded with pupils making their own volcanoes, using plasticine, sodium bicarbonate and acetic acid. All were very excited about this and applied themselves to the task quickly. The teacher gave pupils appropriate health and safety guidance and all wore goggles before they started the eruption.

This was a good lesson because it included a number of tasks that kept this lively group engaged in their activities, and good planning ensured that all made progress.

100. The subject promotes the pupils' social and cultural understanding well by raising their awareness of world issues through curriculum coverage, and 'What's in the News?' discussions. There were good opportunities for developing spirituality in a Year 7 lesson when pupils gazed in awe at the mini-eruption they had created with their plasticine volcanoes. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

101. Evidence is drawn from the observation of a small number of lessons, an analysis of pupils' work, a discussion with the history co-ordinator and by looking at classroom displays. Standards of attainment are in line with the national expectation by the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. One history lesson was observed in Year 7, and pupils' attainment was broadly in line with the national expectation, which is the same as the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in lessons, in relation to their prior attainment. Good teachers' planning ensures that all pupils are able to play a full part in history lessons.
102. The school has addressed well the small number of concerns from the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in history lessons when this was satisfactory previously, and the quality of teaching is consistently good, where there was a mixture of satisfactory and good teaching last time. There is an improved assessment system in place used to identify the extent to which pupils have met the learning intentions in each unit of work. This information builds up over the year and links to statements on the pupils' annual reports. The assessment system is good at reflecting what pupils have covered, but it is less effective in identifying individuals' strengths and weaknesses in historical skills, for example. There have been improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of the subject because the co-ordinator now samples pupils' work from all year groups, checks teachers' planning for coverage and breadth of curriculum, and talks to pupils from different year groups in order to develop an informed view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. As the school operates a rolling programme of classroom observations there have been no opportunities for the monitoring of teaching recently, and this aspect of co-ordination is still underdeveloped.
103. The school has largely adopted the national schemes of work to support the teaching of history. There is an emphasis on pupils learning by first-hand experience, for example, using the school's immediate environment, and the village of Mulbarton when studying Victorians. Visits are also organised to places further afield, for example to Castle Rising, as part of the study of Normans. The school uses visitors to support the teaching of history. Pupils remember well the visitor from 'Tudor Times', a group who brought the period alive for them.
104. The school uses a variety of approaches to teaching history, including role-play, drama and 'hot seating'. In 'hot seating' pupils play the part of a person they have researched, responding to questions about themselves, their experiences and the times they live in. So that they slip into role easily pupils, or staff, usually dress up. This kind of activity contributes well to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, and ensures good links between work covered in literacy lessons and history.
105. The quality of teaching is good. In a lesson about Victorian schooling pupils were using extracts from the school log books to establish the differences between schools then and now. Pupils were fascinated by the entries as they researched the reasons for absences, visitors to the school, what the children learnt and how they were taught. The teacher led a good discussion, drawing together the pupils' findings. Some interesting comparisons were made, especially in the areas of testing and inspections. Pupils were fascinated to discover that schools had visits from inspectors in those days also. This was a good lesson because it developed the pupils' historical skills of enquiry well by using 'real' information. Progress was good because pupils were

interested in the tasks, and they were able to relate them to their own experiences. The concept of similarities and differences was developed well through discussion, and pupils displayed very positive attitudes to history throughout the lesson. The original log books were on display in the classroom and pupils were given the opportunity to handle these and look through them in one lesson but not another, which was a missed opportunity. The chance to handle original log books in one lesson helped promote discussion on a number of issues, including the need to treat these books, and other primary sources of information, with respect. It also helped assure pupils that extracts had been copied from the original entries, and not made up. The teachers support pupils' moral and social development, for example by mixed ability grouping during tasks. They also establish a climate where all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued. As a result, they are well motivated to learn.

106. The use of information and communication technology is variable. Some classes use the Internet for research, whilst others do not use computers at all as there is insufficient software to support current topics. Homework is set occasionally with tasks varying from finishing off work, to carrying out personal research. Resources, overall are adequate. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social moral and cultural development. There was a good example of the subject contributing to spiritual development when pupils in Year 7 were watching a video recording of Norman Castles. When an aerial view of Windsor Castle was shown the reaction was "Wow!" There was a clear sense of awe and wonder at this time that contributed to pupils' spiritual development. The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) exceed the expectation by the end of Year 6 and are broadly average by Year 7. This indicates a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have good confidence and familiarity with the facilities of the ICT suite and use them well to promote learning. The subject benefits from the very good expertise of the deputy headteacher working alongside the teacher who has recently taken on the role of subject leader. During the planned lessons in the ICT suite, and at times when the suite may be booked for other lessons, pupils achieve well through a combination of good teaching, motivating tasks and positive attitudes.
108. The school has adopted national guidance to ensure good coverage and progression of skills in the subject year by year, so that this is a strong feature. Teachers plan tasks thoroughly that enable pupils to acquire, or exceed in, the skills and knowledge expected year by year. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 have the skills to log onto the computers, set up a file and edit it using the mouse to position the cursor. Overall they are developing keyboard and mouse skills well. They are over-dependent on the mouse for entering commands, however, and are generally slow and uncertain in using the keyboard as an efficient alternative. In lessons on a 'police database' of local criminals the teachers used the interactive whiteboard well to demonstrate the steps or commands needed. Pupils listened intently and several contributed to the discussion on why accurate data is important. The pupils had good opportunities to make searches and the high attaining pupils particularly demonstrated a good understanding of how to conduct a search, and to combine criteria. Good questioning, and strategies such as having pupils explain to each other then to the class, promoted good learning.
109. In Year 6, two contrasting lessons provided good learning opportunities so that the majority of pupils made good progress. In one lesson most pupils responded very well to the challenge of using a spreadsheet to find the maximum area of a rectangle given that the perimeter is 60, or 80 or 90 units, and so on. Most pupils understood well how to enter a formula for a cell and to drag with the mouse to extend the application of the formula, particularly the high attaining pupils. In this way, several pupils found that a square gave the largest number and generalised their result to other perimeters. In a further very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher provided good use of ICT to support understanding of angle. The class teacher's very good relationships with the pupils and very clear explanations promoted good, secure learning. Her high expectations for behaviour and strategy of going to the pupils' tables in turn, to check on problems pupils had, created very good

conditions for learning. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour also supported learning well. As a result, pupils improved in their accuracy and understanding of how to use a protractor correctly. In Year 7, good use of the interactive white screen again provided a clear demonstration to pupils on how to enter commands into a spreadsheet, this time to model costs. Most pupils applied the steps correctly to enter a formula for the sum of several amounts. The teacher added refinements at strategic points in the lesson so that pupils could improve their skills; for example, in presenting negative amounts in red. The pupils demonstrated satisfactory standards, not having had much experience of spreadsheet work previously. Overall, pupils' previous work shows satisfactory coverage of the subject, with a variety of relevant tasks, including use of the Internet and control.

110. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan well, setting out clear learning intentions and drawing on the good experience of other staff. The teachers make careful arrangements for pupils to work together to enhance their social development. They also ensure that pupils listen to others so that all pupils' ideas and contributions are valued. This improves pupils' motivation to learn. A few class discussion sessions at the ends of lessons are too short to draw out and consolidate the main areas of pupils' learning. The school has made good progress in applying ICT facilities to support learning in other subjects although there is scope for more consistent links. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour overall, which supports their good progress. The planned curriculum meets the expectations and requirements of the National Curriculum. The procedures to record pupils' progress are satisfactory. The subject leader, who has been appointed recently, is forming a clear view of priorities and is supported well by the deputy headteacher. She has the opportunity to monitor pupils' work and planning.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

111. Standards in French by the end of Year 7 are similar to those expected nationally of pupils aged twelve. This maintains the standards noted at the time of the last inspection. Pupils generally make sound progress as they move through Years 6 and 7, although this is somewhat inhibited by the limitations of the timetable. Pupils are offered a single hour-long lesson each week, and a disproportionate amount of time therefore has to be given to revising previous learning. In Year 6, a potentially very good curriculum is interrupted by the need to teach other subjects during the spring term, and this slows pupils' previously good progress. Nevertheless, the school is unusual in offering French at all to Year 6 pupils, and in doing so it prepares them well for the foreign language curriculum it is required to provide in Year 7.
112. Although no lessons were seen in Year 6, it is clear from interviewing pupils and examining their work that they make at least sound progress. Pupils learn to introduce themselves and to exchange simple greetings. They practise the numbers from one to 30 and learn how to express the days of the week and months of the year. Pupils recognise the names of colours, and name articles of clothing. They begin to understand the concept of gender and to appreciate that pronunciation is subject to different rules from those governing English. Those interviewed remembered well what they had been taught by means of close imitation and repetition, and through mnemonic games, singing rhymes and listening to the taped conversations of native speakers.
113. Pupils in Year 7 generally make at least sound progress in their learning, and in those where they concentrate well, it is good. Pupils answer wide-ranging questions about themselves, such as their age and where they live, and begin to express preferences in French using such expressions as *'j'aime beaucoup..'* or even *'je déteste..'*. They develop a good accent because the teacher provides a very good model for them to imitate. Some gain the confidence to enter into simple conversations in pairs or with the teacher, and begin to recognise patterns in expressing the language that they can make their own. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to speak, write and read, the teacher calling on pupils by name to answer, thus ensuring that each is brought into the conversation. Pupils new to the class or those who are reticent to speak are challenged to contribute so that all feel part of the lesson. As a result, those with special education needs in

English make progress at a rate similar to other pupils in these early stages of French language acquisition, because learning relies heavily on speaking and listening. Many in Year 7 display a real interest in the subject, although a small minority of pupils in one of the two classes sometimes find listening difficult so that their concentration is easily diverted. On such occasions, the experienced teacher quickly brings learning back on course, sometimes by skilfully adjusting his teaching to meet the learning needs of the group.

114. While it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in Year 6, that in Year 7 is good overall because the teacher has thorough knowledge of his subject and offers pupils a wide range of learning activities, including repetition, games and practical exercises. Very good use is made of visual aids and other resources. The visiting teacher works hard to overcome the curricular limitations of a single weekly lesson, liaising closely with the class teachers to ensure that homework is completed, and making sound arrangements to overcome the difficulties of marking work and completing assessment procedures within the time available. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and teaching is very confident because he has close familiarity with the course he has prepared. As a result, lessons proceed at a brisk pace, the teacher using a range of strategies to maintain pupils' attention. Many pupils display a genuine enthusiasm for the subject because lessons are interesting. Despite limited contact with the pupils, the teacher displays a sound knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, and adapts the level of his questioning to the aptitude and ability of the pupil he is addressing.
115. The French teacher has devised a sound learning programme for Year 7; this is adapted to take full account of his limited contact with pupils but nevertheless provides them with the essential skills they will need to meet the demands of the Year 8 curriculum. The progress of pupils is regularly evaluated; the pupils themselves are directly involved in the assessment procedures so that they develop a good understanding of their own rate of learning, and where their strengths lie. Until this year, pupils gained brief first-hand experience of life in France in the course of their stay at Folkestone, but this at present is discontinued. Resources for the subject are otherwise good for pupils in both year groups; many of these are produced by the staff themselves, and are consequently well used.

## **MUSIC**

116. Evidence is drawn from the observation of a small number of lessons, a whole school singing practice, a scrutiny of pupils' folders of work and a discussion with the music co-ordinator. Standards of attainment are above national expectations at the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. It was not possible to judge standards of attainment at the end of Year 7 as no lessons were observed. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in music lessons, based on their prior attainment. Teachers' good planning ensures that all pupils have opportunities to participate fully in music lessons.
117. Since the last inspection the school has addressed the two areas of concern relating to assessment and resources. They have a system for assessing pupils' progress at the end of units of work in relation to the intended learning outcomes. This information builds up a profile of the pupils' musical ability over time and this links to the annual reports. Resources have improved since the last inspection, and there are now sufficient good quality keyboards to meet the needs of the older pupils. Overall, resources for the teaching of music are good.
118. The school has largely adopted the national schemes of work for music, and uses a commercial scheme to support its teaching. Good planning ensures there are frequent opportunities for composing, performing and appraising music, and teachers' lesson planning includes opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own, and others' work. In this way, they identify what worked well, and what could be improved next time. This good planning, at several levels, ensures pupils receive a balanced musical curriculum that focuses on the development of their musical skills.

119. Pupils' performing skills are well-developed. They sing solos or duets to a good standard and in good style. They play tuned and untuned instruments confidently, demonstrating a good sense of rhythm and skill in playing the melody or harmonies, especially when composing. They handle the musical instruments with great care and share the available resources well. Pupils have very positive attitudes to music, and work co-operatively with partners, or in small groups and willingly sing together. They enjoy music lessons, and are disappointed if there is insufficient time to perform their compositions.
120. Singing in assembly lacks enthusiasm. During a whole school singing practice some pupils made very little effort to join in. The practice included several songs already known to the pupils. They sang these all the way through without stopping. Consequently, the quality of singing did not improve because pupils were not given any guidance on how to do so, and any mistakes they made were not rectified.
121. The quality of teaching is good. In an excellent lesson pupils were writing words for a protest song as part of ongoing work in song-writing. The teacher had chosen the Bob Dylan song, 'Blowin' in the Wind' to demonstrate how the composer had used words effectively to create protest messages. Pupils spoke maturely about the Gulf War and other local and world issues. This was an excellent lesson because pupils made rapid progress, creating a protest song in a very short period of time. They successfully combined lines about local and world events into verses that conveyed important moral and social messages about putting an end to war, and maintaining a safe village. There were excellent relationships between all, and the teaching was of a very high quality. The lesson linked naturally to other curriculum areas, for example, personal and social education because of the very strong social and moral messages and contributed significantly to pupils' personal development.
122. The co-ordinator has only been in post since last September, but she is beginning to tackle the subject's priorities effectively by implementing a personal action plan. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching since she took over, as the rolling programme of classroom observations does not include music until next year. Therefore, she is unable to comment confidently about standards of attainment, or the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Information and communication technology is underdeveloped as the school does not use computers for composing, or for any aspect of music teaching. A good number of pupils receive tuition from the school's visiting instrumental teachers, and some attend the wind band which runs after school on one evening per week. There are good links to other subjects; for example, pupils use literacy skills well when writing lyrics for their compositions. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. Standards in physical education exceed the expectation for pupils by the end of Years 6 and 7. This maintains the good standards noted at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and achieve well through the highly committed support by staff and the good teaching and provision in the school. The pupils also have a greater level of fitness than usual. Pupils who have learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. The school also makes very good use of the skills and experience of visiting instructors who take sequences of lessons with pupils. The pupils benefit greatly from the knowledge and the class teachers have the opportunity to reflect on others' good practice to increase their own understanding.
124. Teachers prepare pupils well for their activities by providing a good range of warm-up sessions, and they set a good example to pupils by changing into sports clothing. Pupils know why they take part in these warm-up sessions and do so with a good attitude. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 were seen practising their ball skills outside. Most pupils caught the ball neatly and threw it to the next in line with a good passing movement. The activity offered good challenge because after throwing

the ball pupils had to run to the far end of the line to be ready for another catch: pupils entered into the activity well. Their ball skills were put into practice during a game of netball and they demonstrated improving understanding of the game's tactics for attack and defence. The class teacher used good strategies to give pupils varied experience by moving them to different positions. This enhanced pupils' learning and understanding considerably. In Year 6, pupils developed their mini-rugby skills and techniques well, for example picking up a ball and running at speed to another group then passing the ball inside. The pupils' good attitudes and relationships encouraged good effort, encouraged by the class teacher to refine their movements, such as finding space and intercepting the throwing of the ball.

125. In Year 7, a well-planned lesson, the teacher developed a very good discussion and analysis about the skills needed to control the ball whilst running to make a speed break. The pupils' good attitudes and behaviour were strongly promoted by the class teacher's positive relationships with them. The pupils were keen to take part and put good effort into their activities so that their skills improved well. Pupils showed good control of the ball in bouncing and change-over with a partner. The teacher's good strategy of having pupils watch others to evaluate their moves led to good, sympathetic comments of each other's work and performance. A korf ball tournament offered very good opportunities for exercise and the development of ball skills for throwing, catching and shooting. Most pupils enjoyed the session, putting in good effort. The teacher's very good approach and knowledge of the game enabled him to keep firm control - and pupils accepted the referee's decisions well. The matches were played in a good spirit and pupils made good gains in ball skills as well as experiencing the co-operation of good team-work.
126. In general, teachers provide challenging tasks for all groups of pupils, including the higher-attaining. Where appropriate, pupils with special needs are given individual care and attention. Boys and girls of different levels of skill are offered challenging tasks and, as a result, they make good progress in applying skills and techniques. The expectation by teachers that all pupils will work together gives strong support to pupils' learning and to their social development. Pupils show very good respect to visitors to their school and this supports their learning well. Teachers are highly aware of the need to include all pupils in the tasks.
127. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular sports which enhance the curriculum and pupils' self-esteem. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive games with other schools which supports their personal development. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The school has not yet exploited the facilities of ICT to support the subject. The subject leader, who is recently appointed to the position, is highly committed to providing a very good range of sports activities to suit all groups of pupils. He sees this as an excellent way to promote pupils' personal development and esteem, and hence to encourage learning across the curriculum. He has good subject knowledge and provides enthusiastic leadership. He has prepared a good action plan for future development. The accommodation, both indoor and outdoor, is very good and resources are of good quality to support teaching and learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. Evidence is drawn from a small number of lesson observations, an analysis of pupils' work, classroom displays and from a discussion with the subject co-ordinator. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils' attainment is in line with the local expectations for their age, and this is the same as at the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress, in relation to their prior attainment.
129. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised. At that time there were few opportunities for quiet and still reflection. These opportunities have now increased, and pupils in assemblies are regularly given time for reflection. This was particularly appropriate the morning after the second Gulf War started when the headteacher asked pupils to consider all those affected by it. In lessons pupils also have opportunities for quiet and reflection. There was a very good example of this in a lesson with Year 4 and 5 pupils when they were responding individually, and creatively, to different kinds of religious music. All listened intently to the music and sat very quietly when it had finished, before writing down their thoughts.
130. At the time of the last inspection pupils in Year 7 were making unsatisfactory progress. There are still some pupils in the current Year 7 whose attitudes to religious education are poor, and whose behaviour affects the progress of others, but, overall, progress throughout the school is satisfactory, including pupils in Year 7.
131. The school has devised its long-term plan to ensure the coverage meets the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Some of the topics from the national schemes of work are used to support



the planning of lessons. Through classroom activities, and assemblies, pupils are developing an understanding of some of the world's major religions, including; Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism, but this understanding would be enriched if the school supported a regular programme of visits to places of worship, or of visitors representing major faiths to school.

132. Most pupils are able to demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of religious beliefs. Many are able to recognise similarities and differences between faiths, and what makes them special and important to followers. For example, in a very good lesson with Year 4 and 5 pupils the teacher introduced music from six religions. She invited the pupils to listen carefully to the music and to write down adjectives that came into their heads as each piece played. This class listened intently to each short piece of music and then discussed how it made them feel. Pupils offered mature and reflective statements that communicated their understanding, and interpretation of the music. Some used colours to do this, whilst others used words, colours and drawings. The pupils responded to this task very well, and this lesson contributed significantly to their spiritual development.
133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, taking account of evidence from pupils' previous work, although the teaching observed in lessons was good. An analysis of pupils' work indicates appropriate coverage of topics, but some classes rely heavily on worksheets as the main way of recording information. In those classes some tasks were fairly easy and failed to 'stretch' the more able pupils. This kind of approach did not inspire pupils to think deeply about their work, as often all they had to do was supply a one word answer.
134. The teaching staff explore links with other subjects through lesson planning, and a lesson with Year 4 and 5 pupils successfully linked worship and music. The lesson also successfully employed literacy skills when the teacher asked pupils to write down adjectives to reflect what the music meant to them.
135. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped as there is no software to support religious education teaching, and the internet has been used infrequently to support lessons, apart from one occasion when pupils entered a website to ask leaders of various faiths about their beliefs.
136. The school assesses pupils' progress at the end of units of work by establishing whether they met the intended learning outcomes. This information contributes to the summative statements in the pupils' annual reports.
137. The school operates a rolling programme for co-ordinators to monitor teaching and, consequently, there has been no monitoring of teaching in religious education since the co-ordinator took over three years ago. This is unsatisfactory and the school is now making alternative arrangements. The school is well-resourced to teach religious education, although there are no ICT related resources. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Through assemblies, the teaching of religious education, and links to personal, social, and health education, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.