

INSPECTION REPORT

ALLENBOURN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Wimborne, Dorset

LEA area: Dorset County Council

Unique reference number: 113859

Headteacher: Mr G L MacRae

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Cosway
2734

Dates of inspection: 11 – 12 November 2002

Inspection number: 249174

Short 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 secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Allenbourn Middle School East Borough Wimborne Dorset
Postcode:	RH21 1PL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Baldwin
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school educates boys and girls from the age of 9 to 13. It is larger than average, with 589 pupils on roll. The attainment on entry is average. The school serves the small market town of Wimborne, a generally socially advantaged area, but 40 per cent of its pupils come from wider afield, because of the popularity of the school.

Almost all the pupils are white, with just over one per cent from families of Afro-Caribbean, Chinese or Asian origin. For three pupils, English is not their first language. These figures are below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational need is broadly average. Half of them are at the stage where they receive extra help from school staff. Sixteen pupils have formal statements of special educational needs and so receive both school and other professional help. Ten of these are in the special unit for pupils with dyslexia. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. Along with many Dorset schools, the school does not have the facility to provide cooked meals. This may mean that more families are eligible than actually apply.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, with some excellent features. The pupils achieve well, because of the very positive attitudes to learning that the school fosters and the very good teaching. Standards in English, mathematics and science are particularly high. The provision for teaching literacy and numeracy is very good indeed. It is a very caring school. The personal development of pupils is very good; by the end of Year 8 they are courteous, very well behaved and responsible young people. The headteacher, deputies and many of the subject co-ordinators and year heads give very effective leadership and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in music, information and communication technology across the curriculum, design and technology, French and history are particularly good.
- Personal and social development is very good, leading to excellent relationships between pupils and between adults and children. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils like school and their attendance is good. These positive attitudes help their learning.
- Teaching is very good overall, with examples of excellent teaching.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The leadership from the headteacher is excellent, with very good monitoring of the work of the school and very good use of assessment information to set targets for pupils and teachers.

What could be improved

- Provision is not consistently good across the creative arts. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop musical skills, but fewer in drama. In art, pupils make less progress than they should, because the provision is unsatisfactory.

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 May 1997. Since then there has been good improvement. The quality of teaching has improved and is now very good. Attainment in the national tests for eleven-year-olds has improved steadily in line with the national trend, and has been well above the national average for the last three years. The leadership of the school has improved and, as a result, the work of the school is monitored very well. This information is used very effectively to improve standards.

The key issues from the last report are no longer areas for concern. Long term planning has been improved significantly and is now very thorough, firmly based on evidence from rigorous audits of the

provision across subjects and its effectiveness. All members of staff have job descriptions now and there are clear lines of communication. Staff development is very good and training needs are

identified very well. There is a more collaborative approach to determining school policies. The accommodation is still unsatisfactory, but a new school is in the process of being built. All statutory requirements are now met except for the one to provide a collective act of worship every day for all.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	B	A	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	B	A	B	
science	A	A	A	A	

Attainment is average on entry. At the end of Year 6, pupils are well above average in most aspects of their work, including literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in the national tests for eleven-year-olds was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, attainment was above average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science. The provisional results for 2002 indicate that performance in English and mathematics is at a similarly high level to that in 2001. Attainment in science has improved, with almost everyone gaining at least level 4, the expected level for their age, and more than half gaining levels 5 or 6. The school set reasonable targets in 2001 and 2002, but exceeded them and proposes to raise its targets for 2003.

The school enters all its pupils for the optional tests at ages 10, 12 and 13. The results of these show that they are making good progress. In Year 7, for example, in science, a third of pupils had risen from level 5 to level 6 between 2001 and 2002. This is very good achievement. In mathematics, almost all pupils improved their performance by one level between Year 6 and Year 8 – progress that normally would take a further year. In English, the Year 8 optional test results show that two thirds of the pupils have attained level 5 or above, the nationally expected level for Year 9 pupils.

The finding of the inspection is that current levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Literacy and numeracy skills are also well above average and help the pupils to achieve well in their other subjects. Listening skills are excellent. Attainment is above average in all subjects except art. Pupils make very good progress overall.

Pupils achieve very well in the core subjects and well overall across the rest of the curriculum. Pupils with special talents, with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are interested, motivated and try hard.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms

Behaviour is excellent. Around school, pupils are considerate of each other and polite. In class, most behave impeccably and this helps them to learn.

Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. They are taught to be considerate and co-operative. Relationships are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance levels are good, above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 and Years 6	Years 7 and 8
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very 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.

Teaching is very good, overall, with some excellent teaching. Teachers' very good subject planning and preparation, along with the excellent relationships they establish with their pupils, are strengths. Many teachers are subject specialists and this helps them to extend the learning of the pupils. The pupils learn to concentrate, co-operate with others and find things out for themselves. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils well. In the very few lessons that were unsatisfactory, there was not a clear focus for learning, or sufficient emphasis on the development of skills. Homework is set diligently and extends the work done in class. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well in English and mathematics and reinforced very well across other subjects in the school. The teaching seen was very good in science, French, humanities, music, information and communication technology across the curriculum and design and technology.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good for Years 5 and 6: the quality of the provision is enhanced by specialist resources and teaching, which enrich the curriculum beyond that normally found in a primary school. It is satisfactory for Years 7 and 8. There is very good provision for after-school clubs and trips, with very good sporting opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good; their needs are diagnosed carefully and met well, through a good range of provision, including one-to-one support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils at an early stage in acquiring English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' personal development is very good. The provision for spiritual, social and moral development is very good, so that most pupils become well behaved, tolerant, responsible and co-operative. The provision for cultural development is good, especially in music and history.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school. The very good personal and academic support and guidance help pupils to succeed and to grow in confidence.

The school has good links with parents. The quality of information it provides for them is good. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The very supportive parent/teachers' association raises significant additional funding for the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership of the school, aided ably by his deputies, is excellent. The management of the school is very good overall, although not all subjects are equally well led. The management of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are very good indeed. The management of art is adversely affecting pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They bring, in many instances, professional expertise from outside of education to their roles. This helps them to monitor the work of the school effectively and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for further development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good; the school makes a thorough use of data to monitor and evaluate its performance and help it to decide what actions to take to improve provision even further. Senior managers also seek the views of both staff and pupils on the effectiveness of provision in subject areas.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. Resources are satisfactory and staff well qualified. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, but a new school is due to be completed in Spring 2003. The principles of best value are used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Almost all parents who responded stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children like school. • the teaching is good. • children are helped to become mature and responsible. • there is an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. • children are making good progress. • behaviour is good. • children are expected to work hard, do their best. • the school is led well. 	<p>Over 20 per cent of parents who responded would like improvements in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which the school works closely with them. • the quality of information they receive about how their children are getting on. • the amount of homework that is set.

The inspectors agreed with the positive views of parents. The school is welcoming and open to parents. Standards of behaviour are excellent and the teaching is very good. Pupils enjoy their time in this caring school. The inspection found that homework is set consistently in all classes. It is helping pupils to succeed. The amount of information that parents get about their children is greater than in the average primary school, as is the closeness of the relationship between the school and the parents.

Some parents were concerned about the induction of children into this large middle school from small first schools. The inspectors found that the move could be difficult for some, largely because the teaching is more formal than they would have experienced at their first schools and because of the high expectations of pupils to work hard and attain well. The school is aware of this issue and is continuing to improve this aspect of its work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in music, information and communication technology across the curriculum, design and technology, French and history are particularly good.

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school, at the beginning of Year 5, is average. The standardised tests that the school administers to all pupils in their first term show that the large majority of pupils is close to the average for the country as a whole, with roughly equal, but small, numbers of pupils scoring significantly above or below average.
2. They make very good progress in almost all areas of the curriculum and particularly good progress in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6, the schools results in these subjects are well above the national average. Almost every child attains at least level 4, the nationally expected level for children of their age, in the English, mathematics and science national tests. This has been the pattern for the last three years. The provisional results for 2002 indicate that this has been sustained. In 2001, with a large entry (160 pupils), 89 per cent attained at least level 4 in English, 84 per cent in mathematics and 96 per cent attained at least level 4 in science. (In 2002, 91.8 per cent attained at least level 4 in English, 89.2 per cent in mathematics and 98 per cent attained at least level 4 in science.) These percentages are significantly higher than those for the country as a whole. Many more than the average percentage attained level 5 in 2001: in English, 44 per cent; in mathematics 35 per cent; and in science 53 per cent attained this higher level. The school has had significant success in improving the attainment of boys. They perform as well as girls overall, much better than boys in the country as a whole.
3. The pupils make very good progress in their first two years at the school and the evidence of the inspection shows that this is sustained through Years 7 and 8. The methods for target setting and for tracking the pupils' progress towards their targets are particularly effective and rigorous. Attainment levels from the standardised tests in Year 5 are used to predict future grades. This is done for each pupil, for classes and for year groups. Teachers and pupils are made aware of these targets. Progress towards them is tracked using the National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments in Year 6, optional tests in the other years, as well as standardised tests in Year 7. This results in high expectations, a very clear emphasis throughout the school on achievement and a very thorough process for checking on the effectiveness of departments and individual teachers – all of which is raising levels of attainment throughout most of the school.
4. The results of the optional tests at ages 10, 12 and 13 show that the pupils are making good progress. In Year 7, for example, in science, almost all the pupils who were at level 5 in their Year 6 tests raised their grades to level 6 between 2001 and 2002. This is very good achievement. In mathematics, almost all pupils improved their performance by one level between Year 6 and Year 8 – progress that normally would take a further year. In English, the Year 8 optional test results show that two thirds of the pupils have attained level 5 (the nationally expected level for Year 9 pupils) or above.
5. The finding of the inspection is that pupils' achievement is very good. They make very good progress in almost all subjects throughout the school. Although the public accountability of the school, in terms of published results, ends at the end of Year 6, the school works hard to move pupils on in their learning to the end of Year 8. Their current levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science are well above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8. Literacy and numeracy skills are also well above average and help the pupils to achieve well in their other subjects. Listening skills are excellent. Attainment is above average in all other subjects, except art.

6. The quality of the pupils' work is high. In mathematics, the work in their exercise books shows numeracy skills well above average. The many high attaining pupils are adept at multiplication and division, have a very good understanding of concepts such as shape and symmetry and have very good problem solving skills. They understand fractions and in Year 6 can find and use equivalent fractions.
7. In their written work, very many pupils demonstrate that they can write with a fluency and accuracy far above the expected levels for their age. Their listening skills are excellent and help them to achieve in all lessons. Very good oracy skills were observed in a lesson on *Carrie's War*. The pupils in this Year 7 class responded very well to role-play and group discussion opportunities. In history, Year 6 pupils were seen researching and analysing the reasons for the end of the Aztec civilisation, with an insight and ability to deduce information from first and second hand sources beyond that normally seen with this age group. In information and communication technology, pupils show very good levels of skill in their use of computers to aid their work. A Year 5 class worked very well, using a program they had not previously encountered, to produce a packaging layout to 'market' the bread rolls they had made in food technology. A Year 5 class was observed in a design and technology lesson, designing and making mechanical toys. They had very good making skills, using jigsaws and drills safely and accurately. They had researched their designs, which were very advanced for children of their age. Standards in music are a strength of the school. There is very large school orchestra, which performs in many concerts throughout the year and plays every week in assemblies. A high proportion of pupils has instrumental tuition. These gifted pupils have the opportunity to play their instruments in music lessons to accompany their classmates, who work with simpler instruments, such as tuned or untuned percussion. The school is very successful in inter-school sporting events, reflecting the high standards in physical education lessons and the many sports clubs.
8. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are recognised and they achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs are also achieving very well, especially where there is special provision for them, such as a learning support assistant working alongside them. They achieve the specific tasks in their individual education programmes, which are reviewed regularly. Some pupils with special educational needs are attaining standards in English, mathematics and science that are close to the national average and attain well in physical education. There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language, and none is at an early stage in the acquisition of English. They, too, are achieving very well.
9. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was well above average in English, mathematics and science. It was described as at least average in all other subjects, except French and religious education, where attainment was below average.

Personal and social development are very good, leading to excellent relationships between pupils and between adults and children. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils like school and their attendance is good. These positive attitudes help their learning.

10. Attitudes throughout the school are very good and the ethos is one that encourages and enables pupils to succeed. Almost all pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. They have a real desire to succeed, working hard and listening carefully to the advice their teachers offer in order to raise their attainment. Parents are very pleased with the attitudes and behaviour of their children in school. Almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire think that their children like coming to school and that the behaviour of pupils is good. There has been good improvement in this aspect of the school's work since the last report.
11. Attendance is above the national average. The great majority of pupils arrive at school punctually. This allows the school day and lessons to begin on time in a calm atmosphere that prepares pupils well for the work ahead.

12. Around the school, pupils are very sensible and well mannered. Their behaviour is excellent. The conditions in which they are working are poor. The corridors are narrow, classrooms cramped and the outside of the school a building site – muddy and very noisy. Many classes are taught in temporary buildings. The new school is being constructed only a few feet from the windows of some classrooms. It is to the considerable credit of pupils (and of the way the school has encouraged and developed in them consideration and courtesy) that the school continues to run calmly and efficiently. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last year – further evidence of the very good personal development of pupils.
13. Behaviour is also excellent in lessons. This creates a purposeful ethos that helps learning. They are taught to listen to the teacher and one another, treating the views of others with respect. In class, almost all pupils show interest and concentrate, and pupils listen to the teacher and ask questions in an orderly and controlled environment. A very good example of this was observed in a religious education lesson for Year 6 pupils. The subject was the Jewish tradition of celebrating the Passover. The teacher had brought in all the ingredients and artefacts associated with the Passover meal. A girl in the class, from a Jewish family, helped her to set these out, explaining the significance of each one as she did so. Her classmates watched and listened in awe, with gasps of 'cool' from some of the boys as they gained fascinating insights into a culture quite different from their own. As the girl slowly and haltingly read from one of the sacred books in Hebrew, her friends' wonder and admiration were tangible. This is just one example from many of the excellent relationships between pupils in the school. Older pupils are 'buddies' to younger ones. An assembly was observed in which Year 5 pupils were saying thank you to their special friends in Year 8. The list of ways in which they had helped them to learn and to settle into school was impressive. All pupils have excellent relationships with all the staff. They understand that their teachers are there to help them to do well. They listen very carefully to what their teachers have to say and try hard to meet the high expectations their teachers have of them.
14. The provision for the personal development of pupils is very good, encouraging them to grow into sociable, independent and confident young people. In every lesson observed, the teaching strategies included opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups. They responded very well to these in every case. In a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher gave the pupils periods of one minute to discuss amongst themselves questions that arose from their study of how leaflets are designed to appeal to particular audiences. Immediately, they launched themselves into animated and highly relevant discussion. The teacher counted down the last few seconds. As she reached zero, all pupils fell silent and they were instantly ready to share the outcomes of their discussions. In many lessons, there are opportunities for independent work, sometimes involving research in the library or using computers. Many homework tasks involve independent research and these are done well – reflecting both the independent learning skills of the pupils and the ways in which parents are supporting and contributing to their children's achievement.
15. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is very good, and this includes most of those who have behavioural difficulties when admitted to the school. Their attendance is good. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the dyslexia unit, are completely integrated into the activities enjoyed by the rest of the school, and they have good opportunities for taking responsibility. There are no refugee children. The small numbers from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated. There is no evidence of bullying or racial abuse.

Teaching is very good overall, with examples of excellent teaching

16. Teaching is very good, overall. This leads to most pupils achieving well, because they make good progress, are interested in their studies and develop good learning skills. Very few unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Well over half of the teaching observed in the school was very good or excellent, with good teaching in almost all other lessons. These are very high figures – a testament to the hard work of the teachers and to the excellent monitoring and developing of teaching that has been done in the school. There has been very good improvement since the last report.

17. The teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils, which leads to pupils enjoying the lessons and working hard to please their teacher. This was evident in an excellent Year 6 English lesson. The pupils were learning about level descriptions in English and using them to assess their own writing and that of their classmates. Following this, they were redrafting their work to put into practice what they had learnt. Having their work openly criticised could have been demotivating – but the opposite was true. The teacher had an excellent relationship with the class and used humour well to engage them. The result was that by the end of the lesson all pupils had achieved very well indeed. They worked very well in small groups, giving and taking constructive criticism of their writing. They learnt a great deal, partly because of their trust in the advice that their teacher gave them and their willingness to please.
18. The ways in which teachers use praise to motivate pupils and encourage positive attitudes are an important feature of lessons. In the lesson described above, all contributions were valued. Throughout the inspection, it was very rare to hear a child criticised or reprimanded. Instead, teachers praise the pupils who are working hard or behaving well. This leads to other pupils seeking to emulate them so that they too can be praised. Credits are given as a reward for very good effort or very good behaviour. These in turn are converted into beautifully printed bronze, silver and gold certificates – presented in assembly – that are highly valued by the pupils who receive them. Gold certificates are awarded for 100 credits. Many pupils, in the course of a year, convert their gold certificates into platinum ones by gaining a further 100 credits.
19. Subject expertise is generally high. Some teachers have considerable knowledge and skills in the subjects for which they are responsible, such as English, mathematics science and music. This is spread through the rest of the school by example and professional development. The result is that the teachers are able to show pupils what to do to reach high standards, setting high expectations. The pupils respond by working hard and are often inspired by the examples that their teachers share with them. There was a good example of this in a Year 8 gymnastics lesson. The teacher demonstrated some of the moves that she wanted them to do and followed this by using good examples from the pupils' work for demonstration. The pupils were able to analyse critically the examples they were shown, commenting very constructively on strengths and weaknesses, to the benefit of their own attainment and the standards of those pupils who demonstrated for them.
20. The teachers are enthusiastic and keen to share their expertise and to learn from each other. There is, therefore, an unusual element of consistency in their teaching, resulting from the sharing of good practice. Their planning is detailed and provides for continuity and development in the teaching of skills and knowledge, so that the pupils make very good progress.
21. Lessons are very well prepared to offer an interesting and appropriate range of activities to interest and motivate pupils. In almost every lesson observed, the teacher made clear at the beginning what the pupils were going to learn. The teachers' high expectations, very good relationships and management of pupils meant that no time was wasted. Pupils responded very well to the work that was set and learned quickly. The work was reviewed towards the end of the lesson to consolidate learning. A Year 8 mathematics lesson was a very good example of this. The teacher challenged the pupils, stretching the highest attainers. He maintained a fast pace throughout, using information and communication technology well to make teaching points clearly. At the end, he used questioning very effectively to ensure that everyone had understood the application of algebra that had been the aim of the lesson. Finally, as in many lessons, a useful homework task was set building on what they had learnt. Some teachers are sending home brief notes explaining the homework tasks to help parents who wish to support their children. There are also examples of forms accompanying these, explaining the assessment criteria.
22. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. The school identified examples of boys' underachievement some years ago, and all teachers ensure that both boys and girls are fully involved in all class activities. They try to modify the content of their lessons to ensure that it is interesting to boys. In art, for example, designs using drawings of motor vehicle

parts have been incorporated into the curriculum. Boys' attainment has risen steadily across the school and they now attain as well as girls.

23. For most subjects, pupils are put into classes on the basis of ability - the highest attaining pupils in the top class, and so on. This helps them to learn well, because they are neither struggling to cope with work that is too hard, nor coasting because the work is too easy. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is good support provided by the special needs assistants to statemented pupils. Teachers in all classes support pupils well and promote the learning of literacy and numeracy skills amongst all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
24. In a very few lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory. The reasons for this are explained in the section 'What could be improved' below.

There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs

25. The quality of care and welfare for special needs pupils is very good. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Pupils are identified in Year 4 in the first schools and induction and reassessment in Year 5 is thorough. The new Code of Practice levels are in place and progress is monitored regularly. Learning support assistants and teachers contribute well to the identification and support of those pupils on the school 'concern' level. The achievement of pupils with statements and those on School Action Plus is very good because they are well supported by learning support assistants and teachers. These adults cater for the needs of these pupils very well, forming excellent relationships and showing very good expertise. Class teachers are given full details of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs. The forms they are given prioritise these pupils' learning targets, which are linked appropriately to concerns about their social skills, communication skills or behaviour. Pupils in the dyslexia unit are integrated into mainstream classes for most of their timetable, but are given additional support in the unit whenever it is appropriate.
26. The quality of leadership and management of the Learning Support department is very good. Teamwork between the dyslexia unit, the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and learning support staff is very effective in ensuring a caring and positive environment, where pupils are made to feel secure. Annual reviews fully meet requirements and the levels of attendance of parents at review meetings is good. Parents, and outside specialists where necessary, are involved effectively at all stages of assessment. The administration of learning support ensures that all records are regularly revised and well organised. Monitoring of pupils' welfare and attendance is very good for pupils with statements and those on School Action Plus levels.
27. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good in mainstream lessons and very good in learning support and the dyslexia unit. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning through their knowledge and expertise in behaviour and specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, and stay with their pupils to provide continuity and progression through the school. Teachers and assistants know their pupils well and their excellent relationships help pupils to feel more confident. In the well organised group work and one-to-one sessions, a range of challenging and enjoyable activities is planned to keep the pace lively, so that pupils concentrate on the tasks and feel successful in achieving their targets. Some good teaching of literacy was observed in the dyslexia unit, where the teacher used an effective range of resources and questioning to stimulate and motivate pupils to help them increase their vocabulary. She followed the English scheme of work, so that the help she gave them was useful in their English lessons. They learnt the conventions of diary writing and wrote a short diary entry. The teacher sustained a good pace and supported both pupils well, even though they were at different levels of need.

The leadership from the headteacher is excellent, with very good monitoring of the work of the school and very good use of assessment information to set targets for pupils and teachers.

28. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, supported very well by the deputy and assistant headteachers, are excellent. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and has a clear strategic as well as a monitoring role. The senior team monitors the school's performance very effectively and uses the results very well to guide school development planning. Effective action has been taken to improve the work of the school. This has led to good progress since the time of the last report and the school is well placed to improve in future.
29. The senior team has an excellent and complementary range of skills that ensures that the school runs very smoothly. The headteacher is very experienced and has considerable expertise. He has worked hard and successfully to improve the effectiveness of teaching throughout the school. In addition, since the time of the last report, the senior team has greatly extended the use of data to support school development and to raise standards. The results in the National Curriculum tests were good five years ago, but they were not improving further. The headteacher convinced the teaching force that they should not be complacent. In order to give them targets to aim for and raise expectations, he introduced regular testing for all year groups so that the progress that pupils were making could be measured. Initial testing in Year 5, using a battery of standardised tests, set targets for future performance. The results of the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were followed up by use of the optional tests in all other years. Pupils' performance was projected forward, up to their Year 9 tests in their next schools. It became possible to recognise in which classes and in which subject areas pupils were making the best progress. Alongside regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, the senior team was able to analyse which teaching strategies were proving the most effective and this information was fed back into professional development and performance management. The results have been very positive. Teaching is now almost entirely good or better. Pupils are achieving very well and attainment is rising steadily in the national tests.
30. Though, initially, the process was difficult to implement, because some teachers thought that the targets being set for them were too high, it is now firmly part of the culture of the school. It has opened up debate about the effectiveness of teaching and encourages teachers to reflect on their practice and its outcomes. This is now a reflective school, with a questioning and self-critical staff. Teachers are willing to observe and be observed, welcome constructive criticism and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching openly. The school develops the self-esteem and confidence of all who work and learn in it, teachers as well as pupils.
31. An important part of this new approach to monitoring the work of the school is the subject review. There is an ambitious and on-going cycle of full-scale of reviews of subject areas. These focus on the standards attained in tests; pupils' progress from year to year and the observation of teaching. Both teachers and pupils are questioned to get their views on how effective the teaching and learning are in the subject areas. This extensive research results in an action plan to improve provision still further. The plan becomes part of the school development cycle and is regularly reviewed. The questioning of pupils is particularly valuable. The issues they raise about the effectiveness of teaching are sometimes challenging, but the school is always ready to face up to them.
32. Resources are deployed well to improve the quality of education for the benefit of pupils. Every inch of space in the school buildings is used to very good effect for the benefit of the pupils. Despite the poor accommodation – criticised in the last report and at last being tackled – both pupils and teachers make the most of the rooms and spaces they have got. Teachers are deployed well – music is taught throughout the school by a music specialist teacher, for example. Such details as these are having a very positive effect on attainment. The school succeeds well in getting the best value from its use of its funds. For example, the funding allocated for the education of pupils with special educational needs is used to good effect. The learning support

assistants are well deployed, sufficient in number to meet the needs of pupils, and they support pupils' learning very effectively.

33. Performance management is at an advanced stage of implementation. The work in subject areas is regularly monitored. Subject co-ordinators are, in the main, very effective. They are working to raise the profile of their subjects, to improve performance and to give guidance to their colleagues. There is a wide range of professional expertise on the governing body. They give their time and skills freely to the school. They take their role seriously and are very effective as critical friends if the school. They are involved in setting and monitoring the budget and in school development planning. The school improvement plans are detailed and have been implemented effectively.
34. The administrative and clerical staff works very effectively and supports the teachers well to ensure that they can concentrate on their teaching roles. The caretaking and cleaning staff works effectively to ensure that the school buildings and grounds are clean, tidy and attractive.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Provision is not consistently good across the creative arts. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop musical skills, but fewer in drama. In art, pupils make less progress than they should, because the provision is unsatisfactory

35. The school's prospectus emphasises the importance of providing an all-round education. The school promises not only to develop skills of literacy and numeracy in its pupils, but also to help them to learn, achieve in and enjoy other aspects of the curriculum - such as sport, languages and the arts. French and physical education are provided for very well. The provision for French has improved significantly since the last inspection. The provision for the personal development of pupils is very strong, with very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for the arts, however, is inconsistent and some aspects are unsatisfactory.
36. Music is provided for well, with very good teaching by teachers who are music specialists. Every pupil has at least one lesson a week of music, with extra tuition for the very many who wish to learn to play a musical instrument. There are many extra - curricular opportunities to develop an interest and skills in music, including a school orchestra, a wind band and choir. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to perform. The orchestra plays medleys and accompanies hymn singing twice weekly in assemblies. There are regular musical performances for parents and the local community. Dance is taught as a yearly module by specialist teachers and there is an after-school club, but there are many fewer opportunities than for music. Drama is taught as part of the English curriculum. All pupils have experience of drama, to attend a drama club and have opportunities to perform in public. However, there is not a clear entitlement, because the amount and quality of drama experience depends upon the enthusiasm and experience of individual teachers. Few of the English teachers are drama specialists.
37. In art there is a basic entitlement of one lesson a week for all, but the quality of provision is unsatisfactory. The art room is small and cluttered. It does not have the space to display many examples of pupils' work. This restricts the degree to which good paintings or three-dimensional work, done in previous years, can be a stimulus or model for future work. Similarly, there is little room to show the work of great artists, which could be used to inspire pupils. There are weaknesses in the pupils' experiences in art. There is too little concentration on drawing from life and this restricts the development of pupils' drawing skills. The work in their sketch-books is marked, but there is little evidence of pupils responding to the comments that are made. Too often, these comments have little reference to the development of artistic skills. Assessment is not being used to inform pupils of where their weaknesses are, and how to remedy them. There has been unsatisfactory improvement in art since the last inspection, because the management of the subject is not monitoring teaching, learning and standards in the subject rigorously enough to improve provision.
38. In art, pupils are not informed of the main lesson objectives as a matter of course at the beginning of every session, and so are not always aware of what they should concentrate on or the criteria for assessment. In one of the lessons observed, the pupils were not sure why the work had been set or what the finished product was to be, even though this was an on-going piece of work. The teaching points made during lessons were not helpful to the pupils because there was insufficient emphasis on the skills they needed to achieve well. This lack of emphasis on the development of techniques and skills leads to the pupils making insufficient progress. Attainment in art is average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8, but this represents underachievement. It contrasts with attainment in every other area of the curriculum, which is never less than above average and sometimes well above.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. This is a successful school. In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment even further, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, should:

- (1) Seek to raise attainment and increase opportunities for pupils to achieve well consistently across the arts subjects. In order to do this, it is necessary to:
 - continue to focus the monitoring of teaching and learning on the recognition and sharing of the most successful practice (including clear, shared lesson aims and thoroughly planned lessons, appropriate for all pupils in the classes) with special emphasis on the improvement of teaching in art;
 - ensure that the expectations of pupils and teachers are equally high across all the arts subjects;
 - ensure that the setting of targets and use of assessment data are consistent and equally effective across all subjects and that pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored effectively. In art, more emphasis needs to be given to the assessment, teaching and progressive development of skills.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	12	12	1	2	0	0
Percentage	18	36	36	3	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	589
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	109

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.3

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	83	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	75	73	82
	Girls	70	67	73
	Total	145	140	155
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (89)	89 (84)	98 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	74	74	75
	Girls	71	67	69
	Total	145	141	144
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (89)	89 (86)	91 (96)
	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
423	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded

151

0

0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	29.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	0
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	26
Key Stage 3	25.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	1,268,415
Total expenditure	1,239,238
Expenditure per pupil	2035
Balance brought forward from previous year	128,608
Balance carried forward to next year	157,685

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	598
Number of questionnaires returned	271

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	34	55	8	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	59	3	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	51	3	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	63	12	4	1
The teaching is good.	37	59	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	53	14	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	42	7	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	37	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	26	51	17	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	51	43	1	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	39	4	0	1