

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST EDWARD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Leek

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124458

Headteacher: Revd. John A. G. Kime

Reporting inspector: Dr David Benstock
20243

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th February 2003

Inspection number: 249243

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 secondary

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 9 - 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Westwood Road
Leek
Staffordshire

Postcode: ST13 8DN

Telephone number: 01538 483218

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Revd. Matthew Parker

Date of previous inspection: 16th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20243	David Benstock	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
9970	John Acaster	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
23393	Brian Dower	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	
31100	Geoff Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
22780	David Custance	Team inspector	Science	Learning resources
30899	Ken Boden	Team inspector	<p>Design and technology</p> <p>Art and design</p>	
30973	Geoff Hancock	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	

15576	David Nebesnuick	Team inspector	History Citizenship	Personal, social and health education
15462	Cliff Blakemore	Team inspector	Geography	Assessment
31660	Marianne Young	Team inspector	Music	
25748	Roger Moyle	Team inspector	Physical Education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
31649	Richard Marsden	Team inspector	Modern languages	Accommodation
7926	James Bowden	Team inspector	Special educational needs Educational Inclusion	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13210	Margaret Burslem	Team Inspector		Primary focus

Religious Education was inspected under the provisions for Section 23 of the Education Act 1996, and is reported separately.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edwards is a middle deemed secondary school for boys and girls ages 9 – 13. It is Church of England voluntary aided in the Diocese of Lichfield. The school is situated close to the centre of Leek, a market town in Staffordshire. The school is located in the North West ward of Leek, where the percentage of pupils from higher social class households is above average. However, pupils are admitted from a wider catchment area with a greatly differing social profile. Overall, the socio-economic background of pupils is considered to be about average. Currently, approximately ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with national average. The number of pupils on roll is 770, which is much bigger than other middle schools. The school is popular and oversubscribed. The vast majority of pupils are of white UK heritage. There are just a few pupils with other ethnic minority backgrounds, and there are no pupils identified by the school with English as a second language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, mainly moderate learning difficulties or dyslexia, is approximately twenty percent, which is broadly average, and the percentage with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is 2.6%, again broadly average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Edwards Middle is a good school. Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, and are improving as a result of improved monitoring of teaching and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT), which has a positive impact on standards across most other subjects. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, mathematics, science, history and modern languages, very well in design and technology and art and design, and well in other subjects. The rate of progress being made by pupils in English and science, whilst overall satisfactory, has improved since National Tests last year as a result of improved teaching, which is good in most subjects, though in personal, social and health education it is unsatisfactory. The school is well led and managed with an increasingly prominent and successful emphasis on improving standards. Funding for resources is significantly below average but the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides very well for pupils' moral development, and establishes a climate where very good relationships flourish between staff and pupils.
- Very good opportunities are provided for extra-curricular activities.
- There is a very good focus by the leadership team on the introduction and integration of new ideas in its increasing external links beyond the school. There are very good links with the partner institutions, especially the high school, and also very good is use made of the strong relationship with the community.
- There is very good provision for ICT, which impacts very well across all subjects of the curriculum.
- The good, specialist subject teaching promotes good learning, which prepares pupils well for transfer to the high school.
- Governors work very effectively in helping the school to shape its further

development.

What could be improved

- Provision for a clearer, better-taught programme of personal, social and health education.
- The level of challenge for higher attaining pupils in some subjects, including English, science and geography.
- The sufficiency and quality of information for parents about pupils' progress.

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 June 1997. Since that time, attainment in the National Tests taken in Year 6 has improved broadly in line with the national trend, although from 2001 to 2002 results in mathematics and science improved significantly compared to national changes. At the last inspection teaching was judged to be predominantly sound with good features. This aspect of provision has shown good improvement and particularly so in the teaching of ICT across subjects. Teaching of personal and social education, however, was unsatisfactory and this remains the current position. The analysis of attainment and performance data, which was also a key area for improvement, has been developed so that clear comparisons are made against national averages, and evidence of achievement from entry to the school in Year 5 is recorded. Aspects of the leadership, monitoring, communications and future planning were all criticised last time. A new headteacher was appointed two years ago, and considerable improvements in the leadership and management systems have been achieved since then, together with a more strategic and substantive role adopted by the governing body. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, but the rate of improvement is increasing.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved 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	C	C	C
mathematics	D	D	C	B
science	C	D	C	C

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

					average
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Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests in Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average in all schools and also in line with the average in schools admitting a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Performance was close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. There has been an upward trend over recent years broadly in line with the national trend. At the end of Year 8, the final year in the school, the school's results in PIMS (Performance Indicators in Middle Schools), based on mathematics science and reading tests, are broadly similar to the average in other Staffordshire middle schools, but national comparisons are not possible. Overall standards of pupils' work seen in English, mathematics, science and history at the end of Year 6, and again in Year 8, are all broadly close to the expectation for their age. Standards seen are well above average in design and technology and art and design, and in other subjects they are above average. Achievement of pupils in English, mathematics, science and history has been satisfactory but is now improved in English, in reading and speaking and listening, and in science. Overall in most other subjects it has been at least good. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is also good. Pupils meet the personal targets set for them well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show good attitudes to school, and are interested to learn. They show respect for their teachers and enjoy lessons. They take some pride in the presentation of their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well around school and in lessons. They respect property and the needs of others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships contribute very well to the good learning in class.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 – 8
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.

Teaching is good overall in all years as a result of the new style of leadership and focused management of the school. This explains why achievement has improved. It is very good in design and technology, art and design, and ICT in Years 5 to 8. It is good in English and science, having improved significantly recently. It is satisfactory in mathematics and history. Good specialist subject knowledge is a strength and teachers' careful planning, together with supportive relationships, contribute significantly to the good achievement evident in the last few months. Expectations of the higher attaining pupils are insufficient in some subjects including English, mathematics and science. Very good use is made of information and communication technology throughout all subjects and this has a significant impact on the learning and pupils' attitudes. Teaching is enhanced by the availability and use, by all year groups, of extended and relatively sophisticated learning resources, such as computers, well equipped science laboratories and workshop equipment. In most subjects, teachers develop very good relationships with pupils and provide support outside the lesson times to help their understanding. Assessment data is used increasingly well but not with enough rigour to ensure pupils know their level of attainment and progress well enough against national expectations. Marking and homework are satisfactory, but give insufficient guidance to pupils on ways to improve their attainment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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<p>The quality and range of the curriculum</p>	<p>Good. It is very good for Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is broad and balanced, offers good opportunities for enhancement, very good extra-curricular activities and external links with the community. The provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>Provision for pupils with special educational needs</p>	<p>Good. The school has successfully introduced the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in lessons and targets as set out in their individual education plans.</p>

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Spiritual, social and cultural development is good, and provision for moral development is very good. The programme for personal social and health education remains in need of improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Secure procedures are in place to monitor and support the personal and academic progress of pupils, especially through the very positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are increasingly being made aware of their assessment levels.

The school works hard to develop good relationships with parents. However, the quality of reports on pupils' progress needs improvement. They give good information on general progress and pupils' attitudes but lack detail about specific areas related to subjects and do not focus well enough on pupils' performance against national expectation.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Leadership has clear direction and management responsibilities are well delegated. There is a shared commitment to the rounded development of pupils within the ethos of a Church school and standards and achievement are now improving. The work of the school reflects its aims very well, and improvements to weaker areas such as PSHE are being planned.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Good support from governors and secure knowledge of the school contribute well to the strategic development planning process.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching are becoming established and performance data is being used increasingly to compare with national expectations.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The limited financial resources available are used efficiently. Development planning is carefully matched to financial cost. Good procedures are in place to monitor expenditure.

There is a good match of staff to the needs of the curriculum. Resources are adequate but financial income is well below average and limits opportunities. As a middle school, the sophistication of specialist teaching resources, for example in science, is above average for Years 5 and 6. The school applies the principles of best value in its expenditure. Accommodation is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which parents are kept informed about how well pupils are

<p>and achieve their best</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good • Parents feel comfortable about approaching school with a question or problem 	<p>getting on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the right amount of work to do at home • The extent to which the school works closely with parents
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The inspection team agrees that the teaching is good and that parents should feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. The team agrees the school has high expectations that pupils should work hard and respect each other's needs, but there is insufficient challenge in some subjects for higher attaining pupils. The team agrees with parents that there is a need for the school to review its arrangements for working with parents and in particular the need to improve the quality and detail of reports. Homework is variable in quality but overall satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When pupils enter the school in Year 5, their attainment as seen in lessons and analysis of written work is broadly average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Performance Indicators in Middle Schools (PIMS) for Year 5 are taken. This is an assessment that makes a comparison with other Staffordshire middle schools in mathematics, reading and contextual analysis skills. In 2002, these confirm that the school's average scores are close to the Staffordshire average for mathematics and reading, but a little above the average in science.
2. In the national tests taken in Year 6, in 2002, the average points score for all pupils was broadly in line with the national average. This pattern was similar for all three core subjects. The percentage reaching Level 4 or greater was close to average in English and mathematics, but above average in science. The percentage reaching the higher Level 5, however, was below average in English and close to average in mathematics and science.
3. Attainment overall remained fairly constantly close to the average in English, mathematics and science from 1999 until 2001. There has been an improvement in line with the national trend. Since 2001 there has been a notable improvement in science and also mathematics.
4. Performance of pupils in comparison with schools where there is a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also close to average overall. Progress of pupils from their performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2, when they were still at the first school, is indicated by comparison with other schools with a similar profile of performance at that age, and is again broadly average.
5. Overall the performance of boys and girls in 2002 was very much the same, with boys performing very slightly better than girls. There have been minor variations over the past few years. In English, mathematics and science in 2002, the boys' performance was slightly higher than girls' in all three subjects.
6. Targets set by the governors in 2002 were reached in mathematics and science, but not in English. In other subjects in 2002, teachers' assessments in Year 6 indicated that the relative performance in music and ICT was higher than in other subjects.
7. In the assessments carried out in Year 8 in 2002, performance compared with other Staffordshire middle schools was slightly below average in mathematics, slightly above in reading and below average in science.

8. Standards of work seen in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection confirm that in English, mathematics and science in Year 6, attainment is close to expectations. Literacy standards are satisfactory overall but writing is good in expression and flair. Writing structure is less effective. The standards are also as would be expected for pupils' age during Year 8.
9. Standards in other subjects were overall a little higher. For example, work seen in Year 6 design and technology revealed good construction skills and overall, standards were well above those expected at that age, reflecting the benefits of specialist facilities compared to primary schools. Work seen in ICT was of a good standard and was a feature of many subject areas, with good use of software packages, for example, to enhance presentation. Standards were also very good in art and design, and good in physical education and music.
10. Pupils have achieved satisfactorily in Years 5 and 6, and also in Years 7 and 8, in the core subjects and also history and modern languages. Achievement in geography in Years 5 and 6 has been satisfactory, and good in Years 7 and 8. Achievement is judged good, or very good, in the other subjects. There is good progress in citizenship in Years 7 and 8. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching to acquire significant skills and secure knowledge and understanding.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the active work of the learning support assistants (LSAs), and keen awareness of teachers as to the needs of the pupils. Teachers are provided with good quality information and good quality individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with special educational needs and this contributes to the ethos of care, support and inclusion in almost all departments. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set out in their IEPs. Progress made in lessons is also general good and pupils with special educational needs learn well. In history and mathematics, however, the progress of pupils with special educational needs is only satisfactory because the teaching does not plan sufficiently well for the needs of these pupils. Though the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is aware of how pupils with special educational needs attain in relation to their reading and spelling ages, there is little systematic analysis of data to show how well they have progressed in relation to their prior attainment.
12. Literacy standards across the school are satisfactory, with some strength in writing. Pupils are able to adapt their writing to subject need and most are able to write at length in a range of styles. This was seen in music where pupils' prose evaluations comparing and contrasting different musical styles were of a very high standard. Note-taking skills are well developed in science and their high quality records of practical work are a useful aid for future reference. Pupils in geography are able to organise and present information sequentially and their project writing is of high quality. The use of technical vocabulary is strong in design and technology and art and pupils write extended evaluations of their work in these subjects. The literacy aspect of the work done in ICT is also strong with many opportunities afforded for writing in varied styles for different audiences. Pupils read the varied subject texts confidently and with understanding because the standard of this basic skill is above average. Pupils

also speak well. In physical education pupils explain themselves clearly because of their command of the specialist vocabulary. They also listen carefully, an essential attribute for effective learning.

13. Pupils have satisfactory numerical skills. In geography, Year 5 pupils are effective when constructing climate charts and in Year 8 pupils collect and use data well in an investigation of Antarctica. In French pupils can handle the arithmetic for day-to-day living and express it in the foreign language. All pupils have skills enough to enable them to learn in all areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Overall, pupils have good attitudes towards the school and their work, and they behave well. Very good relationships throughout the school help to foster pupils' personal development very effectively. Attitudes and personal development are at least as strong as at the time of the previous inspection. The standard of attendance has declined slightly in comparison with the national average for equivalent schools. Previously better than most of them, attendance is now broadly on a par.
15. Pupils enjoy their school life. They like the friendly atmosphere. Pupils get on well with their teachers and find them very helpful. They like their lessons, which are generally interesting and well pitched. Pupils are appreciative of the good equipment available, and of the wide range of activities at lunchtime and outside school hours, including school visits. Many are keen to take good advantage of these. Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons and listen well. Occasionally response is rather subdued, with few hands, for instance, raised to answer questions, but in the majority of lessons pupils take part willingly, settle to work with enthusiasm, and collaborate well. They often show good initiative.
16. The overall standard of behaviour is good. It is often very good, with consideration and courtesy offered. Assemblies, for instance, are very orderly and self-disciplined occasions. Lunchtime behaviour in the dining hall is very sociable and pleasant. Movement about the school is sensible. Pupils are trusted to use their form rooms at break times and do so very responsibly. School and personal property is respected. At times friendly informality can be taken a little too far by a few pupils, and in lessons teachers are required to show firmness on occasion. In general, however, an inclusive, family, happy atmosphere pervades the school and the use of serious sanctions, such as exclusion, is uncommon.
17. Relationships and personal development are very good. Pupils relate very well to their teachers and other adults, and get on very well with each other. Staff set very good examples of purposeful concern and adult expectation, which pupils correspondingly respond to. They are encouraged to take a hand in improving their school environment, they learn about the wider world, are encouraged to reflect, and consequently generally show thoughtfulness and a strong regard for fairness. The school council, for instance, recently considered the arrangements regarding food in school. Representatives from every year were able to take points up with kitchen staff, and the session was much valued on

both sides for raising understanding. Proportions of orange juice have now been adjusted to a new standard based on consumer choice! Pupils show themselves to be generally very ready to volunteer and to undertake responsible roles round the school.

18. In normal lessons the attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is good on the whole. They respond well to the help and support they receive and are keen to make progress in the great majority of subjects. Where pupils with special educational needs receive extra support from LSAs in lessons, other pupils usually accept this and they themselves often ask for help. Year 8 pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs said they were appreciative of the extra help and support they had received throughout their time at St. Edward's. In accordance with the requirements of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs, pupils are fully involved in the annual review process and their views and opinions are recorded.
19. Attendance is broadly comparable to that of similar schools. Unauthorised absence is rare, and lateness is not a significant problem.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is at least good in all subjects except mathematics and citizenship, where it is satisfactory. This now leads to good learning overall. The quality of teaching and learning in science and English are currently good. Teaching is very good in design and technology and art. Teaching and learning have improved over the past few months as the new headteacher becomes more established in post. The impact of the improved teaching is beginning to be evident in pupils' motivation and progress. Within the good teaching there are often very good features. For example, time is often used well to ensure a brisk pace of learning. ICT is used well in most subjects of the curriculum to enhance pupils' interest and ensure good acquisition of skills. Pupils gain secure knowledge in a positive environment that results from the teachers' skill in managing pupil/teacher relationships. Also pupils grow in confidence, showing increasing enthusiasm for learning as they respond to well-aimed questions. However, there is a lack of available resources in food technology and little opportunity for ICT development within physical education.
21. Teachers have a good level of knowledge and understanding and use this to develop essential ideas within the specialist subjects. This is particularly effective within design and technology workshops and science laboratories. Planning is a consistently strong feature in every subject area. Teachers identify key objectives and communicate these well to pupils.
22. Pupils are managed well in their lessons and relationships are strong. Teachers understand the needs of pupils and match the work well to accommodate a good range of attainment within groups. In some subjects, including English, mathematics and science, there is insufficient expectation of the work required to reach the higher National Curriculum levels. By contrast, very good support is

often given to the lower attaining pupils and specialist support is provided through IEPs for those with special educational needs.

23. There is often a good variety of teaching methodology in use and the variety of specialist equipment and facilities make an important contribution to the interest generated. There is often a range of learning styles, including practical and group activities, and the learning is particularly good. In some areas, such as mathematics, teaching lacks the excitement that can bring the subject to life.
24. Questioning is used well by many teachers to ensure participation by pupils and stimulate interest. Ongoing assessment is often used to give immediate feedback through this technique. Marking is regular and helpful in many areas. Assessment is used well generally to identify underachieving pupils in most subjects, but is not always used to influence planning and the curriculum. In particular, ongoing assessment is an area for improvement in history and citizenship and marking in these subjects does not provide enough guidance to pupils on how to improve their levels of knowledge and understanding.
25. Homework is satisfactory overall, and is used well to extend and consolidate learning in geography, English and art. Elsewhere opportunities are not always taken to make the best use of homework.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are generally taught well in normal lessons and supported by LSAs in many of these. There are also some individual withdrawal sessions led by an LSA as well as sessions led by local authority delegated support teachers.
27. In normal lessons, in almost all subjects, teachers know the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. In a Year 6 geography lesson, for example, the teacher had prepared an adapted exercise for those pupils with special educational needs, thus enabling good progress to be made by them. As a result of the practical nature of a task in a design and technology lesson, a Year 5 pupil with special educational needs was absorbed and able to explain knowledgeably what she was doing. In a Year 6 literacy lesson the teacher targeted pupils effectively to ensure the IEP target of improving concentration span was met. In a Year 6 science lesson the teacher provided additional help with presentation of the work for pupils with special educational needs as well as allowing extra time for them to complete the task. Because there are no directed questions in some lessons, those pupils with special educational needs occasionally have few opportunities to express their views and opinions.
28. Where observed, LSAs provide effective help and support to those pupils with special educational needs as well as to other pupils who ask for help. Teachers and LSAs work together closely, thus enabling pupils with special educational needs to make good progress in their lessons. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, both the teacher and the LSA circulated well ensuring pupils were fully on task and understanding what was required of them.
29. Individual support sessions are generally effective and meet more specifically the learning needs of pupils with, for example, dyslexia. In one good support

session led by a local authority support teacher there was effective use of 'bite-size' activities throughout. This helped maintain the pupil's motivation and interest and ensured the pupil was making good progress towards the targets set out in the IEP. In another session, though, planning was less rigorous and some tasks lacked a clear rationale and focus. In Year 5 literacy support withdrawal sessions, the LSA has useful strategies to engage pupils and very good working relationships with them. As a result of this the pupils make good gains in their learning.

30. Teachers frequently find opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills. For example, science teachers regularly encourage pupils to write concisely and to present their work neatly and clearly. They pay particular attention to written accuracy in their marking. Teachers in many subject areas ensure that key technical vocabulary is displayed prominently in classrooms and in modern foreign languages; for example, literacy prompts are displayed in English as well as the European language. Attention is paid to accurate spelling in all subject areas. In English there are opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through group discussions on the set texts. In information and communication technology pupils are encouraged to mentor each other's work through discussion and so have many opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
31. Strategies for teaching numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory. There is a whole school policy for the teaching of numerical skills, which directs departments in planning and teaching the main aspects of data handling, shape, space and number. Each term a member of the mathematics department visits other departmental meetings to advise and give help on different topics. All staff have been in receipt of training on the National Numeracy Strategy.

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

Quality and range of the curriculum

32. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are good. In Years 5 and 6 they are good, as the sophistication of specialist resources and opportunities for deeper learning are better than found in most primary schools. The quality is marred by the unsatisfactory provision for personal, social and health education. The school continues to meet its objectives in providing a broad and balanced curriculum in relation to the National Curriculum and the Staffordshire and Diocesan combined syllabus. Pupils' learning opportunities are broadened by the provision of taught chess and drama in Year 5, the introduction of French in Year 6 and the teaching of Latin for higher attaining pupils in Year 8. ICT fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and is used across subjects together with a dedicated weekly session for each class. Citizenship was introduced into Years 7 and 8 in September to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and was planned jointly with the local high school.

33. The school makes very good provision for extending the curriculum. There is a wide range of activities available for pupils to take part in at lunchtimes as well as after school. These activities are popular and available for all groups of pupils; for example, the open art club, sports practices, the scrabble club, reading club, activities club, nurture club and computer club. Physical education provision is a particular strength, offering recreational and residential opportunities and competitive fixtures involving some 65 teams. There is also an annual drama production as well as numerous musical groups in which pupils can perform. A range of enrichment activities provided by subjects further extends pupils' learning experiences. These include trips to local places of interest to support learning in geography, history and religious education, visitors to the school and pupil involvement in local business-sponsored challenges.
34. Equality of access and opportunity are good. The school has a clear commitment to this aspect in all its work as exemplified by a concise whole-school policy for equal opportunities. The policy for social inclusion is only in draft form and has yet to be ratified by the school governing body. A co-ordinator for the gifted and talented has been recently appointed and there are plans to identify these pupils at a whole-school level and to provide extension activities for them.
35. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. There are fundraising links with Knivedon and links with the Moorlands Day Service as well as local industry sponsored 'educational challenges' for pupils to take part in. The school has worked with the British Antarctic Survey and has a partner school in Curitiba, Brazil. There are very good links and relationships with partner institutions within the Staffordshire Partnership, and particularly in terms of curricular planning with the high school, thus easing considerably the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 8.
36. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to the curriculum on offer. The SENCO has ensured the introduction of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Where appropriate, the SENCO organises special arrangements in examinations to help support those pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs department and the school show a strong commitment to promoting an inclusive education. Mainstream teaching, setting arrangements and additional support lessons mean that pupils with special educational needs receive effective support.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs outside normal curriculum time extends the quality of learning opportunities. These include activities at lunchtime; for example, support for literacy skills as well as social skills. Pupils with special educational needs therefore have the opportunity to ask for and receive any extra subject or specific support and guidance they feel they might need. Pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from normal lessons for additional ICT support. As a result, some impressive progress is being made

and this is having a benefit on the quality of their work and the progress they make in their normal lessons.

38. There is effective provision in place for meeting pupils' literacy needs and as a result they make good progress in their subjects. The provision for improving pupils' literacy skills is good in nearly all subject areas.
39. Most departments have a stated policy for the teaching of numeracy and have identified opportunities for enhancing the pupils' thinking in numerical terms. In music, for example, teachers point out relationships between fractions and note values. In physical education pupils record and evaluate blood pressure readings and heart rate in relation to fitness on the health related programme. Even where there is no policy incorporated into the departmental schemes of work, such as in history, pupils use graphs and charts to help interpret information about households from the local 1861 census.
40. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is currently unsatisfactory. However, good development of moral and social responsibility takes place through assembly. The programme for PSHE includes elements of sex, relationships, and drugs education but the school recognises that the curriculum is in need of a thorough review. This has begun with the appointment of a new PSHE co-ordinator in 2002. At the current time the school's stated policy is to deliver sex and relationship education through a Christian and moral framework. However, this is not being fully delivered as it is mainly being taught through the science curriculum. Although parents are informed of their right to withdraw their children this is not available from a National Curriculum subject and the arrangements for the overall delivery need to be rethought.
41. At the time of the last inspection the school had no documented policies for health and drugs education, which were planned for in the school development plan of that year. To date, however, no progress has been made and there are no plans currently to include these policies before 2005. This area of the curriculum needs to be reviewed with some urgency. The school also does not currently have a policy for the management of drug-related incidents. The PSHE curriculum is being delivered through the form tutors and in the lessons two of the six seen were unsatisfactory. A review is underway to improve the curriculum provision, which is also being refocused to include developments in citizenship.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

42. Overall, the provision for personal development is satisfactory since, despite the weaknesses in the PSHE programme, the provision for the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Provision for moral development is very good.
43. The provision for spiritual development is good. The influence of the school's ethos enables pupils to demonstrate their values and beliefs in a safe and supportive environment. Assemblies have a strong worship focus and provide good opportunities for spiritual development, including time for reflection. Pupils are now considerably more active participants in assemblies than at the last inspection. In religious education, pupils are introduced to a wide range of religious beliefs and practices and receive chances to discuss the impact of

belief on behaviour. Other areas of the curriculum also make a substantial contribution. In English, pupils explore the mysterious and unexpected in their writing on 'a troubled house'. Emphasis is made in art on drawing inspiration from the works of established artists. Opportunities are provided for pupils to listen, reflect and consider the effects of music. In geography, pupils listen to a tape of waterfall noise to get a sensitive feeling about the power of water.

44. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Topics such as attitudes to bullying and ethical issues such as human rights provide a sound curriculum for discussion and the development of attitudes and values. Pupils are encouraged to distinguish right from wrong, to consider ways of behaviour and to be respectful to each other. Assemblies make a considerable contribution in this aspect; for instance, using the *Holocaust* to explore issues of race, culture and discrimination. Several subjects provide very good opportunities for moral development. In religious education, pupils learn how different moral systems emerge from different beliefs about life. Pupils demonstrate their commitment to fair play in physical education. In science, discussion on the use of nuclear fuel as an alternative source of energy enables pupils to consider moral attitudes. Pupils are encouraged to care for the environment, through participation in the school's environmental projects and ecological code. Older pupils mentor younger ones and pupils raise money for other people and for charities.
45. Provision for pupils' social development is good. The school fosters a sense of community and strongly promotes equality of opportunity. Pupils work well together. Group work in class and in extra-curricular activities develops co-operation and listening and also provides opportunities for the development of leadership skills. Social development for many pupils is well promoted by their involvement in sporting events, school productions, visits, overseas trips, environmental projects and the Year 8 outdoor education residential week. The school enhances its socially inclusive role through its many links with the community. The school, however, as at the last inspection, does not fully exploit its potential for empowering pupils, although they are now more actively involved in assemblies.
46. Provision for cultural development is good. Many opportunities are provided for the pupils to learn about other cultures and their own. Pupils improve their understanding of local culture through field trips and museum and exhibition visits. The religious education department explores a variety of cultures and there have been successful visits to a synagogue. Pupils compare different styles of multi-cultural music; they have opportunities to explore African and Indian art and in English, work with visiting writers from different ethnic backgrounds. The multi-cultural dimension is also strong in food technology, dance and history. The modern foreign languages and physical education departments organise European visits. The school has established links with a school situated in a socially deprived area of Brazil. Opportunities to develop an awareness of the cultural diversity of present-day Britain have increased considerably since the last inspection. Improved co-ordination of this good practice will further help pupils prepare for life in a multi-cultural society.

47. The school has maintained the good standards reported at the last inspection and has further improved its provision for spiritual and cultural development. Greater consistency of policy across departments, in particular monitoring, could raise further an already high level of pupils' personal development.
48. The school's ethos of inclusion and support for those pupils with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experience of these pupils as well as that of all other pupils in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. The overall standard of care has much improved in certain important respects since the previous inspection and is now good. Former weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' progress have been rectified. The school now monitors pupils' academic performance and personal development well, and its general educational and personal support and guidance for pupils continues to be good. Good standards of behaviour, in particular, are promoted very well. There are satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare.
50. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships throughout the school are very good. Co-ordinators for each year group liaise weekly with their team of form teachers. They maintain a running record of merits and sanctions, supplemented from time to time by progress reports from subject areas. They usually maintain primary contact with parents. Thus they get to know the background, characteristics and abilities of each pupil in their year group well, and that knowledge and relationship is maintained over the years as the year group and co-ordinator move up the school together.
51. Good behaviour is very well promoted through this settled basis of contact, a consistency of high expectation by teachers, and the friendly respect that characterises the general ethos of the school. A merit scheme is operated to reward good behaviour and encourage effort. By the introduction of 'Form of the Week', pupils are conscious that their own actions may affect the success of their classmates, and individuals have tried hard not to transgress. Sanctions are well known and very effective. Any oppressive or unkind behaviour is promptly dealt with when reported. This is greatly assisted by a trained team of Year 8 pupils who act as 'buddies' to those new to the school in Year 5, using techniques of conflict resolution and support. The school had to temporarily exclude 11 pupils last year despite giving a great deal of attention to their behavioural needs, including the provision of an alternative curriculum. The incidence of exclusion is usually small.
52. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Registration is prompt. Absences and lateness are monitored closely in the school office. A weekly report is made to Year co-ordinators who initiate appropriate enquiries, sensitively if necessary, but using the services of the educational welfare officer when justified. Pupils with excellent attendance each term receive merit recognition. The importance of good attendance does not, however, have the same high profile in the school as that for good behaviour.

53. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection much groundwork has been applied to overall health and safety. A modern whole-school policy has been approved and responsibilities are clearly laid down. Central risk assessment and prioritisation is regularly carried out, with reporting to a committee of governors. Day-to-day awareness around the school, however, could usefully be sharpened. Pupils needing first aid are treated professionally and kindly but the medical room is under-utilised. Child protection procedures are satisfactorily established. The policy will be updated and staff further briefed following training which the co-ordinator is shortly to take.
54. The school has effective relationships with outside specialist agencies. This enhances further the quality of support for those pupils with special educational needs. Transitional and annual reviews are effective and support those pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs as they move through the school. The school meets fully the curricular requirements as outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs.
55. When Statements of Special Educational Needs are reviewed annually, the review draws upon a wide range of professional opinion and consultation with parents or carers and the pupils themselves. This provides for and effectively informs the updating of pupils' records on a regular basis.
56. IEPs are in place for all pupils at action plus and above on the schools' list of pupils with special educational needs. These are reviewed on a regular basis and targets subsequently modified or changed. Targets set are generally clear, concise, challenging yet attainable by pupils. On occasion, though, some of the targets are addressed to teachers rather than being specific to the pupil. Overall, however, IEPs are of good quality. They are informative in that they also detail strategies that can be used by teachers and LSAs, thus helping them effectively plan their lessons to address the needs of all pupils with special educational needs.
57. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. A substantial amount of data on pupils' attainment is collected and recorded when they enter the school, including information about pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Information for some pupils is incomplete because data is not passed from all schools, but the gaps are filled by the school's own data gathering in the early part of Year 5. As pupils progress through the school further statistical evidence is gained from optional testing on basic competencies on an annual basis. Knowledge about pupils' standards is passed to all teachers and forms the basis for setting group and individual learning targets. Information is stored centrally and monitored by the senior management to check progress and to monitor the appropriateness of the targets.
58. Pupils' attainment in subjects is progressively linked to National Curriculum levels as they move through the school and established arrangements with the local high school ensure the accuracy of the standards achieved in Years 7 and 8. There is some inconsistency by departments in the use of the assessment

data. In the best practice departments are reviewing their curriculum planning, and are identifying how well pupils are progressing in relation to national averages or expectations. However, pupils are not always clear about their levels of attainment.

59. For pupils with special educational needs, the SENCO is able to draw upon a range of assessment data in order to enable her to identify those pupils who need support and place them appropriately on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs. However, some confusion is caused by the addition to this list of pupils identified as having an 'entitlement to differentiated work'. This group is in addition to those identified as being at school action or school action plus stages of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. Data collation is being helped by the use of ICT. Pupils are well supported and seen to be making progress in line with those of similar ability.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Parental partnership, judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, has improved and is now good. Parents and carers perceive the school as being much more open and communicative, and respond by supporting the school well. They make a good impact on its work.
61. More than six in every ten parents answered the inspection questionnaire. This is nearly double the response received at the previous inspection, and the degree of approval shown to almost every question is significantly greater. Almost all parents think that teaching is good. Their children are expected to work hard and are believed to be making good progress. Parents and carers find the school to be readily approachable. Problems raised have been dealt with willingly and effectively. Parents are also impressed by the range and quality of activities available outside lessons. They feel that the school is helping their children to become mature, responsible and to enjoy school.
62. A minority of about one in five parents has doubts as to the sufficiency of information received about their child's progress. This is particularly so in Year 5. In this first year in school parents do not ordinarily receive formal feedback as to how their children are getting on until well into the spring term. The inspection team agrees that the school's arrangements for communicating progress information could usefully be overhauled.
63. Parents are provided with a satisfactory standard of information overall. The prospectus is parent-friendly and the governors' annual report is now very informative. Frequent newsletters keep parents up-to-date on general matters. Some parents, however, would value knowing the full range of activities available for their children so as to be able to add their encouragement. Staff are generally friendly and efficient in responding to queries and have a strong pastoral concern for pupils. Parents are consulted from time to time. The homework diary provides information about what work has been set, and gives opportunity for comment, but parents and carers are not routinely advised in advance about what is to be covered each term. The school does, however,

promote study guides to help, and it has assisted parents by including them in ICT courses. The homework diaries also record progress in terms of merits and sanctions. Parents speak appreciatively of the letters of particular commendation that have been started. Written academic reports provide very little space for comment in each subject. Within this, the quality of information overall is broadly satisfactory, though the system used for grading is not clear and minimal reference is made to National Curriculum levels. The best subject reports are clear about what the pupil knows, understands and can do, and offer some guidance as to how improvement can be made. Parents of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are consulted and kept appropriately informed.

64. Parents and carers make a good impact on the work of the school. Most are supportive of the school's wishes and are keen for their children to succeed in their activities. Almost all, for instance, have provided their homes with computers, and many make arrangements to enable their children to take on after-school and weekend activities. Some parents assist in running these, as in sport and the very successful chess club. A few parents give direct help in the classroom. Some accompany school visits. Many contribute financially to school funds, and the very active social occasions run by the Friends are well supported. The governing body has a full complement of committed parents closely involved in directing and holding the school to account.
65. Parents and carers are invited to, and almost all attend, the annual reviews of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. Their views are recorded; hence they are fully involved and informed as to their child's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review process.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are good. There is a strong commitment to improvement and strengthening the pursuit of higher achievement. The current headteacher has been in post for two years and has brought a significant change in management style. Key issues in the previous report on the quality of leadership related to the effectiveness of communication between senior managers, governors and staff. This aspect of management is greatly improved and the open door policy of the new headteacher enables issues to be readily resolved.
67. The governing body is effective in its role. Its members take a very active part in committee work and they are clear about their function in shaping the direction of the school in its development. There is a good range of expertise across the governing body and their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is very clear.
68. The school provides an ethos for learning that reflects its association with the church. There is an emphasis on educating pupils broadly and a commitment to providing a full range of experiences separately from achievement in academic subjects. The work of the school reflects these aims and values well. There is a

strong commitment by staff to developing personal qualities and moral values. The senior leaders work closely together to promote the aims.

69. There is an increasingly shared commitment to development by staff, and the principles and processes of whole-school planning through departmental involvement are established. Closer links between departmental and whole-school priorities, severely lacking at the time of the last inspection, are being forged and are continuing to be further strengthened. More rigour has been attached to development planning in terms of timescales and costing. Planning priorities are appropriate except that there is a notable lack of emphasis in the school development plan on raising attainment.
70. Delegation to senior managers is effective and they are now clear about their roles. They have appropriate accountability and responsibility for areas and aspects of the school. Departmental work and teaching are monitored well through the line management structure and performance management is in place. Senior managers share the responsibility as team leaders for all teachers. This puts a heavy load on senior managers and prevents department heads from having the team leader responsibility. Performance management contributes well to school development.
71. Good provision is made for supporting new teachers and training opportunities are readily available to all staff. Teachers are actively encouraged to further the already strong links with partner institutions and the community. There is a good match of staff to the specialist needs of the curriculum.
72. The school pays due regard to the new Code of Practice for special needs and the list of pupils and students with special educational needs is effectively organised and up-to-date. However, the addition of an extra category alongside those stages required as part of the new Code of Practice means that official statistics for the number of pupils with special educational needs are being inflated. The school has a high commitment to ensuring inclusion of all pupils, including the promotion of racial harmony and equality.
73. LSAs are dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to working with pupils with special educational needs. They have a good range of experience and expertise and have attended and are attending appropriate courses to enhance their professional development. This has a positive impact on their support for pupils with special educational needs.
74. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) deploys LSAs effectively in order to provide the required support for the number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. This helps provide the breadth and level of support required for those on the school's list of pupils with special educational needs. As yet, there is no annual appraisal system for LSAs to develop further their expertise and ensure their continuing professional development.
75. The special educational needs department has no dedicated room or base for withdrawal work. Both the SENCO and the second in charge of the special

educational needs department have insufficient administrative support. This is an inefficient use of their time and expertise, as they have to complete much routine administrative work themselves.

76. The SENCO is an experienced and well-qualified practitioner. Improvement planning and department documentation is effective in guiding the work of the department. There is a governor with responsibility for special educational needs. The governing body, however, has not yet reviewed the role of the SENCO in relation to the changes introduced by the new Code of Practice for special educational needs.
77. Overall, the quality of leadership and management of the special educational needs department are effective. The SENCO and second in charge of the department provide effective management of the procedures for the support of pupils on the school's list of special educational needs.
78. Learning resources overall are satisfactory. The wide range of textbooks for English is very good and supports the very good reading progress of pupils. In many other subjects, however, the supply of textbooks is limited, and in modern foreign languages, there are no books to support the new course for Year 8. While there are good facilities for video and audio recording in physical education and modern foreign languages, the absence of microphones, tape recorders and suitable keyboards severely restricts pupils' learning in music. There are good resources in science and design and technology for Years 5 and 6, more sophisticated than would be usual for this age group in primary schools. Pupils' access to ICT is generally good, with three new network rooms created since the last inspection. The school, however, is aware that further improvement in ICT provision is necessary and this is being addressed in the development plan. The recently refurbished library is well used, but is too small for a school of this size. The computerised cataloguing and lending control is efficient. The non-fiction stock of books is particularly limited – there are no modern foreign language materials and in many cases stocks need to be brought up-to-date. All resources are well looked after by pupils. There is a lack of ICT software resources to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs.
79. Financial management is secure and educational priorities are supported well through the financial planning. Careful adherence is made to apply the principles of best value in day-to-day expenditure. The income per pupil is much lower than average, but the school provides good value for money. The school uses funding for special educational needs as it should in order to ensure quality provision.
80. Overall the governors and senior staff of the school make good strategic use of resources including specific grants and other funding. The most recent auditors' report of September 2002 made a few recommendations for improvement, all of which have been acted upon so that good financial systems are now in place with appropriate procedures for assuring probity. Governors are well briefed at regular meetings of the finance sub-committee and concentrate on ensuring that moneys are dispersed to support their plans for the school's development.

Concerns expressed in the last inspection report about the weakness of links between the budget-making process and the school's development planning have been fully addressed. The very able chair of the finance committee has a background in education as a professional adviser and is very alert to all issues. A committee of governors who chair each of the major subcommittees now forms recommendations for budgetary decisions to be put before the governing board. This means that all aspects of the school's development are considered before major money decisions are taken. The governors and headteacher feel that the pupils learn best from more specialised teaching and so have adopted a secondary model for staffing the school rather than using a primary model with more generalist teaching. They recognise that this is more expensive and have budgeted accordingly.

81. Capital expenditure on building works has also been essential. To enable this to take place the governors have taken on long-term borrowing commitments. The repayments of these have now been brought fully under control and are being dealt with within the annual budgeting arrangements.
82. Good use is made of information technology in the school's administration. New equipment has been recently purchased and installed to add to efficiency. Teachers can access assessment data through the computer link but not to the central schools information management system. Arrangements for computerised registration procedures are not yet in place, leading to some limitations in the efficiency of addressing weaker attendance quickly.
83. The governors pay close attention to achieving best value. Examples of this can be seen in arrangements for letting the grounds maintenance contract, which resulted in relative cost savings and better service. Consultation is effective with all-important parties – the diocese, the local education authority, parents and staff. The children, too, are consulted on matters that concern them closely such as the school meals provision, which has been recently improved at their request, and the development of the spiritual garden.
84. Considering the pupils' satisfactory level of achievement in core subjects, good achievement in several others, good attitudes, good teaching, leadership and management and satisfactory improvement since the last inspection the overall level of the school's effectiveness is good. Weighing this against the relatively low costs and the average socio-economic circumstances within which the school operates, this constitutes good value for money.
85. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. It is pleasantly decorated and generally in a good state of repair. Many lessons take place in specialist areas. The entrance area is pleasant and welcoming and wall displays enhance the learning environment. There is an ongoing programme of renovation. A new perimeter fence has greatly reduced incidents of vandalism. In some parts of the school teaching areas are small compared to class sizes, and restrict the learning activities that can take place.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

86. In order to raise the standards of attainment and achievement further the governors, headteacher and key staff should:

1. Improve provision for personal, social and health education by:
 - Providing a clearer, more carefully considered programme that includes all aspects of health and social issues as given in national guidance
 - Ensuring that form tutors or teachers are fully aware of requirements and have training in the delivery of programmes of study
 - Ensuring that the subject is appropriately managed and monitored, and the areas of study more rigorously co-ordinated.

(Paragraph 40)

2. Ensure that a higher level of challenge is provided in the teaching of higher attaining pupils in some subjects, including English, science and geography by:

- Ensuring teachers are clear about their expectations of the standards required for higher levels of attainment
- Ensuring assessment data is analysed and used more fully to set targets and make comparisons with national averages.

(Paragraphs 89, 118, 141)

3. Improve the quality of information to parents and in particular the reports by:

- Informing parents more precisely how well pupils are achieving
- Giving very clear feedback to pupils and parent about relative attainment compared to national expectations

- Ensuring targets for improvement are specific to subjects and achievable and relate more to attainment than attitudes.

(Paragraphs 62,63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	116
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	27	49	35	3	0	0
Percentage	2	23	42	30	3	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	770
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	54

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	101

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance 2001-2002

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
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	100	92	192
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	77	77	95	
	Girls	75	68	84	
	Total	152	145	179	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (77)	76 (63)	93 (84)	
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)	
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	75	78	86	
	Girls	84	66	83	
	Total	159	144	169	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (81)	75 (67)	89 (87)	
	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
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
736	21	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	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
0	0	0
0	0	0
22	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)	35.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.4
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Average teaching group size: Y5– Y8

Key Stage 2	28.2
Key Stage 3	27.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	1510380
Total expenditure	1510380
Expenditure per pupil	1967
Balance brought forward from previous year	25000
Balance carried forward to next year	25000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	770
Number of questionnaires returned	487

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	51	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	52	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	55	4	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	63	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	32	62	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	53	17	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	42	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	55	14	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	39	51	2	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	56	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	47	4	1	4

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The aspects that pleased parents most were the belief that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best, that teaching was good and they felt comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. The inspection team believes that the school should expect more of higher attaining pupils but agrees with other views. Parents would like to see improvement in the extent to which the school keeps them informed about how well pupils are getting on, pupils getting the right amount of homework and the extent to which the school work closely with parents. The inspection team supports the parents' view that these areas need improvement.

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good

Strengths

- Achievement in English over time has been satisfactory. However, the good quality of teaching now established has resulted currently in good learning.
- Good leadership and management of the subject have been established and have created a positive learning environment.
- Very good classroom relationships and pupils' commendable attitudes to work account for the good learning that takes place.
- Standards of reading and speaking are above average.

Areas for improvement

- The achievement of the highest attaining pupils is not high enough because the level of challenge for them in the teaching is not as great as it might be.
- Writing skills are average overall, weaker than other literacy skills and the written fluency and accuracy of the lower attaining pupils in particular is too low and not of the expected standard.

87. The proportion of pupils attaining at Level 4 or above in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 was close to average. These results were in line with those attained in mathematics and science. The English results in 2002 were comparable to those obtained in similar schools and represented satisfactory achievement when compared to the pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs made progress in line with other pupils due to the good support from teaching assistants. The girls performed better than the boys by a margin similar to the national difference. Results for the higher attaining pupils in 2002 were below the national and similar school averages for attainment at Level 5 and above. This marked a drop in performance at this level compared to 2001. Overall, standards in the national tests were similar to the results attained at the time of the last inspection.
88. The standards of written work are average and so for Year 6 they are in line with what was attained in the national tests. This represents satisfactory achievement in writing for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils are able to write in a range of styles for varied audiences. The fluency and accuracy of the extended writing of the most competent pupils is

good and represents an improvement on what such pupils were attaining in recent years.

89. Pupils in all four years are using computers to improve the standard of their writing and to present it in varied forms. This was seen in the reports written by the younger pupils on homeless children where they used word processing techniques and presentational devices to good effect. Pupils are also encouraged to work independently and they do this well in their work on autobiographies. The standards of writing of the less competent pupils are too low because there are too many inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation and there is weakness in the use of grammar. The extended writing of many pupils is not well enough organised in the correct use of paragraphs. All but the most competent pupils are failing to make extensive use of complex sentences in their writing. The department is aware of the need to raise standards in these areas and already has provision in place to secure improvements.
90. Reading standards throughout the school are above average and achievement in this skill is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. High priority has been given to this skill recently and standards have significantly improved. Pupils read a range of increasingly difficult texts, including works of non-fiction, and, when reading aloud, do so fluently and with expression.
91. Speaking skills are above average. Listening skills are more variable but overall are also above average. Pupils are confident and articulate when speaking and are able to use Standard English correctly. They generally show respect for each other's contributions. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson. Pupils had compiled their own newspaper reports and were sharing them with the class. Such was the strength of the relationships that their critical comments on each other's work were readily accepted as part of the learning process. Achievement in both these skills is good.
92. Pupils are progressing well in the key areas of reading, listening and speaking, making significant learning gains in lessons, because teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The quality of the curriculum is good because of the provision of a wide range of reading and writing activities and the use staff make of computer technology and drama techniques in their teaching. There is insufficient development of technical skill. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they plan well and make the learning objectives clear at the start of each lesson. This is an improvement on the last inspection when there were lessons that lacked a clear purpose. A further improvement is that teachers now meet the requirements of the full range of pupils' competencies within classes because they target support to those pupils who specifically need it and make good use of the learning support assistants.
93. The very good relationships in the classroom contribute significantly to learning and account for pupils' positive attitudes to their work. Teaching methods are varied appropriately and good use is made of ongoing assessment to encourage pupils and inform them of how to improve. The quality of teachers'

marking is particularly high. There were instances in a minority of lessons when time was not used well and the plenary sessions were rushed. Teachers were therefore failing to review and consolidate what had been learnt. Not all questioning was rigorous and there were occasions when pupils' superficial answers were accepted without challenge. Teachers need to make greater use of supplementary questions and sequences of questions to stimulate and challenge pupils intellectually. Teachers' expectations of pupils were not high enough in those few lessons, which were deemed to be satisfactory. The subject's senior teachers are aware of these shortcomings and are being proactive in dealing with them.

94. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The two senior colleagues provide clear educational direction to the work of the department. Able and committed teachers, who work well as a team, support them. That commitment is evident in the priority they give to ongoing professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Effective measures are in place for monitoring teaching and sharing good practice. Care is taken with displays and word prompts to create a literacy environment in the classrooms and the department as a whole makes a significant contribution to improving pupils' basic skills.
95. Because pupils are encouraged to read widely, the subject also contributes to their spiritual development through opportunities for reflection on values and beliefs, and to their moral and social awareness through discussion of sensitive issues. Pupils are given opportunities to read literature from other cultures. Appropriate strategies are used for the monitoring of pupils' performance and their achievements are celebrated and underachievement checked. There is provision for extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject through drama, the contributions of visiting speakers and through library and poetry competitions. The library would contribute more effectively to the work of the subject if the range of texts held was extended. Accommodation is good and provides a positive ethos for learning.
96. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. In addition to the improvements already recorded, progress in Years 7 and 8 is better and is now good. Also, teaching approaches and the deployment of resources are now matched to the desired learning outcomes. The department has the capacity to improve further because of the commitment of the teachers to developing their own skills and their ability to work effectively as a team in a critical but mutually supportive way.

Literacy

97. There is effective provision in place for meeting pupils' literacy needs and as a result they make good progress in the skills of reading, listening and speaking in their subjects. Pupils are able to adapt their writing to subject need and most are able to write at length in a range of styles. This was seen in music where pupils' prose evaluations comparing and contrasting different musical styles were of a very high standard. Note-taking skills are well developed in science and their high quality records of practical work are a useful aid for future reference. Pupils in geography are able to organise and present information sequentially and their project writing is of high quality. The use of technical vocabulary is strong in design and technology and art and pupils write extended evaluations of their work in these subjects. The literacy aspect of the work done in ICT is also strong with many opportunities afforded for writing in varied styles for different audiences. Pupils read the varied subject texts confidently and with understanding because the standard of this basic skill is above average. Pupils also speak well. In physical education pupils explain themselves clearly because of their command of the specialist vocabulary. They also listen carefully, an essential attribute for effective learning.
98. The provision for improving pupils' literacy skills is good in nearly all subject areas. Science teachers regularly encourage pupils to write concisely and to present their work neatly and clearly. They pay particular attention to written accuracy in their marking. Teachers in many subject areas ensure that key technical vocabulary is displayed prominently in classrooms and in modern foreign languages, for example, literacy prompts are displayed in English as well as the European language. Attention is paid to accurate spelling in all subject areas. In English there are opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills through group discussions on the set texts. In ICT, pupils are encouraged to mentor each other's work through discussion and so have many opportunities to develop their speaking skills.
99. Significant improvements have been made in provision since the last inspection when subjects gave insufficient explicit support for the development of writing and there were limited opportunities for oral work in some subjects. The raising of literacy standards remains a priority and there is the capacity for further improvement on the already good provision.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is satisfactory

Strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' work and the use of the assessment are good.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching, to increase pupils' enjoyment and to raise standards.
- The department has some good ideas that are yet to be consolidated in lesson plans and schemes of work.
- There are inconsistencies in the recording of test and examination results.

100. Pupils' results in 2002 in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average and above average for similar schools. These results were a marked improvement on those in 2001, which had been affected by staff absence because of maternity leave. Overall there was a rising trend over the years 1998 to 2002 that is marginally better than the national improvement.
101. The work of pupils in Years 5 and 6, as seen during the inspection, is in line with these results. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils handle fractions well and produce thoughtful, well-argued investigations, such as one considering what is the best combination of postage stamps to pay for sending any package up to a given figure. Average attaining pupils can find simple percentages of a quantity such as 70% of £16 without making mistakes. Current Year 6 pupils in the lowest sets have a reasonably secure grasp of place value in numbers up to 1000 and can recognise the difference between an acute angle and a right angle.
102. Results in the optional Year 8 National Curriculum tests in mathematics are also in line with national expectation. The work of pupils currently in Years 7 and 8 corresponds with these results. Higher attaining pupils can use the formulae to find the area and circumference of a circle and produce good work in statistics on stem and leaf diagrams. Middle attainers recognise the equivalence of simple vulgar fractions, percentages and decimals and can deal with negative numbers. Lower attaining pupils produce some good investigative work focused on the addition of consecutive numbers identifying, for instance, that the sum of two consecutive numbers must be odd and explaining why. They can recognise simple linear sequences and state the rule governing them but quite often make mistakes when asked to identify and simplify equivalent fractions. There is no obvious significant difference at any age between the standards reached by boys as compared with girls, between different ethnic groups or those with special needs.
103. Pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. They learn to handle numbers better and produce neater, more accurate drawing in geometry and in data handling. Higher attaining pupils argue more effectively in mathematical terms, using letters substituted for numbers and variables to generalise statements. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Help from well-qualified learning support assistants is a strong feature contributing to this progress.
104. Pupils who are most able in mathematics achieve satisfactory progress over time. They gain, as do all pupils, from being taught in sets of broadly similar ability throughout their time in the school. Many benefit from entry for national and internal competitions. Good results in the National Mathematics Challenge,

for example, motivate able pupils and give them an opportunity to attempt difficult and interesting puzzles.

105. The teaching seen during the inspection was always at least satisfactory and often better. All lessons follow the three-part structure recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy and even in the weakest lessons teachers are well prepared, know what they want the pupils to do and have the necessary materials and equipment on hand to ensure that the pupils use time fruitfully and effectively. In the best, as with a Year 5 lesson on area, very good questioning and work matched to the pupils' various abilities engenders enthusiasm. In some, however, such as a Year 6 class on sequences, the magic of number and patterns and the thrill of identifying a problem and finding a solution are lacking. In part this is because the department, although it has a policy for spiritual development in mathematics, has not consolidated good ideas already identified into planning for opportunities to exploit and inspire the pupils' enthusiasm.
106. Pupils' learning is closely associated with teaching so that in all lessons seen the pupils' learning was always at least satisfactory and in almost half it was good. Pupils respond well, even when the teaching is not particularly exciting, because they are well managed by teachers who respect them and want them to succeed. In most lessons they produce substantial volumes of work and show a degree of interest. Where the teachers use charts of key objectives stuck into the front (and sometimes the back also) of the pupils' books on which records are kept of which skill areas have been understood, the pupils are much better aware of what they need to do to improve. There is a degree of inconsistency in the teachers' practice in this respect, which renders what is a good policy less effective than it might be.
107. The contribution to the pupils' literacy skills in mathematics lessons is good. Teachers follow the departmental policy and introduce new vocabulary with care. Key words are displayed on classroom walls with reference usually made to them in lessons. More attention could, however, be paid to the marking and correction of spelling. Good use is made of technology, including overhead projectors, in many lessons. The pupils are taught to use computers to enhance their learning. Spreadsheets are used to investigate solving equations by trial and improvement and good data handling was seen in Year 8 project work.
108. Contributions to improving pupils' numerical skills in subjects other than mathematics are satisfactory overall. In design technology teachers emphasize the need for accuracy when measuring and weighing. In art and design, good teaching of proportion was seen in relation to drawing the human body. Geography and history have as yet no policy on numeracy.
109. Regular testing against National Curriculum attainment targets is a good feature of the department's work. Most teachers keep records of the pupils' test and examination scores analysed by topic in their mark books and coloured in with red to show a lack of understanding, yellow to show some understanding and green to show the topic has been mastered. This enables pupil achievement and underachievement to be readily identified and also shows which parts of

the programmes of study have or have not been understood. It is a very effective mechanism that is used to review schemes of work and lesson plans and to set targets for the pupils, but is rendered less effective in practice by not being used universally.

110. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Pupils' number work is better, there is no marked disparity between the performance of girls and boys, pupils no longer waste time in lessons and there is no unsatisfactory teaching.
111. Departmental management and leadership are satisfactory, with many good features. Schemes of work are complete with enough detail, for example, to enable a supply teacher to collect a lesson and teach it. What is required next is to include good ideas for starters and activities to support plenary sessions. The head of department is an experienced teacher who enjoys the respect of both pupils and colleagues. The teachers work well together designing, for example, projects such as plotting Christmas trees with wibbly-wobbly coordinates. She has identified most of the key areas in need of improvement. She works hard and has a desire to raise standards, which she shares with her colleagues, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Lesson observation, monitoring of teachers' marking and record keeping are sufficiently frequent and rigorous although they have not as yet ensured total consistency from the teachers. The pupils value a marked emphasis on praise and reward for doing good work and some enjoy their mathematics. The challenge is to ensure that everyone enjoys it more.

Numeracy

112. Pupils have satisfactory numerical skills. In geography Year 5 pupils are effective when constructing climate charts and in Year 8 pupils collect and use data well in an investigation of Antarctica. In French pupils can handle the arithmetic for day-to-day living and express it in the foreign language. All pupils have skills enough to enable them to learn in all areas of the curriculum.
113. Strategies for teaching numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory. There is a whole-school policy for the teaching of numerical skills, which directs departments how to plan for and teach the main aspects of data handling, shape, space and number. Each term a member of the mathematics department visits other departmental meetings to advise and give help on different topics. All staff have been in receipt of training on the National Numeracy Strategy. Most departments have a stated policy for the teaching of numeracy and have identified opportunities for enhancing the pupils' thinking in numerical terms. In music, for example, teachers point out relationships between fractions and note values. In physical education pupils record and evaluate blood pressure readings and heart rate in relation to fitness on the health-related programme. Even where there is no policy incorporated into the departmental schemes of work, such as in history, pupils use graphs and charts to help interpret information about households from the local 1861 census.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is good

Strengths

- Whilst standards are average and achievement has been satisfactory, the current rate of progress is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good and contribute to good motivation.
- Pupils sustain concentration and work at a brisk pace.
- Pupils enjoy science, and have gained good practical skills.

Areas for improvement

- Overall achievement, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils that reach higher levels in National Curriculum tests.
- Communicating teachers' expectations to pupils more effectively.
- Extent of monitoring of teaching and learning.

114. In 2002, the results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests slightly exceeded, but were broadly in line with the national average for all schools and were in line with the average for similar schools. While the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above was higher than the national average, the proportion reaching Level 5 was below. Over the last three years, standards of attainment in the national tests in Year 6 have increased in line with the national trend. In 2002, overall attainment in science was higher than that in English and mathematics, though a smaller proportion of pupils reached Level 5 compared with mathematics. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. At the end of Year 8 performance in the PIMS assessment was below the average in other Staffordshire middle schools.

115. Work seen during the inspection confirmed that standards attained by the end of Year 6 are in line with national averages and the national test results. Year 5 pupils are able to investigate the extent to which different substances can dissolve in water. They are able to make accurate observations, record their results and appreciate the need for fair comparisons by controlling the amount of substance being dissolved in fixed volumes of water. By Year 6, pupils are able to make good use of the Internet to research the solar system. Their findings enable them to develop an appreciation of the relative sizes and positions of the sun, earth and moon. Another Year 6 class studying the heart was able to make accurate predictions about changes in pulse rate in relation to exercise. Pupils' attitudes to science are good; they are enthusiastic and show pride in the standard of presentation in their notebooks. However, in some cases, pupils' ability to remember facts needs improving. SEN pupils make good progress, particularly when supported by a learning assistant.

116. Scrutiny of written work and lesson observations show that by the end of Year 8, pupils are making satisfactory progress and standards are in line with expectations for the age. A Year 7 class discussing fuels was able to suggest ways of testing fuel efficiency by measuring temperature changes. Pupils understand the need for fair testing and higher attaining members of the class were able to suggest how the results of the experiment could lead to a quantitative analysis. A higher-attaining Year 8 class observing various

examples of energy conversion was able to describe their observations confidently, using the correct scientific language. Project work on 'Alternative sources of energy' showed a good understanding of the environmental and ethical issues involved. The standard of writing in notebooks is high, with good descriptive and evaluative writing. Pupils use their ICT skills to good advantage in the presentation of projects. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls and SEN pupils progress well in line with other members of their classes.

117. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is currently good; it is also good in Years 7 and 8. Good teaching is now leading to good learning. This represents an improvement over the satisfactory achievement that existed before the impact of the new headship became embedded. Teachers have adopted the three-part lesson structure which reinforces what pupils have learnt. They are secure on their knowledge of the subject, adopt challenging question techniques and make good use of available resources. For example, good use was made of the interactive white board to consolidate Year 8 pupils' understanding of terms used to describe conductivity. The pupils then investigated the conductivity of various substances, including water and a salt solution. Focussed questions ensured that pupils were able to make valuable deductions from their observations.
118. Good use is made of differentiated material both for SEN pupils and for those pupils who need to be extended. Teachers are aware of, and adapt to the educational needs of SEN pupils. Pupils respond and learn well, particularly in lessons where they are engaged in a variety of activities and working together in groups and when teachers have a high expectation of what they can do. However, while the objectives of lessons are made clear, there is not always sufficient reinforcement of teachers' expectations especially for higher attaining pupils. Standards of marking and commentary are good throughout all years. Comments in notebooks are helpful and positive. Class management is sound and pupils respond positively to an ordered learning environment.
119. The department is satisfactorily led and managed. Aims are clear and staff work well as a team with a shared commitment to high standards. Two non-specialist members of the department who teach in Year 5 are well supported. Whilst monitoring of teaching is taking place to some extent, and staff are able to share teaching strategies through regular departmental meetings, the rigour and degree of focus is not yet enough. Good progress has been made towards adopting the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. Liaison with the LEA, the Key Stage 3 strategy co-ordinator, feeder schools and the High School is excellent. A thorough record of pupil performance is in place, but further refinement is needed, especially in informing the curriculum, to derive full benefit from the system. ICT resources are good; other resources are satisfactory and are used effectively to ensure a high frequency of practical work. A dedicated technician team underpins the good teaching.
120. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement. Levels of attainment have risen in line with national averages. Some higher-attaining pupils are not reaching their full potential to achieve Level 5 in the national

tests. This is being addressed by the introduction of booster classes and by the increase in the number of teaching groups in Year 6. The refurbishment of one laboratory has improved the quality of the learning environment. However, in the case of large classes, the types of practical work conducted in the remaining laboratories may be restricted. The department has made some progress in monitoring its effectiveness by analysing pupil performance in terms of teaching groups and topics taught.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is very good

Strengths

- Standards attained are well above average.
- Teaching is very good and is particularly effective in developing pupils as independent learners.
- The quality of 3D work is particularly good.
- Very good relationships create a positive atmosphere in lessons.

Area for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT during normal practical lessons are limited.

121. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 8, measured by teacher assessments, are well above average and this is confirmed by observations of lessons and work during the inspection. The figure for pupils gaining Level 5 or above is ten per cent higher than the average for pupils at the end of Year 9. Very good liaison with first schools enables teachers to build on pupils' prior experience and, through skilled and well-planned teaching, they make very good progress and achieve very well. This represents good progress since the last inspection.
122. Well-planned courses provide pupils with very good progression in the type of work and depth of challenge. Year 5 pupils exploring line and tone, for example, begin to develop good observational drawing skills as they produce self-portraits. By Year 8, higher attaining pupils are able to use these techniques to represent depth and form in a sophisticated way. All year groups use sketchbooks to record developmental work and homework. Pupils value these, look after them with care and are proud of the work they contain.
123. Because each year group is given experience of a wide range of practical skills and media, pupils develop competence in each and are able to see the relationship between them. For example, early experiments with colour and texture in textile work can be discussed and used in the application of texture to clay work. Work in clay is developed to a high level. Year 8 pupils, for example, are able to translate 2 dimensional portraits into 3 dimensional clay heads with not only technical skill, but with an appreciation of how to represent the character and personality of the subject. Pupils are introduced to the work of established artists in Year 5 and from simple descriptive responses rapidly develop the ability to evaluate the work in a way, which gives an insight into the artist's technique and intentions. Higher attaining pupils can give a mature

response to the emotional impact of a work of art. This culminates in the high quality work to be seen in Year 8 history of art assignments. These contain in-depth research from a variety of sources, including the Internet. They are presented to a high standard using a combination of hand drawn and computer methods. Pupils use ICT well, as, for example, in the high quality work resulting from a project to design the school Christmas card, but the lack of computers in work areas limits opportunities for its more widespread use as an additional tool in normal lesson time.

124. There are no significant differences in standards and achievement between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the practical nature of the work and achieve very well. Teachers' regard for the individual needs of all pupils ensures that those with a special talent for art are given appropriate challenges and achieve very well.
125. Teaching is very good. Pupils have high quality learning experiences because teachers have developed very good techniques for developing pupils' ability to become involved in the learning process. Very good discussion and negotiation skills are used to develop self-evaluation and group evaluation skills, and a respect for the views of others. Consequently, pupils grow confidently into the skills of giving and receiving constructive criticism without embarrassment or fear of failure. Together with a strong cultural and multicultural emphasis, this makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
126. Teachers possess very good class management skills and have high expectations of pupils. This has generated very good relationships and a positive learning atmosphere in most lessons. Homework is used particularly well to support and reinforce work in class. Homework tasks are structured to provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and creatively. Pupils receive good support for literacy development and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking skills through discussion and group evaluation techniques. Very good assessment procedures supplement the teachers' own knowledge of pupils and enables progress to be monitored effectively. Very good contacts with the High School provide a smooth transition for pupils and for continuity of work.
127. Very good leadership and management of art is a significant factor in the high standards attained and the high quality of pupils' learning experience. The head of art also has overall responsibility for the visual and technical arts faculty and provides a clear vision for development in both these roles as well as effective day-to-day management. Departmental policies are supported by clear strategies for implementation in the classroom and the quality of teaching and learning is kept in the forefront of discussion. Pupils benefit considerably from the wide range of enrichment activities, high quality displays throughout the school and involvement in community projects.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is good

Strengths

- There is good leadership providing clear direction together with a thorough audit to provide a clear development plan.
- There are good curriculum links with the High School and First School.
- Effective training has been given to teachers involved with curriculum delivery and there is good emphasis on providing active learning experiences for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The production of a comprehensive scheme of work to include all citizenship activities and link to PSHE.
- An assessment strategy to monitor pupils' progress.
- Further development of monitoring of teaching and learning.

128. As citizenship is a new subject within the National Curriculum, there are no existing benchmarks to assess standards. Citizenship has been introduced into Years 7 and 8 and there are plans to extend the provision into Years 5 and 6 in 2003. By the end of Year 8 standards are as expected. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of becoming informed citizens through the study of Britain as a diverse society, the significance of the media in society and how the law protects animals. These are taught alongside the personal, social and health education curriculum in mixed attainment form tutor groups. There is a wide range of opportunities for all pupils to contribute appropriately to active group work especially through the Make It Real activity in Year 7. Achievement in the subject is good, this is the result of good early planning, a thorough audit of what was available and what needed to be introduced and because of the energetic and enthusiastic leadership of the newly appointed head of department.

129. In work seen during the inspection, standards are as might be expected, considering this is a new subject in the curriculum. This represents satisfactory achievement. There are good opportunities for project work including: the development of a children's newspaper reporting on the impact of road accidents and the development of health booklets, which are used in the First Schools. ICT is used extensively to develop strong communication skills and these are very good examples of pupils using a good range of learning situations to develop their citizenship skills.

130. In addition to the planned curriculum the pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of citizenship outside of the classroom. Pupils elect form representatives to the Year Councils, they collect money for local senior citizens charities, there is a good link with the Adult Day Centre and a range of external visitors help the pupils to develop their understanding of their own community.

131. Overall the quality of teaching and learning are good, and has resulted in the good start that has been made in the subject. The form teachers have received specific training to deliver citizenship and the positive impact of this can be seen in the lessons where pupil participation is high with good opportunities for reflection and analysis. Relationships within the classes are good and these

help to underpin the effective group and discussion opportunities. Pupils are seen to be making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of citizenship.

132. A head of department was appointed in 2002 to introduce the initiative and she has provided energetic and strong leadership that has enabled the subject to develop well. A comprehensive school audit was undertaken to identify what the school already did but more significantly to develop the weaknesses in the curriculum. The full curriculum for Years 7, 8 and 9 has been identified, in partnership with the High School. To date an outline scheme of work has been developed, this now needs to be filled out so that the teachers have a complete scheme to use. This can include the full range of activities that contribute to the citizenship curriculum so that the whole entitlement is clear. This will enable more effective monitoring of pupil learning and progress to take place. At this stage this is no form of assessment to encourage pupils to develop their skills and understanding, a strategy will need to be developed so that pupil progress can be developed and supported. The form tutors with the heads of year deliver the curriculum and the management arrangements need to enable the head of department sufficient opportunities to ensure that the tutors are fully empowered and that there are good opportunities for review and evaluation of the pupils' progress. Citizenship is still a developing initiative, however the school has made good progress in the introduction and development of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is very good

Strengths

- Standards attained by the end of Year 8 are well above average.
- Very good teaching, supported by well-planned courses enables pupils to make very good progress.
- Varied teaching techniques and well structured course materials support the progress of lower attaining pupils and also those pupils who are talented.

Area for improvement

- There is limited access to computers during food technology lessons and this prevents their use as valuable learning tools.

133. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 8, measured by teacher assessments, are well above average. Seventy four per cent of pupils gained level 5 or above in 2002, which is six per cent higher than that normally expected of pupils at the end of Year 9. This is the result of very good teaching and close monitoring of pupils' progress. Observation of work and lessons seen during the inspection confirms these very high standards. Pupils make very good progress and their achievements are high.

134. Pupils experience a broad range of technological activities and develop a good understanding of the design process, which links them. For example, Year 8

pupils designing a packed lunch for sale in a supermarket were able to compile a specification, prepare the food and make the packaging. Similarly pupils in resistant materials were able to follow a good design methodology to make a charity moneybox. In both cases, investigative skills were good and pupils were able to critically evaluate their own work. Courses are carefully planned to ensure progression of content and standard. For example, in a well-taught Year 5 food technology lesson pupils were developing the basic vocabulary for testing food products. Year 8 pupils could use these words and methods in a more sophisticated way in food sensory analysis tasks. Pupils develop good research skills and use ICT confidently and competently to find information. Higher attaining pupils can edit Internet material, manipulate the images and add text to make the work their own.

135. Although there are computers in the resistant materials area there is limited access for pupils in food technology. Pupils are trusted to move, unsupervised, to computer rooms and they exercise a high degree of personal responsibility in doing so. Booklets containing course materials provide a strong framework, which supports lower attaining pupils and allows them to make progress in line with their peers. For example, one Year 5 pupil with writing difficulties was able to participate fully in a practical lesson and speak confidently about what she was doing despite difficulties in setting it down on paper. Higher attaining pupils use the booklets as 'planners' to navigate their way through the course and extension materials at a pace to suit their needs. This enables talented pupils to make very good progress, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use the social context of design projects to explore a range of social, moral and cultural issues, for example, in food technology where pupils experience food from other cultures. The difference in performance between boys and girls is in line with that seen nationally.
136. Teaching is very good. Strategies for promoting independent learning are a strength of teaching. Good management of pupils, resources and working procedures have established a positive atmosphere for learning. Good technician support enables teachers to concentrate fully on work with pupils. Courses are very well planned and, in general, an appropriate range of teaching techniques is used. Good teaching of computer graphics enables pupils to produce high quality images but minor changes to teaching methods would consolidate the learning process for pupils. Very good assessment procedures enable teachers to track the progress of individual pupils. Relationships are very good and are a major factor in developing pupils' independent learning skills. Pupils respond to teachers' high expectations with very good levels of personal responsibility and behaviour. Consequently the quality of learning is very good.
137. Leadership and management of design and technology are very good. The close co-operation between the subject leaders and the head of visual and technical arts provides clear direction for the subject. This results in effective management and a forward-looking working relationship. A broad and balanced curriculum has been established and this, together with the quality of teaching, is monitored and reviewed. Very good extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum and provide talented pupils with further opportunities and challenges. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good due to a great

increase in resources, more confident teaching and leadership focussed on the impact of ICT in all subjects.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good

Strengths

- Good teaching in Years 7 and 8 leads to pupils achieving well.
- The curriculum is very good and provides pupils with a broad educational experience.
- ICT is well used to support learning and improve the quality of work.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in Years 5 and 6.
- The rate of progress of higher attaining pupils.

138. The results of the 2002 teachers' assessments of pupils' National Curriculum standards at the end of Year 6 are average. Girls attained higher than boys did and boys were below the average for boys nationally. At the end of Year 8 standards seen were above average with girls achieving higher than boys. The results are an improvement on those in 2001.

139. The standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 5 and 6 are average. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement given their standards when they entered the school. Many possess an appropriate range of geographical skills. They know the main points of the compass and can read grid references to locate places on maps. They know a range of terms such as 'waterfall' and 'gorge' and can identify them on sketch maps, but find difficulty in explaining how they are formed. Pupils have a foundation of knowledge about places. They can locate continents and oceans and local places. In Year 6 for example, pupils study Carsington Water in Derbyshire. They understand the differing views of local people to its construction and write reports of their findings. High and average attaining pupils write well-developed accounts with sound grammatical accuracy, but they do not explain their answers enough. Lower attaining pupils, including pupils with special educational needs write well because of the guidance given in re-drafting the work, but answers show confused thinking about development issues.

140. The standards of work seen in Years 7 and 8 are above average. This represents good achievement given their standards at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a range of knowledge about regional and global areas. They understand issues such as the workings of the EU and about the urban problems in Brazil, but many do not know where places are located and knowledge about the rural areas around Rio de Janeiro is insecure. Many pupils, girls in particular, achieve very high standards in project work. In Year 8 for example, well-organised and detailed accounts about Antarctica are produced. Pupils are well informed about environmental issues of the region's development but do not explain and evaluate the arguments of developers enough. Pupils have good research skills

and make full use of ICT to obtain information and to present results. Higher attaining pupils achieve very high standards in written aspects whilst the writing of lower attaining pupils is improved by re-drafting work and using computers to support spelling accuracy. In on-going work however, grammatical inaccuracies are evident and this reduces the standards achieved.

141. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. The aims of lessons are shared with pupils and teachers structure lessons well. They regularly consolidate work previously covered and this leads to pupils improving their understanding of topics. In a Year 5 lesson about the climate in England and Jamaica, pupils practised skills in reading data prior to constructing charts to show the monthly differences in temperature and rainfall. Most pupils achieved well, but learning was slow at times because pupils spent a long time on the colouring activity, whilst a minority did not sustain concentration on the tasks. Teachers manage pupils well in lessons. Behaviour is very good and pupils are interested in the work. Many are enthusiastic to discuss issues in class and this leads to them achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because the teacher supports learning closely and uses additional adult support effectively. The over-reliance on the 'outcome' of learning to meet the needs of gifted and talented however is not fully successful because the tasks do not demand enough of them and extension work is not identified in planning.
142. Teaching is good in Years 7 and 8 and this leads to pupils achieving well. Teachers are appropriately qualified, experienced and they manage pupils very well. Learning was very good in a Year 7 lesson for example, because the teacher engaged them actively in consolidating work on types of industry and then organised group work to obtain information from maps. Pupils responded well to the challenge and made very good progress in understanding the advantages of different locations for various types of work. Teachers use resources very well to support learning. Books, film and maps are regularly used in lessons but insufficient use is made of atlases. Teachers make much use of reprographic materials and these make a very good contribution to meeting the needs of lower attaining pupils. Computers are well used for research both in class and for homework tasks. As a result pupils extend their learning to knowledge of global places and others achieve because the close guidance provided by supported writing materials. Pupils' work is regularly assessed with supportive summary comment, but there is insufficient guidance given on the quality and level of the work.
143. The leadership and management of the department are good. The recently appointed subject leader is efficient in the day-to-day management and provides clear guidance through the schemes of work about learning intentions. The assessment procedures are good and enable the teachers to monitor the progress that pupils make, but there is insufficient guidance about pupils' National Curriculum levels in the unit assignments. There is not enough monitoring of lessons to identify areas where teaching and learning could be improved. The curriculum is very good. The continuity of learning is secure because of the close co-ordination that exists with the High School. The experiences that pupils have are enhanced through fieldwork opportunities for

all year groups. Resources are satisfactory, except for the need for atlases for Years 7 and 8 leads to limitation for pupils to access the resources.

144. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards overall continue above average and group work in lessons is now effective. The assessment of standards has improved, but the slow pace of progress reported previously continues in some lessons.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is satisfactory

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very positive.
- There is good use of ICT to create research opportunities for project work.
- There is a strong emphasis upon the interpretation of primary evidence.
- Learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' achievement.

Areas for improvement

- Standards and achievement in all years.
- Marking of homework, to ensure a more focused approach.
- Continuous assessment particularly in the recording of oral contributions.
- Schemes of work to include cross-curricular themes, resources, learning strategies and opportunities.

145. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 6, were at the national expectation and given the standards on entry, this represents satisfactory achievement. Similarly the standards at the end of Year 8 were at the national average and this confirms the teachers' assessments. Again this indicates satisfactory achievement. The work seen suggests that over time that these standards are being maintained. However this masks differences between the attainment levels. In some lessons during the question and answer activity, there were many more opportunities for higher attaining pupils to develop their oral skills than those pupils with specific learning difficulties, consequently those with more opportunities made greater progress in some lessons than other pupils.
146. By the end of Year 6 pupils develop a range of historical skills, including interpretation of primary source material, the understanding of chronology and the ability to see more than one side in a historical situation. Pupils can use a range of learning materials including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, starter sentences and writing frames. Year 6 pupils can identify evidence from local photographs and can draw conclusions from them. They work effectively in groups and maintain a good pace of work. They work with purpose and with considerable focus.
147. By the end of Year 8 pupils have developed a range of research skills using the Internet and can illustrate their project work with a good range of evidence, presentational methods and can draw up bibliographies. When presented with the issue of Elizabeth's suitors, they can identify the advantages and disadvantages of each one and can draw conclusions about which suitor would bring the most advantages to England. In a Year 7 class pupils model their work using whiteboards to refine their arguments and they produce well thought out conclusions.
148. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but has improved in the last year. Sixty per cent of the lessons seen were good or better with a close correlation between the quality of the teaching and the learning. In the best lessons pupils are encouraged to work in pairs or in groups and the pupils' interaction is high. The pace is challenging and pupils are systematically exposed to a range of strategies that encourage their knowledge and understanding. In these lessons teacher expectations are high and pupils respond very well to the interest and excitement that is generated. In these lessons the teaching assistants work very closely with the teachers with the result that they provide very good support for those pupils with learning difficulties.
149. In some lessons there is too much teacher led discussion and as a result pupils spend much of the lesson listening rather than developing their enquiry skills.

There is also too much reliance on pupil volunteers to answer the questions and these sessions offer most opportunities to the higher attainers. There is little systematic recording of pupil interventions to ensure equal access to the curriculum and as a result assessment does not ensure a good diagnosis of individual needs. Overall ideas are well explained with good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. In addition there is good project work particularly in local history in Year 6 and the Romans project in Year 7. The ICT strategy has been well embedded in the curriculum throughout the department and this has enabled a wider range of evidence to be interrogated by the pupils. The literacy measures that have been introduced are beginning to improve the quality of the writing. However the marking of homework does not yet provide sufficient guidance for pupils to develop the higher-level skills necessary for good progression. There is regular half termly assessment across the department that contributes to a steady improvement in standards.

150. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory in that the very good pupil behaviour and the satisfactory teaching have been sustained, however the issues of marking and insufficient consolidation at the end of some lessons remain. Leadership and management are satisfactory as some innovations have taken place, in particular the introduction of assessed tasks and the schemes of work have been revised. However the schemes need to include comprehensive reference to the cross-curricular themes. Monitoring of standards across the department needs to take place regularly so that the progress of all pupils can be more accurately assessed and changes to the curriculum and to teaching methods can be introduced. The current accommodation is unsatisfactory because the size of the rooms makes it difficult to support all pupils effectively in their group work and the lack of Internet access limits the range of resources available for historical research. Overall the department is making satisfactory progress however there is a need to develop further strategies to support the continued improvement of standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is very good

Strengths

- The quality of teaching throughout the department leads to good achievement.
- The leadership and management provides a clear vision for further development.
- There is very good breadth of experience of ICT across the whole curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- The level of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Extent and rigour of monitoring of teaching to improve learning and raise the standards of all pupils further.

151. In 2002 teachers assessed pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 and towards the end of Year 8 as above average.

152. In the work seen during the inspection, standards by the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils enter the school with varying experiences of ICT and achieve well by the end of year 6 as a result of good teaching. Pupils develop a very good knowledge and understanding of text processing, graphics, modeling and data handling. Pupils show confidence in task and file management on the network and have well developed skills in using a range of software tools. The careful matching of ICT teaching to curriculum needs ensures that a variety of activities are developed that fully meet the National Curriculum programmes of study.
153. In the work seen during the inspection, standards towards the end of Year 8 are further above average and reflect good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment in Year 5. Pupils show well-developed ICT skills in data and text manipulation, computer control and modeling. Pupils show a clear understanding of the need to adapt their work for different audiences. A good example of this is the Year 7 housing project where pupils produce an advertisement for an estate agent using promotional language and developing text and graphical layout skills.
154. The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils benefit from knowledgeable teachers who demonstrate enthusiasm and interest throughout. Lessons are thoroughly planned and the pace of lessons is brisk. A good range of activities captures the interest and involvement of pupils of all levels of attainment, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The scheme of work developed for Years 5 and 6 is clearly referenced to the National Curriculum programmes of study to ensure suitable challenge and progress for all pupils. However, some tasks provided do not always match the range of pupils' individual needs. Higher attaining pupils often demonstrate higher standards through the quality of their work. Lessons in Years 7 and 8 are characteristically well planned with clear learning objectives. Pupils are supported by worksheets that support progress through the various units.
155. Teaching methods are appropriate and pupils with special educational needs are well supported. The department has identified a target group of low achieving pupils and has developed clear intervention strategies to raise their achievement. In addition an innovative peer-mentoring scheme in Year 8 is helping to support learning. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils' concentration is maintained. Teachers manage their classes well and this contributes to a positive learning environment. A system for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' performance is in place. Regular assessment against using the school's assessment policy provides valuable information on achievement and end of year assessment using a standard system enables the head of department to compare attainment against national standards.
156. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. Pupils show tremendous enthusiasm and interest in lessons and the daily lunchtime computer clubs and weekly after school club are very popular. The department makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Key words are displayed in the main teaching room and accuracy in spelling, punctuation and

grammar are emphasised through teaching. Year 8 pupils were recently highly commended for their entry into a national newspaper design competition. Numeracy skills are developed through such activities as data handling for example the year 5 housing survey where pupils have to use calculations and produce graphs to present data. The leadership and management of ICT are very good. As a result of relatively new leadership ICT is making a major contribution to the achievement of all pupils. Pupils' ICT skills are being very well developed across the school and most departments are actively using ICT to enhance teaching and learning. The department ensures that key priorities for future development are identified and whole school curriculum needs are considered. The extensive development plan produced by the head of department in consultation with the management group and the active support of the link governor fits closely with the school's priorities. Since the previous inspection, the school has made a major investment in the computer network for curriculum use. The ratio of pupils to computers is in line with government targets. Most staff have completed their national ICT training and are confident and capable of using ICT in their subject areas. The school has a full-time ICT technician who provides valuable support to the department. The department has produced an effective school intranet to support pupils' learning; this will soon be available for parents and pupils to access from home. The improved quality of provision reflects the good progress that has been made since the previous inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is good

Strengths

- Specialist teaching of French in Year 6, one year earlier than in most schools, gives pupils a good grounding on which to build their future progress.
- Specialist teachers use a variety of activities and materials to make their lessons interesting.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and work with enthusiasm.

Areas for improvement

- The limited range of activities used by non-specialist teachers, for example the extent of use of target language in class.
- The deployment of classroom assistants so that teachers can more effectively meet the needs of all pupils in their classes.

French

157. All pupils study French in Year 6 and their attainment, as measured by teachers' assessments, is in line with expectations at this age. The highest achieving pupils reach National Curriculum level 3. Others work at levels 1 or 2.
158. From Year 7 the statutory National Curriculum is in place. Standards in Year 8 are also in line with expectations for this Year group. The highest-attaining

pupils reach level 5, which is the national expectation for Year 9, and the proportion of pupils attaining this level has risen steadily since the last inspection. Rather more girls than boys perform at this level. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

159. Standards seen during the inspection were overall in line with expectations in listening, reading, speaking and writing. Pupils have achieved satisfactorily but the rate of progress is now better due to the improved teaching. The most able pupils in Year 8 show they understand passages in French made up of familiar material using different tenses. They take part in conversations, seeking and conveying opinions. Although there are some mistakes, they make themselves understood without difficulty. They write in simple sentences using different tenses. Other pupils are beginning to use their knowledge of grammar to adapt individual words or phrases. They identify and note main points and details in the French, which they read or hear. Pupils with special educational needs are given tasks, which enable them to achieve, and enjoy a sense of achievement at an appropriate level. Both boys and girls were seen working at the highest levels.
160. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but the teaching of specialist teachers is good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 6. In Years 7 and 8 teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teachers now use a variety of activities to promote pupils' motivation and maintain pace in their lessons. In the best lessons teachers made good use of overhead projectors, visual aids, tape recordings and songs. Specialist teachers use whole-class teaching, group work and pair work, although this variety was less in evidence in the lessons of non-specialist teachers. In the specialist classrooms displays give a French 'feel' and are used to promote learning.
161. Specialist teachers have a good command of French and use this to provide a model of pronunciation and intonation for pupils and to promote the idea that French is a living means of communication. They use English judiciously to check understanding and maintain the flow of lessons. In the lessons of non-specialists a preponderance of English means that opportunities for pupils to practise their French are missed. Teachers are careful to include all pupils. Boys and girls are equally involved in all aspects of foreign language learning and pupils with special educational needs receive different tasks from others in the class. However the very restricted use of classroom support assistants – none were seen during the inspection – means that when teachers are providing individual help for some pupils, others in the class do not receive as much attention as they should.
162. Teachers are beginning to use ICT to support learning but this is as yet under-developed. Work seen was restricted to 'presentation' rather than the learning of French, and the activities did not make adequate demands on pupils.
163. French makes a valuable contribution towards pupils' cultural education. A thriving Year 7 trip allows pupils to enjoy a taste of France each year. Work in French makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy. However,

opportunities for pupils' development in the spiritual dimension and citizenship are not yet being fully explored.

164. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department is aware of the department's strengths and areas for development, and promotes languages energetically. Schemes of work now give detailed information to assist planning, and pupils' progress is very effectively monitored. There have been clear improvements since the last inspection.

Latin

165. Latin is offered to the highest-attaining twenty-five per cent of pupils. This gives them a broader perspective on languages, focuses their attention on grammar makes a valuable contribution to their learning in literacy. Activities in Latin centre on translation into English. The level of demand is appropriate for these pupils and standards are satisfactory.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is good

Strengths

- Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 are above average.
- Teaching is good with high expectations and challenge for all pupils.
- Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There is a good variety and quality of extra-curricular activities.

Areas for improvement

- Quality of ICT equipment including full-sized keyboards to improve the range of opportunities for composition and performance.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation for storage of instruments, group work and instrumental lessons, which has an adverse effect on standards.

166. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average for all pupils. By end of Year 6, achievement is good and attainment overall is above expectations for all pupils of this age, including those with special educational needs. This rate of achievement continues throughout Years 7 and 8 and as a result attainment for a significant minority of these pupils at the end of Year 8 is above that expected nationally. The quality of the written work done by pupils in Year 8 shows considerable maturity as they compared and contrasted the different musical styles of Salsa and Calypso music. Their analysis showed awareness of the individual characteristics of the music and their answers were replicated by oral work done in lessons. Standards are high because musical skills and language are developed and used consistently. In a lesson for Year 5 pupils, they clapped increasingly difficult rhythmic patterns confidently using mnemonics to help them understand the relationships of different note values. This work then ensured that keyboard playing was accurate and clearly understood so progress in this lesson was very good.

167. The quality of teaching is good overall. However, examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen during the inspection especially for pupils in Years 7 and 8. The musical knowledge of the teacher and high quality demonstrations ensures that pupils want to learn, take pride in their work and are well motivated to reach high standards. During a lesson for pupils in Year 8, they rehearsed syncopated rhythmic patterns as a class to develop their understanding of Caribbean music. Once they were secure in their understanding of the genre they composed and performed their own compositions using the knowledge gained at the start of the lesson. Activities are linked so that time is not wasted and learning time is maximised. Skills are practised regularly and developed systematically.

168. Lessons are planned carefully so that all ability groups work to their potential. More competent pupils who have instrumental lessons are encouraged to use their own instruments for group work though some choose to use other instruments. Pupils in Year 7, familiar with keyboards preferred to develop their performing skills using a glockenspiel. A singing lesson with pupils in Year 6 was delivered enthusiastically with a strong emphasis on vocal technique, posture and diction. The key points of singing were reinforced regularly through

appropriate songs which pupils enjoyed singing. Pupils are expected to use technical language combined with good questioning helps pupils develop their answers and give justifications for them. Occasionally, when lessons are taught without giving pupils clear guidance and structure for their practical work, progress in these lessons is barely satisfactory as pupils struggle to complete the task, or loose interest in the lesson. At present there are insufficient resources for information and communication technology so pupils skills in this area are lower than expected.

169. Pupils have very good attitudes to music and enjoy their lessons. Many pupils take part in the variety of extra curricular activities and instrumental lessons they are offered. Ensembles perform regularly and the music played reflects a wide range of musical styles. Members of the renaissance recorder group are familiar with early music have the advantage of using crumhorns to gain a real understanding of how this music sounded originally. All pupils are encouraged to reflect, discuss their work and enjoy the social opportunities afforded by performing. This means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is considerably enhanced.
170. The leadership and management of the recently appointed head of department are good. Development of the department is planned and she is working to address key issues from the previous inspection that had been neglected. Nevertheless, improvement since last inspection has been satisfactory. Already completed is a revision of the scheme of work to ensure that lessons are suitable for all pupils, and also to develop a comprehensive assessment system that builds a musical profile of each pupil. At present it is not possible to record pupils' practical work, as the department does not have any suitable recording facilities. Some music lessons are taught in non-specialist rooms with limited musical facilities. Overall accommodation is not adequate, with nowhere for pupils to work in small groups; ventilation is ineffective and rooms becoming very stuffy, which makes it difficult for pupils to learn well. Space for instrumental teachers is limited with teaching sometimes conducted in cluttered and poorly ventilated rooms and this has an adverse effect on standards. There is a need to invest in new full sized keyboards and also to provide sufficient ICT equipment and programs for all pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good

Strengths

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8.
- Teaching and learning are good, with planning well for a range of activities to allow all groups of pupils to learn well.
- Teachers have a strong commitment to improvement.
- The very good extra curricular programme provides opportunities for all pupils to extend their learning.
- There are good relationships and positive attitudes of pupils to their work.

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Curricular links with partner first schools to improve skills that may be taken onwards.
- The quality of facilities, especially the surface of the hard court area to ensure regular availability and quality of practice.
- The use of assessment data for target setting and monitoring pupils' progress.

171. In the teachers' assessments taken at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 in 2002, the pupils achieved results that were above the national average. There was no significant difference in the results for boys and girls. Trends in results are in line with the national average. High attaining pupils, including the talented, achieve well in a range of sports at district, county and sometimes regional levels. Pupils achieve particularly well in football, athletics and cross-country running.
172. Standards seen in lessons and the work of Year 6 pupils are above average. This represents good achievement, given these pupils' average attainment on entry in Year 5. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve beyond expectations, because teachers plan work that is appropriate for all levels of attainment. The very good extra-curricular programme allows talented pupils to refine their skills. Most Year 6 pupils understand the reasons for warm-ups; they show good safety awareness and a range of individual skills. They plan performance well in dance and gymnastics. The highest attaining pupils use more refined skills to regularly outmanoeuvre opponents. Their work in the aesthetic aspects is characterised by high levels of creativity, control and timing. The standards of a small minority are below average. Their main barriers to progress are poor hand-eye co-ordination and body management skills and lack of spatial awareness.
173. Standards by the end of Year 8 are further above expected levels. This represents continued good achievement across Years 7 and 8. Pupils consolidate previous learning and develop a good understanding of technique, tactics and rules. They have a good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Most are developing good independent learning skills; for instance, in a Year 8 basketball lesson pupils planned their own warm-ups and evaluated peer performance well. Higher attaining pupils use good tactical awareness to consistently outmanoeuvre opponents. They understand how to improve performance and are successful in extra-curricular sport. The standards of a small minority are below average. They understand basic techniques and rules, but lack the necessary spatial and tactical awareness to make progress in game situations. Their body management and creative skills in dance are poor. Most pupils in all years show good levels of numeracy and literacy; they confidently use scoring systems and accurately measure performance. Listening skills are good and pupils are confident in oral work. Pupils' ICT skills in the subject are underdeveloped, due to lack of opportunity.
174. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Very good management of pupils creates a purposeful and safe learning environment. Teachers' specialist knowledge and schemes of work that build on previous

learning, promote good progress across the age range. Work planned is appropriate for pupils at all levels of attainment. In a Year 7 health related fitness lesson, lower attaining pupils made progress beyond expectations, because of modified tasks, simplified instructions and good demonstrations. The learning of higher attaining pupils, including the talented, is accelerated by extension tasks, grouping and extra-curricular activities. Opportunities for independent learning are good in most lessons. In a Year 6 gymnastics lesson, pupils planned their own warm-ups, composed sequences of movement and evaluated performance. Their progress in such tasks is good. Teaching in a few lessons, is sometimes more prescriptive and pupils are given fewer opportunities to explore their own ideas.

175. Pupils in all years have good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills. They are given opportunities to measure and record performance and to use scoring systems. Teachers emphasise key words and are adept in their use of questioning. These methods improve the technical vocabulary, speaking skills and ability to listen of pupils across the attainment levels. The subject provides few opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills. Their positive attitudes and good relationships enhance pupils' learning. Boys, girls, pupils with special educational needs and the talented, all make good progress.
176. Leadership and management are good. The department has a strong commitment to improvement and success. Good procedures are in place to monitor, evaluate and improve standards. The curriculum more than meets statutory requirements. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The good standards of teaching and attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and athletics facilities reinstated. In order to improve standards further, the department needs to develop the use of ICT, improve curricular links with partner first schools, make more use of assessment data to set targets and monitor pupils' progress and improve facilities, particularly the inadequate hard court surface.