

INSPECTION REPORT

THE RYDON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Storrington, Pulborough

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126067

Headteacher: Mrs E Jenkin

Reporting inspector: Mr A Shield
3569

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th October 2002

Inspection number: 249256

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Intermediate deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 10 to 13 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rock Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Linfield

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3569	Mr A Shield	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14214	Ms G Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the schoolwork in partnership with parents?
15268	Mr J English	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17530	Ms M Cureton	Team inspector	English as an additional language English	
12762	Mr R Catchpole	Team inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality Science	
8503	Mr A Allfree	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
30743	Mr N Cowell	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs	
32115	Mr J Foster	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
1085	Mr J Laver	Team inspector	History Physical education	
101942	Ms A Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education Citizenship	
10679	Mr M. Aston	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rydon Community College is a mixed intermediate school for pupils aged 10 – 13, situated in Storrington near Pulborough in West Sussex. It draws its pupils from Storrington and from neighbouring villages. Most pupils are from relatively advantaged social and economic backgrounds. At around four per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There are 470 pupils on roll, about the same size as other middle deemed secondary schools. There are slightly more boys than girls on roll although this varies from year to year. Numbers on roll have been increasing in recent years. Attainment on entry overall is average and the full range of ability is represented in the school. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is just below average, with 101 pupils (22 per cent) on the register of special educational needs. Most of these are for learning difficulties although there are also some with emotional and behavioural problems. Ten pupils have statements of special educational needs; this is about average. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, and although five pupils have English as an additional language, none of these is at an early stage of language acquisition.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Although standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average, by the time the pupils leave in Year 8, they are above average and pupils are achieving well. Good progress is made throughout the school as a result of consistently good teaching. The effective leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by her staff and governors, is promoting continuing improvement. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is an inclusive community; good relationships, a friendly atmosphere and a commitment to the care of all pupils, alongside effective links with the wider community, help to promote achievement.
- Good leadership and management are ensuring a common sense of purpose and a commitment to improve further.
- Effective links with partner schools ensure a smooth transition between the different phases of schooling.
- Good teaching overall is leading to most pupils making good progress.
- The very good attitudes of pupils towards learning helps to ensure a positive approach.
- The very good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities helps to broaden pupils' learning opportunities.

What could be improved

- The range of teaching and learning styles to ensure more consistently high levels of challenge in lessons for pupils of all abilities.
- The consistent use of assessment to identify areas of underachievement and target support in a more focused way.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall improvement since the last inspection in June 1997 has been good. Although performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 has improved, the improvement has not been as fast as the national trend. Above average standards have been maintained for pupils when they leave at the end of Year 8. The quality of teaching has improved, with fewer unsatisfactory lessons, and a higher proportion of very good lessons observed than during the last inspection. Key issues from the previous inspection have

been tackled rigorously. There have been marked improvements in the provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and personal and social education. School policies are now much more consistently applied as a result of tighter management procedures. The provision for spiritual development is now good, although the school still does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
End of Key Stage 2 tests	C	C	C	E	

Standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2001 taken at the end of Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's performance was well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science. However the school only takes the pupils for one year before taking the tests, and the good teaching has had a relatively short time to impact on the pupils' performance. The comparison with similar schools is not therefore fair. Overall results have improved over the last few years, but not as fast as the improving national trend. Results improved further in 2002. In 2002, the challenging targets the school set were exceeded in English, though not quite met in mathematics.

In work seen during the inspection, attainment in English was above average in both Year 6 and Year 8, while in mathematics standards were average in Year 6 and above average in Year 8. In science, attainment was above average in Year 6 and average in Year 8. In most other subjects, attainment is broadly in line with the national average in Year 6, and above average in Year 8, reflecting the progress made through the school. Pupils' achievements given their attainment on entry are good. The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities also achieve well. Both boys and girls achieve well, but there are some boys who underachieve. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic about the school overall and learning in lessons. Positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to the progress the pupils make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Many examples of thoughtful and sensitive behaviour both in and out of classrooms were witnessed during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships amongst the whole school community contribute strongly to pupils' very good personal development and the school's values.
Attendance	Good. Overall levels of absence are below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Year 6	Years 7 and 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.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Strengths of the teaching include the very good relationships between staff and pupils and effective classroom and behaviour management which encourage pupils to respond positively. Planning is mostly detailed and thorough, and teachers clearly identify what it is that they expect pupils to know, understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson. Where teaching is satisfactory and not good, it is because the range of teaching and learning styles is limited and does not involve the pupils in active learning.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Teaching is usually well planned to meet the needs of all pupils, but not consistently well in all subjects. Pupils' learning is good in almost all lessons. Their learning is characterised by a keen and lively interest in their work. They work hard and conscientiously.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The breadth and balance of the curriculum is good. The very good range of extra-curricular activities contributes strongly to the range of opportunities for learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' individual needs are well catered for through a programme of withdrawal and support in lessons. Progress is good in a number of subjects, although in relation to the literacy and numeracy targets set, progress is only satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision, particularly for the pupils' social education, makes a strong contribution to pupils' good personal development through the school. The school's values are reflected in its caring and sympathetic working atmosphere.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Teachers know and care for their pupils well. Comprehensive and thorough procedures for assessing and monitoring individual pupils' progress are in place. The use of assessment data to monitor progress and set targets is less consistent.

The school works successfully to involve parents and to work in partnership to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Effective leadership by the headteacher is providing clear educational direction and inspires the trust of the whole school community. She is well supported by her senior team and middle managers.

Aspect	Comment
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are committed and hardworking. They have good procedures for monitoring the school's work, and through their regular visits and meetings, governors have good insights into the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's procedures for monitoring and self-evaluation are thorough and increasingly effective.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school applies the principles of best value to its spending decisions, and good budgetary planning closely reflects identified educational priorities.

The school is adequately staffed, including support staff, and the teaching is supported by a good level of resources, including computers. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and provides an attractive and welcoming environment for learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and that they are making good progress • Their children enjoy coming to school • Behaviour is good • The school is well led and managed and is very approachable • The school provides an extensive range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small minority do not feel well informed about the progress their children are making • A few think that the school does not give the right amount of homework

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, although a small number are critical of the information given concerning progress and of the amount of homework set. Inspectors judge that parents are kept well informed about the progress their children are making, and that the amount of homework given is about right. The school is reviewing the timing of the issue of annual reports.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school in Year 6, teacher assessments and cognitive ability tests, taken after the pupils have started, indicate that attainment is average, and that pupils of all abilities are represented. Scores in the verbal tests are slightly lower than those in non-verbal tests. Results of the optional tests taken by pupils in Year 5 while at their First school confirm that pupils' attainment in writing is lower than their attainment in reading or mathematics, although not significantly.
2. At the end of Year 6 in 2001, the latest year for which national comparisons are available, standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science were all broadly in line with the national average. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the performance in mathematics and science was below average and in English it was well below average. However, by the time pupils at Rydon take the tests, they have been in the school for less than one year. The comparison with similar schools is not therefore a fair one. Progress through this year is satisfactory, but the good teaching through Year 6 has had a relatively short time to make a significant impact on their achievement at this stage. Higher attaining pupils achieved their potential and reached higher levels in all three subjects. Twenty-five per cent of pupils reached Level 5 in English, and 36 per cent reached this level in science; percentages which are close to the average nationally. In mathematics, 31 per cent of pupils reached Level 5, a figure which is above the national average. Girls have done consistently better than boys in English, although in both mathematics and science, boys' and girls' results are much closer and not significantly different. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds make similar progress.
3. Results in 2002, improved in both English and science and remained about the same in mathematics. In English 86 per cent of pupils reached the expected Level 4 and 36 per cent the higher Level 5. This is a particularly good achievement for pupils and a reflection of the good teaching they are receiving in Year 6. Work seen during the inspection confirms the improving performance of pupils, not only in English, but in mathematics and also in science where recent staffing changes are already making a positive impact on the quality of provision. Overall results in the period since the last inspection up to 2001 have been improving, but not as fast as the national improving trend. Results in 2002 indicate a stronger trend upwards.
4. As a result of continuing good progress through Years 7 and 8, standards overall by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 8 are above average. Both boys and girls achieve well, although there is a very small number of boys who underachieve, largely because of less positive attitudes. Their writing skills in particular are less well developed and less care is taken with presentation of their work. The school is aware of this issue and has taken on a number of strategies to address the causes.
5. Year 6 targets set by the school in 2002 were ambitious. They were exceeded in English, but not quite met in mathematics. Targets for 2003 and beyond had not been set at the time of the inspection.
6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory through the school and very good in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Teachers are aware of the special needs of pupils and take these into account in

general preparation of work but in most subjects do not provide sufficiently different tasks. However, In English, good account is taken of pupils' needs and work planned is well matched to individual pupils as it is in geography and religious education. In most subjects, pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress, better when they are supported in classes by learning support assistants. Some particularly good support was witnessed, for example, in Year 7 German classes. Pupils also learn very well in the special educational needs areas when withdrawn to work with specialist staff. In this situation, they progress as well or better than expected. However, the lack of planning which takes account of their particular learning needs in classes where there is no support, is affecting their achievements.

7. The school identifies its gifted and talented pupils, and higher attaining pupils usually make good progress. Pupils are mostly given challenging work, but in English and mathematics, some higher attaining pupils are not always given work which pushes them to achieve even higher standards.
8. In English, standards are above average in work seen in both Years 6 and 8, and pupils' achievements are good given the language and literacy skills with which they enter the school. Pupils' listening skills are above average, and many examples of concentrated listening were observed during the inspection. Speaking skills are also above average, and pupils often make strong and confident oral contributions in class. Reading skills are above average, and most pupils are fluent, expressive and confident. They research information and develop good levels of subject specific vocabulary through the use of key words. Standards of writing vary, and while higher attaining pupils write well and often with imagination, others have difficulty with extended writing, particularly the boys. Standards of handwriting and presentation are usually good.
9. In mathematics, standards are close to the average in Year 6, and above average in Year 8. Pupils' achievements are good. Most pupils are able to use and apply numerical skills well, although some pupils lack strategies to calculate simple additions and subtractions mentally. Other aspects, including pupils' knowledge of shape, space and their ability to handle data are good. However, pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills are less well developed.
10. Standards in science are above average in Year 6, and average in Year 8. Pupils' achievements are good in Year 6, and satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. Pupils understand the principles of a fair test and most are able to make predictions and record observations accurately.
11. In other subjects, in work seen during the inspection in Year 6, standards in design and technology, French, art and design and religious education were above average. Standards in all other subjects were about average. After just one year in the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory given their prior attainment on entry. Most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and achievement overall is good in English and mathematics and in most other subjects. Progress accelerates through the school and in most subjects, pupils' achievements are more consistently good in Years 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in a number of subjects, although in relation to the literacy and numeracy targets set for them, progress is only satisfactory. There are no pupils with English as an additional language who are at an early stage of language acquisition.
12. In work seen during the inspection, standards in Year 8 are above average in geography, information and communication technology, design and technology (resistant materials) and religious education, and they are well above average in

French, German and art and design; standards are broadly in line with the average in design and technology (food technology), history, music and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Most pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to learning and are very well behaved. They are really keen to do their best and enjoy taking part in the wide range of opportunities available. Pupils share a strong sense of school identity and are very proud of being members of the school. They come to school in a positive frame of mind and strongly support the school motto 'Opportunity, Confidence, Success'. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and are based on mutual trust and respect. Pupils speak highly of their teachers and feel confident about asking them for help or clarification when necessary. This atmosphere of support and understanding creates a good climate for learning, encouraging pupils to work hard and make good progress.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. They respond very well to the opportunities for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development which the school provides. Pupils increasingly appreciate how their actions impact upon others. As they move through the school, they learn to understand intangible concepts such as the value of friendship and, through the performing arts, develop their expressive and creative abilities. In response to a concerted effort by their teachers, pupils' self-esteem and confidence steadily grow. They enjoy extra-curricular clubs and relish the sense of achievement and pride they feel when, for example, they sing in the choir or perform during a school production. As they get older, pupils are increasingly able to distinguish right from wrong and develop the ability to make reasoned and responsible decisions on moral dilemmas. Pupils collaborate amicably and constructively during lessons, in sports teams and on other school activities.
15. Pupils are usually very well behaved during lessons. Teachers are consistent in their expectations of behaviour and the result is a lively but harmonious community. The school has a good atmosphere and pupils work hard and do their best. During lessons, pupils often work purposefully and constructively on their own, in small groups or pairs. For example, during a drama lesson, Year 6 pupils improvised a scene from Roald Dahl's story 'The Witches'. Although they were eager to participate, each group waited their turn patiently. They tried their very best to portray the characters, adopting the hard, metallic voice of the witch and the body language of the various animals they were turned into. The school expects and achieves very good behaviour and has established a very effective blend of high expectations and praise. In between lessons and when in large groups such as assemblies or during lunchtime, pupils behave very well, despite the often cramped space in the public areas of the school. Pupils usually respond sensibly and safely and show a respect and consideration for other people. A small number of pupils, often boys, in Year 7, however, are not as highly motivated and they can be challenging during lessons. Teachers usually cope well but the reluctance of these pupils to apply themselves makes life hard work for their teachers and very tiring for their more interested and co-operative classmates.
16. The school has a very successful policy of social and educational inclusion and relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good. Although the younger pupils say that bullying does occasionally occur, they are confident that teachers deal with it firmly. There have been no permanent exclusions over the last school year and the number of fixed-period exclusions is below the national average.

17. Pupils with special educational needs display the same interest and involvement in lessons as other pupils. Their behaviour is good. In work with learning support teachers and assistants, pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. A friendly, working atmosphere characterises work in special educational needs. Good relationships with each other and the teacher improve the quality of concentration and progress such as when reading parts in a play. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all lesson activities and well supported by others. In discussions with adults and in answering questions in class, special educational needs pupils, encouraged by the positive atmosphere the school engenders, show assurance in putting forward their own point of view. In geography for instance, a very accurate explanation of soil erosion volunteered by a boy with severe learning and behaviour difficulties was valued both by the teacher and others in the class. This exemplifies the success of the policy of inclusion and the opportunities for personal development in the school.
18. Attendance was above average at the time of the previous inspection and this continues to be the case. Pupils usually arrive in good time for their lessons and time keeping during the day is good. There is no difference between the attendance of boys and girls or between the few pupils from ethnic minorities. In response to a concerted effort, the number of unauthorised absences has fallen over the last year. Although it continues to be just above the national average, this is largely the result of poor attendance by a small number of pupils. The school does everything it can to discourage parents from taking term time holidays, however, a small minority continues to do so.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The overall high quality of teaching reported on at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. Only two lessons were judged unsatisfactory, and in three out of five lessons the teaching was judged to be good. In one in four it was very good or better.
20. Pupils are making good progress and their learning in lessons overall is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and this means that they try very hard and work with high levels of concentration and motivation. Some pupils are less confident in knowing how well they are doing and what they should do to improve.
21. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics and science; it is also good in geography, physical education, ICT and religious education. In art and design, French and German, it is very good. The quality of teaching in music, design and technology and history is satisfactory overall, although there are good features. Characteristics of the good teaching are the high expectations of what individual pupils can achieve, effective planning which makes it clear what is to be learnt during the lesson and which builds on the prior attainment levels of individual pupils in the class, very good relationships and classroom management skills. There is a very close link between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning, and pupils' progress in lessons is directly related to the quality of teaching.
22. The teaching of literacy is good. The National Literacy Strategy is being used well to set clear objectives for learning, to plan interesting activities and to consolidate learning through review and evaluation. Opportunities to reinforce literacy skills are taken in all subjects. Teachers emphasise correct spelling and grammar and good presentation in all subjects. Vocabulary is well developed, particularly in English and French. Key subject specific words are promoted in many subjects, including mathematics and

music, although this is not done consistently enough across all subjects. Many good examples of writing for different purposes and audiences were observed during the inspection. Opportunities for pupils to develop extended writing skills are good in English, but unsatisfactory elsewhere.

23. The teaching of numeracy is good and supports learning in those areas of the curriculum where it is needed. Good application of number is found in a number of subjects. In ICT, pupils calculated profits and losses, and drew relevant graphs. In physical education, pupils collected data in a lesson on health-related fitness, which was passed to the mathematics teachers for processing with the pupils in mathematics lessons, a good example of inter-departmental co-operation. In science in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher and class held an extended discussion on the appropriateness of different ways of representing data. In geography, the pupils used their knowledge of scales fluently when doing work on climate change.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, and good in specialist withdrawal sessions. Although some teachers use the range of assessment information well to ensure that work is suitably matched to pupils' needs, this is not consistently done in all subjects. Some good practice was observed in English, art and design and geography, but this good practice is not widespread. Teachers and support assistants do work closely together and the quality of support is effective when available. However more could be done to ensure individual progress is monitored carefully and information on progress shared in order to plan the next step. Individual education plans are well written and provide challenging and achievable targets for individual pupils, who are themselves involved in the review of progress being made. These individual education and behaviour plans are effective in ensuring that teachers know the needs of particular pupils, but teachers do not always use them to plan suitable work.
25. It is the expectations that teachers have of what pupils can achieve that distinguishes the best teaching from the less effective. Where expectations are high, pupils are challenged, the pace of lessons is brisk and the pupils' learning is at least good. This good learning takes place within a well-planned and well-ordered lesson that meets the needs of all pupils, taking account of their different starting points. For example, in an excellent Year 6 French lesson, the pupils were learning how to make simple requests and how to say they have not got something. The teacher gave very clear instructions and explanations, followed up by skilful questioning to challenge pupils further. The range of teaching and learning methods ensured all pupils were fully involved. The teacher was constantly checking on progress, while the class was having such fun that learning came easily. The pupils were unafraid of making errors, spoke confidently and worked together enthusiastically throughout. Excellent attitudes led to excellent learning, and the teacher's very good relationships with the pupils and effective use of praise ensured that pupils were encouraged. Above all, however, it was the high expectations of what all pupils could achieve, which led to very good gains in knowledge.
26. A Year 7 physical education lesson observed provided another example of very high expectations leading to very good learning. This was a girls' gymnastics lesson in the gym, which is barely adequate for the size of the group. However this was a very well planned lesson which effectively challenged pupils at their own level. The learning objective was clearly outlined to the pupils at the start, and as a consequence they all had a clear idea of how to progress from one aspect to the next. The teaching was brisk and authoritative, which motivated the pupils and gave them the confidence to achieve. Throughout, a productive working atmosphere was sustained. The teacher

monitored the work of individual groups very well and gave immediate and very good feedback on how they could refine and improve their routines. Throughout the lesson there was a good emphasis on progression and an insistence that the pupils moved on to develop new ideas. This was excellent teaching in which an emphasis on all the key elements of planning, performance and evaluation ensured very good progress.

27. Whilst these lessons illustrate some of the very best teaching, many other lessons incorporate some of these characteristics: tasks set on the basis of prior learning; varied activities; challenge; and active learning. In around two out of five lessons, teaching, while satisfactory, lacks some of these qualities, and often involves pupils in routine work that does not stimulate their interest and their thinking in quite the same way. Learning is satisfactory but could be better.
28. Sometimes there is little sense of purpose and urgency. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, the pupils were working on scales and identifying scales from pictures of everyday life. There was a very good working atmosphere throughout and the pupils settled quickly and quietly to work when they first entered the class. Pupils made satisfactory progress, but the work was insufficiently demanding and most pupils were able to get everything right. Tasks were not set to challenge pupils at their own level, and the teacher's questions failed to get pupils to explain their thinking or describe what they were doing. Pupils made progress but it might have been more, and in this case, expectations were not high enough to ensure pupils' learning was maximised.
29. In other lessons, there is sometimes a tendency for the teacher to talk for too long and a failure to involve the pupils in their learning more actively and independently of the teacher. In a Year 7 science lesson when pupils were revising their knowledge and understanding of heating and cooling, the lesson began well and pupils responded positively. However, as the lesson progressed, the teacher failed to engage the pupils in an activity which the pupils could get their teeth into. The teacher seemed nervous of allowing the pupils to work on their own. As a result, while learning was satisfactory, it failed to enthuse and inspire.
30. In general, the teaching is adapted to suit the needs of the range of pupils in the class. This is because the teachers know individual pupils well and are able to respond well to their individual learning needs. Grouping by prior attainment in mathematics, modern foreign languages and science is helping teachers to plan particular activities to match the learning needs of specific groups. Elsewhere, however, and even sometimes within mathematics and science, as in the case of the mathematics lesson above, work is not planned with sufficient thought to ensure pupils are set tasks which challenge them at their own level. As a result, work is sometimes either too easy for the higher attaining pupils or too difficult for lower attaining pupils.
31. Most lessons begin with a clear identification of the learning intentions, carefully explained to the pupils. The most effective lessons returned to these not just at the end but at various points during the lessons to remind pupils of the learning objective and to assess progress. Homework is used to support learning in a number of different ways, and in most cases, the quality and quantity set is appropriate.
32. Characteristic of much of the teaching is the very good relationships established between staff and pupils. Many teachers have established trusting and productive relationships with their pupils. As a consequence, good learning takes place in a friendly atmosphere. Classroom management and discipline are very good, and examples of unsatisfactory or challenging behaviour are rare. Instances of lack of concentration or restlessness amongst the pupils are also uncommon.

33. Teachers are increasingly confident in their use of ICT. Improved access to computers is ensuring that computers are increasingly seen as a natural tool to enhance learning. Some good use of computers was observed in art and design where pupils were using an electronic sketchpad to refine their ideas, in English to present their work in a wordprocessed format, and in music, design and technology and physical education. However, despite the good number of computers in the school, opportunities are sometimes missed to use ICT to support learning, particularly in science and mathematics.
34. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are generally good. The school deploys teachers effectively to teach to their specialist subject strengths. Its use of advanced skilled teachers in art and design and mathematics to support others is beginning to impact on the quality of learning across all years.
35. Marking is satisfactory overall in most subjects. In English, mathematics and science much marking is regular and supportive with detailed guidance on how to improve. Sometimes however, marking concentrates too much on the correction of spellings and lacks specific guidance to the pupil on what should be done next. During lessons the assessment of pupils' progress is not always being used to evaluate how well the learning is progressing and to move the learning forward. Pupils themselves are not always sure of how well they are doing and what they should be doing to improve. As a result pupils are sometimes unsure of their progress and how they might reach higher levels of attainment.

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

36. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a very wide range of experiences and opportunities for developing skills and understanding, and encouraging personal development. All the subjects in the National Curriculum are taught, with a strong emphasis on English and mathematics in Year 6; numeracy and literacy are taught for one hour each day, which represents about 40 per cent of all curriculum time. Almost all the pupils learn a modern foreign language, and in Years 7 and 8 they take up a second one. Provision of time for design and technology is below average. Since the last inspection the school has tackled the issue of inadequate provision for ICT, although some parts of this have only recently been completed, and have had limited impact so far.
37. The main form of organisation for teaching is in mixed-ability classes, which are used for most subjects. However, mathematics classes are set by ability from Year 6, and science and modern foreign languages from Year 7. In general these arrangements support the teaching of the curriculum in all subjects. Strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy skills are good. In mathematics, an advanced skills teacher provides useful additional resources and support for members of the department.
38. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support is effectively targeted through well-designed individual education plans alongside good guidance for staff on strategies to address particular types of physical, learning or behaviour difficulties. Provision for the ten pupils with statements of educational needs is good and is formally reviewed annually in accordance with the code of practice. Annual reviews are attended by both parents and pupils; pupils are thereby closely involved in monitoring and planning their own progress. Individual education and behaviour plans

are effective in ensuring that teachers know the needs of particular pupils. However, individual targets are not sufficiently reflected in lesson planning.

39. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is well planned and successfully builds on pupils' knowledge and experiences as they move from Year 6 to Year 8. No lessons took place during the inspection. Inspectors, however, were able to review the recently re-written scheme of work, talk with pupils and look at the work they have undertaken. The programme includes appropriate provision for sex and drug education and includes a wide range of opportunities that enable pupils to explore a diverse range of moral, social and health issues. Visits from external organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the fire brigade are included. Individual class tutors teach PSHE and they are suitably trained. The programme is well supported by the award system, residential experiences, visits and extra-curricular activities. Criticisms of the PSHE programme made at the time of the last inspection have been thoroughly tackled.
40. Links with partner First schools are very good. There is frequent contact with teachers, agreements on curriculum planning to speed integration of the pupils on entry to the school, and a range of events that enable pupils to visit the school and get to know the teachers before they start. The transfer of performance data on the pupils is good. Links with the main destination secondary school are satisfactory. There are regular, though less frequent, meetings between the staff of the two schools to co-ordinate transfer arrangements and discuss curriculum issues.
41. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good, and the school was awarded the Schools' Curriculum Award for its community involvement in May 2002. The school is a centre for community education and links and collaboration have been very close. There is a very good range of extra-curricular clubs, activities and visits, which are fully inclusive and well supported by the pupils. Special events, including subject specific activities such as the mathematics challenge days, take place for pupils in the school. The annual school production involves a large number of pupils and staff, and is always very well received. Other links with the community include visits from a wide range of people, including business people, diocesan youth leaders and the fire brigade. Gifted and talented pupils have a wide range of enrichment opportunities available to them, including a very good local authority organised programme of events.
42. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is an improvement on the findings at the last inspection.
43. The provision for spiritual development is good, despite the fact that the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship and that there are some missed opportunities in some subjects. However, assemblies do make a good contribution to moral and social development as observed in a Year 7 assembly on choices. Spiritual development in religious education is very good. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to consider the ultimate questions of the purpose and value of life. The school climate encourages all pupils to have respect for themselves and others. Pupils are developing their creative abilities in drama, music and art and design but elsewhere in the curriculum there are missed opportunities for spiritual development.
44. The provision for moral development is good. The school has a clear code of conduct, consistently applied, which forms the lynch pin of everyday life. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils promotes fairness, conflict resolution as well as encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils are given good

opportunities to consider moral issues in English through a study of literature. In geography, they view the construction of the Aswan dam from both the farmers and electricity users' points of view. Pupils are also taught through the PSHE programme to consider the difference between right and wrong and how the victims of crime may feel.

45. The provision for social development is very good through the school's strong promotion of community and inclusive values. The house system enables a large number of pupils to be involved in competitive sport where they learn to play by the rules and accept impartial decisions. In addition to the annual production there is a house drama competition involving pupils from each year working together. There are opportunities for individuals in Year 7 to volunteer to be 'buddies' to reassure Year 6 pupils in the playground, and for Year 8 pupils to help with parents' evenings. Each Year 7 class has a 'green' afternoon when they are off timetable and help with an environmental task on the site to raise their awareness of environmental issues. Each year group raises money for a charity of their choice. Pupils undertake elections each year and vote for their house or sports captains, as well as their class representatives for the school council. They meet once a month and pupils really appreciate having a 'voice' in the running of the school. Council members appoint a chairperson, secretary and treasurer and run the meetings in a very efficient and business-like manner. This forum provides a valuable opportunity for class representatives to assume responsibility and to use their initiative. The pupils involved, however, are elected in Year 6 for three years and this means that only a handful of pupils are given the opportunity to participate.
46. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture and increasingly appreciate the diversity of other ways of life and traditions. Theatre visits, concert going and visits to art galleries enable pupils to broaden their cultural understanding. The school organises visits to France and Germany, enabling pupils to gain first-hand knowledge of life in another European country. The school has a well-established link with a school in Malawi, providing pupils with a very good opportunity to understand the life and culture of an African country. In addition, a multicultural day is organised and pupils experience the drama, dance, art, music and crafts of an entirely different culture. The art and design and religious education departments arrange visits to local churches, a synagogue and a Hindu temple.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. Pupils are very well looked after at school. The role of the form tutor is central to the pastoral system and pupils receive good personal and academic guidance and support. Links with partner First schools are very close and incoming Year 6 pupils receive a warm welcome. Senior members of staff also meet any other pupils who arrive during the school year. In this way, any concerns they may have are addressed at a very early stage. This helps to ensure that all pupils are able to settle down quickly and are in a good frame of mind for learning. Routine health and safety procedures are in place and statutory requirements are met in full. Child protection procedures are good.
48. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers know their pupils well because year teams remain intact as pupils move through the school. Tutors closely monitor their pupils' attendance, punctuality and their personal planners. As well as encouraging a basic work ethic, this also helps them to spot any personal problems at an early stage. Twice a year, pupils have profiling

sessions with their tutors. These meetings follow a set format and pupils are made to reflect upon their personal interests, as well as strengths and weaknesses in their organisation and motivation. They also consider any successes and difficulties they may be experiencing in their work and set targets for improvement. As a result, pupils have a very clear idea of how well they are progressing and whether or not they have managed to meet their previous targets. This structured system of self-review helps pupils and tutors alike to monitor how well they have got on and to identify when additional support is needed.

49. Procedures for promoting behaviour are good. Members of staff promote the school's code of conduct very consistently and provide very good examples of how to behave. Pupils, therefore, have a clear idea of what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour. The school's high expectations are reflected in the very good behaviour seen during the inspection. There are close ties with outside agencies and a wide range of support is available for pupils who are experiencing particular difficulties. The school's policy for social and educational inclusion is very successful and pupils who are at risk of exclusion, or those who encounter social problems, receive very good support. This is reflected in the fact that there have been no permanent exclusions during the most recent school year. Procedures for dealing with bullying are effective and parents and pupils are confident that such behaviour is dealt with firmly. Should pupils behave inappropriately, or be late to class, they may be placed on a weekly report or given a detention. This system of sanctions is very flexible and can be adapted to suit the individual misdemeanour.
50. The school devotes considerable time to the monitoring and promotion of attendance and current procedures are very good. Overall trends are monitored, as well as the attendance of individual tutor groups and pupils. The education welfare officer liaises each fortnight with the individual heads of year and the school is scrupulous in following up each and every unexplained absence. While all such absentees are telephoned on the first day, those who achieve perfect attendance are rewarded with a congratulatory certificate.
51. There are good arrangements for establishing the attainment of pupils prior to their joining the school in Year 6. Early testing of reading and spelling and the use of assessment data from primary schools ensure that all teachers have good information on which to base Year 6 work. Testing of cognitive ability is used effectively to set targets for pupils, including those with special educational needs, and to establish objectives for teaching and learning in different subjects. Twice termly whole school monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress is now routine. In some subjects, teacher assessments are not securely enough based on the assessment of units of work designed to test performance against National Curriculum criteria. Reports to parents include clear information on attainment using National Curriculum levels. The school has improved its assessment practices since the last inspection and practice across the school is now much more consistent.
52. The school is beginning to make effective use of its assessment data to set targets for pupils and for monitoring progress in different subjects. Use of standardised assessment is being extended to Year 7 to provide data for more accurate target setting and to monitor progress more objectively. Assessment data is very accurately and effectively used by the special educational needs co-ordinator to identify pupils with special educational needs and to inform provision to address their needs. There is good tracking and analysis of pupils' progress in reading and spelling and where sufficient progress is made pupils are removed from the register of special educational needs. Teachers have good access to assessment data and are increasingly using it

to plan effective strategies and appropriate work. However, this is not consistent across all subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. This school places great emphasis on working closely with parents and is keen to involve them as much as possible. Parents hold the school in high esteem and are pleased with almost every aspect of its work. Links with parents are good and their encouragement and support motivates their children to work hard and achieve their very best. Attendance at consultation meetings is high and they are kept closely informed about their children's progress. Although most of the parents understand the importance of regular attendance, some of the parents book family holidays during the term. The school strongly discourages this as the pupils concerned miss the work undertaken by the rest of the class and these interruptions could well place them at a disadvantage in the future.
54. This school enjoys a good reputation and is very popular. Parents' level of interest is reflected in the high rate of return of the pre-inspection questionnaire. Analysis of the responses indicates that few of the parents have any concerns and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting endorsed these positive views. However, a small minority of parents are dissatisfied with the information provided about their children's progress and the amount of homework that is set. Inspectors do not agree with these concerns; the school's current arrangements for reporting to parents and for setting homework compare well with other schools. Parents receive a detailed annual report and their children's planner contains a termly progress report. This amounts to a cumulative record of their children's achievement, along with a grade for their behaviour and the effort they are putting in. There are regular opportunities to meet with teachers and parents indicate that the school is approachable should there be any problems. Annual reports are very informative and there is also a school website. Parents are sent the weekly newsletter by e-mail.
55. The constructive involvement of parents has a positive impact on the day-to-day life of the school. The school regularly canvasses their opinions, on matters ranging from how their children travel to school, to how they would like sex education to be taught. Parents respond in great numbers and the school takes full account of their views when planning. Although there have been recent difficulties in obtaining a new committee for the Rydon Community College Association, the various fund-raising and social activities are expected to continue. Funds raised are used to enhance many aspects of school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Leadership and management are good. The school has maintained its improvement since the last inspection, and is now well placed to continue moving forward. The school's values are reflected in its commitment to good relationships and a sense of the community, working together on shared ideals and purpose. The school is socially and educationally inclusive and values individual achievement.
57. The headteacher provides the school with a clear sense of direction and purpose. She has gained the support and trust of the whole school community, including governors, parents and staff. Her vision is shared by all. She is loyally supported by her senior

team which brings considerable experience and commitment to the school. Their complementary roles enable the school to run efficiently.

58. The senior management team meets weekly. These meetings are a good forum for both strategic planning and for the day-to-day management of the school. The school's management systems are now effectively in place, and criticisms of the school's management procedures at the time of the last inspection have now been tackled. School policies are now implemented with much more consistency than was previously the case. The senior management team has a good understanding of standards and the quality of provision through its formal line management systems and the regular monitoring of lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. Performance management has been implemented successfully and is now an integral part of the school's performance review cycle. The effect of these management procedures has been to ensure a much more focused approach to quality assurance and a greater sense of working together towards agreed targets.
59. Management at all levels is at least satisfactory and more frequently, good. Curriculum co-ordinators and heads of year have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities. Several curriculum co-ordinators are providing very effective leadership of their subject, working hard to secure improvements in teaching and learning, and giving a clear lead based on a careful evaluation of standards and provision. Heads of year are taking an increasingly active role in monitoring the academic as well as the personal development of pupils, for example in the use of form tutors to set academic targets during personal profiling sessions with pupils.
60. Performance management and the professional development of staff have been effectively integrated. The emphasis on enhancing the skills of all teaching and support staff through continuous professional development is proving invaluable in raising the overall quality of teaching. The recent award of Investor in People is recognition of the priority the school places on continuing professional development. The school is making good use of available resources, but more could be done to involve the two advanced skills teachers on the staff in sharing and developing effective models of teaching and learning. The further development of teaching and learning strategies is a priority in the school's development plan.
61. The open approach to management and the concern shown to take all views into account is highly valued. Communication systems are good and a daily staff briefing ensures all staff are well informed about day-to-day issues. Staff morale is high and all staff are committed to improvement and share the school's values and ideals. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.
62. Monitoring of teaching and learning through lesson observations is carried out by senior staff and subject co-ordinators when appropriate. All teaching staff are observed and feedback ensures that the drive to ensure more consistently good standards of teaching and learning is constantly on the agenda. This has led to a more consistent approach, but more might be done to ensure best practice is shared and that standards of teaching are continually levered up.
63. The school development plan 'Fast forward together' is a comprehensive document which builds on previous years' plans and places improved pupil progress at its heart. It provides a good framework for school improvement. The plan is securely based on an audit of current standards and provision, and priorities identified are appropriate.

64. The special educational needs department is well led and managed. Systems and procedures for the management of provision for special educational needs and the meeting of statutory requirements are thorough and rigorous. The quality of provision is kept under ongoing review. Planning is good, and funding and resources are appropriately allocated.
65. Governors are committed and hard working. They are proud of the school and its close relationship with the local community. Governors bring a good range of experience and professional expertise to the school's governance. They are well informed about both day-to-day issues and more strategic planning. Governors are involved in the ratification of the school development plan and in monitoring progress towards meeting its targets. Discussions in committee and full governors' meetings are detailed and comprehensive. Governors are confident in their ability to challenge and question the senior management. Statutory requirements are largely met, although the provision of a daily act of collective worship remains unmet, and the school is currently working on its race equality policy.
66. The school's budget is being well managed, and budget planning to ensure that resources match educational priorities is good. Governors have a good overview of the budget and are kept regularly updated with monitoring statements. They monitor the educational impact of spending decisions and have a good understanding of issues related to value for money. The school seeks best value wherever possible in its spending decisions. The most recent audit of the school's financial systems and controls was in June 2002 and indicated that all controls and financial procedures were effectively in place. Designated funds, including those for special educational needs and social inclusion, are used appropriately. The school is efficiently administered and it makes good use of information systems to process data and ensure that information is readily available for governors and staff to manage the school effectively. It manages the bureaucratic demands from both local and national sources well.
67. Staffing levels overall are satisfactory throughout the school and there is a reasonable match between teachers' qualifications and experience and their deployment in most subjects. Even in Year 6 where non-specialists are teaching a wide range of subjects, it is rare for this to impact on the quality of provision. On the other hand, a number of subjects in Year 6 are taught by specialist teachers, and the benefits of having specialist teachers of science, PE, music, art and design and modern foreign languages are very positive. Only in food technology and geography are there any concerns regarding the subject skills and knowledge of the teacher adversely impacting on standards.
68. Good systems are in place for the induction of new staff and newly qualified teachers. The number and expertise of support staff are good. The school is well served by its administrative staff and there is an appropriate level of effective technician support. The help pupils with special educational needs receive from the learning support assistants is of good quality and contributes significantly to their progress.
69. Accommodation is satisfactory. The school is set in spacious grounds. Classrooms are of a good size and the available space is used well. Although parts of the school need to be updated, such as one of the science laboratories and the food technology room, the accommodation is well maintained by the premises staff. It is kept clean and tidy by the staff and respected by the pupils. Although the outdoor facilities for physical education are good, the swimming pool and indoor gym are too small for the relatively large number of pupils on roll. This means that their classes have to be split into groups

and they spend more time waiting for their turn on the equipment. As a result, pupils spend less of their lesson being physically active.

70. The quality of learning resources is good for all subjects. Course materials are up to date, well matched to the age and ability range and meet the requirements of the curriculum. Science laboratories are adequately equipped and well organised. Art rooms provide good facilities for both two- and three-dimensional work, including clay work. Though there is a satisfactory range of tools for design and technology, pupils currently work in a relatively narrow range of materials. Physical education classes benefit from the use of a digital camera and video-recording facilities to evaluate and improve performance. There has been considerable investment in computer resources and both the quality and quantity of ICT resources are now good.
71. The library provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for study and research and is well used each lunchtime and two days per week after lessons. There are a dozen computers with Internet access, and a range of CD-Roms is available. However, the library is small and its stock of books inadequate for a school of this size. It is nevertheless well organised and welcoming, and functions also as a learning resource centre. All pupils are given opportunities in lesson time to understand its use, change their personal reading books and learn how the books and computers can support their learning. The number of volumes meets recommendations, but the provision of reference books is no more than satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to maintain and improve standards, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Widen the range of teaching and learning styles to ensure more consistently high levels of challenge in lessons for pupils of all abilities by:
- ensuring that planning meets the needs of the often wide range of abilities and prior attainment in the class;
 - ensuring that pupils are actively involved in the learning;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and develop research skills;
 - continuing to develop the use of ICT in the classroom to support learning in all subjects;
 - developing more opportunities for extended writing in subjects other than English;
 - ensuring the individual education plans are used more consistently in lessons to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs;
 - ensuring that teachers ask questions which make the pupils think more deeply and explain their understanding.

Paragraphs: 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 33

- (2) Use assessment more consistently to identify areas of underachievement and target support in a more focused way by:

- ensuring that the marking of pupils' work is clear about what should be done to improve;
- ensuring that progress during lessons is monitored closely and that pupils themselves are more aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach the next level;
- continuing to develop the use of assessment data in all subjects to identify those pupils who may be underachieving and to target support more precisely.

Paragraphs: 35, 51, 52

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	18	31	33	2	0	0
Percentage	4.5	20.5	35.2	37.5	2.3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y6 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	463
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

Special educational needs	Y6 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
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	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	6.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.4

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	82	64	146

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	58	55	66
	Girls	57	50	58
	Total	115	105	124
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (81)	71 (72)	84 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	59	60	46
	Girls	55	51	47
	Total	114	111	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (78)	76 (73)	63 (73)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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
427	7	0
0	0	0
23	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	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
1	0	0
3	0	0
8	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: Y6 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1

Education support staff: Y6 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

Deployment of teachers: Y6 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	24.2
Key Stage 3	21.7

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1,308,266
Total expenditure	1,326,077
Expenditure per pupil	2,890
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,731
Balance carried forward to next year	31,920

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.6

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	463
Number of questionnaires returned	223

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	47	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	52	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	57	9	0	1
The teaching is good.	52	42	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	44	11	0	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	44	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	35	1	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	31	0	0	1

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

- Teaching and learning are good in all years
- Standards are good. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8, standards are above those expected nationally
- The subject is well led and managed

Areas for improvement

- Some higher attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to make the greatest progress of which they are capable
- Although pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, they do not make the same progress as the rest

73. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is broadly in line with the national average. They make good progress and by the time they leave at the end of Year 8, standards are significantly above those expected nationally. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above has been broadly in line, though slightly above, the national average for several years. Standards dipped in 2001, but improved in 2002 and are now significantly above the national average. Girls do better than boys. On average, over the last three years, girls' performance has been slightly above the national average for girls, and boys' performance slightly above the national average for boys.
74. Pupils' achievements through Year 6 are good and their attainment in work seen is above average. In Year 6, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They make clear and confident responses in class. Pupils collaborate confidently in pairs and small groups whenever they have the opportunity to do so. In their reading, higher attainers are already capable of paying close attention to text, which is the basis for successful literary criticism. All pupils are capable of annotating texts successfully to help them retrieve information. All can comment on aspects of style. Pupils understand the term 'genre' and know the names and key characteristics of some of them as they apply them to poems and novels. By the end of the year, all have tackled a Shakespeare play with interest and some measure of success. Pupils write in a variety of styles including letters, diaries and poetry. When their work is redrafted, a high proportion of the writing is properly punctuated, and spelling is accurate. Work is neatly presented, often with the use of information and communication technology.
75. In Years 7 and 8, pupils continue to make good progress, and their attainment is significantly above the national average. They listen attentively both to the teacher and each other. They realise that they must vary their style of speech when they address the class or speak formally to the whole school in assembly. The key skill of oral collaboration is well developed. Pupils read widely for interest and pleasure. They enjoy reading their favourite poems aloud for others to appreciate. In their study of 'The Highwayman' and the 'Lady of Shallot' they readily comment on rhyme, rhythm and vocabulary. In a passage from 'Oliver Twist' higher attaining pupils defined figurative language, and readily gave examples from the text. All, including pupils with special educational needs, produced spidergraphs in this lesson to show how the language

used by Dickens to describe the Artful Dodger is so vivid. Higher attainers successfully adapted this narrative into a play script. Pupils readily engage with information texts. Higher achievers skim read for information. In their study of autobiographical writing, all pupils readily comment on tense, style, tone and authorial voice, analytical skills which higher attainers use to inform and improve their standards of writing. Pupils write for a variety of purposes. Work is habitually and carefully redrafted and, as a result, is substantially correct. A notable feature of attainment amongst the highest attainers is the careful use of paragraphs which link together rationally to produce good prose. Pupils show a sure sense of audience in the beautifully illustrated books they have produced for five-year-old readers. Pupils use information and communication technology to present their work in striking and appropriate ways.

76. Teaching is good throughout all years and pupils learn well as a result. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They concentrate well and co-operate in their own learning. Lessons are well planned and there are clear learning objectives. In the most effective lessons, teachers are completely at home with the National Literacy Strategy. Planning for all pupils is detailed and highly effective. Pupils are greeted by name. The lesson introduction is crisp, and class management is sure. Learning objectives are shared with the class, so that all are left in no doubt as to what they must do to succeed. The pace of the lesson is brisk. Well-chosen texts form a secure and challenging basis for the work in hand, and hold pupils' attention. Teachers show extensive knowledge of the subject and share their enthusiasms, which helps motivation. There are good opportunities for pair and small group work which allow all to take an active part in the learning. Expectations of all pupils are high, and amply realised. All are enabled to achieve. Resources are of good quality and appropriate. Although some worksheets are provided for pupils with special educational needs and separate activities for those who are gifted and talented, in almost every lesson the teaching focus is on average attainers, and some lack of individual help means that pupils with special educational needs make only satisfactory progress. The slow pace of some lessons means that pupils who are gifted and talented do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
77. The curriculum is good. The National Literacy Strategy and other initiatives have been well assimilated and are being used to particularly good effect. Provision for information and communication technology is satisfactory and well planned. Pupils who fall just short of expected standards receive well-focused and highly effective lessons which enable them to catch up. Extra-curricular provision is good and specifically planned to enrich pupils' experience of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Assessment is good, and targets set for pupils are effective and appropriate.
78. Pupils' standards of literacy support learning in other subjects well. Listening skills are good in all years. Pupils are confident speakers who have no hesitation in making good oral contributions to lessons. By the end of Year 8, they have effective skills of oral collaboration which help their learning in all subjects. There are good opportunities for public performance.
79. Reading skills are good. Higher attaining pupils skim read for information. All pupils retrieve information from CD-Roms, dictionaries and reference books. Pupils have good opportunities for private reading in English and modern foreign languages. An extensive range of vocabulary is developed in English and French, with pupils making useful comparisons between the two at a very early stage of their study in Year 6. Keywords are well promoted in a range of subjects such as mathematics, but this practice could well receive more systematic development across all areas of the curriculum.

80. Pupils are taught useful planning skills using spidergraphs in subjects such as English. They are taught to take effective notes. Opportunities to develop skills of extended writing are variable but generally unsatisfactory except in English. However, some good empathetic writing was seen in geography.
81. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Co-ordination of the subject is well informed and conscientious. Monitoring of teaching, particularly in Year 6 where non-specialist tutors teach the subject, continues to raise standards. Pupils' learning is monitored on a regular basis.
82. Since the last inspection, there has been a good level of improvement. The proportion of pupils achieving higher grades has improved in the short term and was once again significantly above average in 2002. By the time they leave school in Year 8, pupils' achievement in English continues to be above national expectations. Teaching and learning have improved and are now good. The department now makes good use of data available to it in its highly effective target setting for all pupils. The department is now consistent in its level of planning, assessment and in tracking progress. Departmental targets, a result of careful audit, are appropriate and look set to raise standards further.

Drama

83. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well in drama in all years. Pupils have a good ability to create and sustain characters. They improvise with confidence and have good listening skills and sense of audience. All pupils are taught drama once each week and this enables their skills to be developed in a progressive and systematic way.
84. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are mostly very positive and they clearly enjoy the work. They have many opportunities to extend their understanding of drama beyond the work in the classroom and there are theatre visits and a house drama competition which is organised by the pupils themselves.
85. Only a limited amount of teaching was observed during the inspection. The quality varies but is mostly good. Teachers are not only knowledgeable and skilled in teaching, but they also bring an enthusiasm for the subject which sparks interest and motivates the pupils. They approach the work confidently, demonstrate by example and inspire the pupils to work purposefully and with conviction. Sometimes a tendency to dominate the lesson fails to allow the pupils themselves to give ideas and create their own scenarios. Pupils make good progress generally although the lack of opportunity for reflection and evaluation of their own and each other's performance means that critical appraisal skills are less well developed.
86. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum leader provides clear educational direction and is well supported by committed and able colleagues. The space provided for the teaching of drama is good and the resource levels are satisfactory. Drama contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social experiences as well as being a powerful influence on their personal development.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Strengths

- The teaching is good
- Pupils have a very good attitude to the subject
- There has been an overall improvement in standards over the three years
- Leadership and organisation of the department are good
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and underachievers identified and supported

Areas for improvement

- The progress of pupils in the lower attaining sets should be better
- There should be more time spent helping pupils to understand the key concepts rather than rote learning of processes
- There should be more investigational mathematics to stimulate and challenge pupils

87. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with the national average. In the year 2001 tests at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils scoring the expected Level 4 or above was in line with the national average, and well below that of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion scoring the higher Level 5 or above was above the national average and in line with that achieved by similar schools. Standards in mathematics are generally lower than those in English and on a par with those in science. There is no clear difference in the performance of boys compared to girls. Results in 2002 were broadly similar.
88. The standard of attainment in work seen during the inspection was broadly in line with the national average in Year 6, but above average in Year 8. Standards of numeracy are generally good, particularly knowledge of number bonds and multiplication tables. Pupils tend to lack a range of strategies to work out less common problems in number, particularly when doing mental arithmetic. Understanding of the properties of shape and space, and the quality of geometrical drawing is good. Year 8 pupils, of a wide range of attainment, were seen drawing very accurate triangles with ruler, compass and pencil. Most pupils can solve simple algebraic equations, but have a poor understanding of the purpose of symbols to represent numbers. Pupils have a poor understanding of the role of mathematics in investigating and pattern finding, mainly because this aspect is not covered adequately in the course.
89. Achievement, that is the progress that the pupils make during the three years at the school, is good overall. Most pupils, particularly higher and middle attaining pupils, make good progress, but lower attaining pupils and those pupils with special educational needs only make satisfactory progress, despite being in smaller sets. This is largely because they are not taught the basics thoroughly enough, and spend too much time copying processes without really understanding what they are doing. A few of the highest attaining pupils only make satisfactory progress because they are not challenged sufficiently in lessons and spend too much time on work that is too easy for them.
90. The quality of teaching is good overall in all years. All the teachers have a good knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum and how to plan lessons that have the variety and structure required by the National Numeracy Strategy. They use starters to consolidate skills at the beginning of the lesson, and hold a plenary session at the end to add some new piece of information or understanding. Relationships with the pupils are very good, and teachers have created and maintain a calm, orderly

working atmosphere in the classrooms. All the teachers explain the basic processes in the clearest possible way. The lessons are all carefully planned, and the exercises prepared for the pupils to practise the processes are usually pitched at the right level. In the best lessons, the teaching helps the pupils understand the basic principles as well as being able to carry out the processes needed to get the answers to solutions. There are a variety of activities and phases to keep the pupils interested, and give them real opportunities to stretch their thinking and explore their understanding of the subject. The teachers mark homework in great detail, giving the pupils clear guidance on how to improve, also encouraging them when they try hard.

91. In those lessons where there are weaknesses, the teaching concentrates too much on practising mathematical processes without spending enough time understanding the key underlying principles, particularly in the lower attaining sets. For example, pupils in Year 8 can solve simple algebraic equations, but do not understand what they are actually doing when finding the correct solution. There are insufficient strategies to check on the progress of the pupils during the course of the lesson, so that some make repetitive mistakes for too long before this is discovered. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to respond to open questions or to explain out loud how they worked out a particular problem, both to help themselves understand better and to enable the teacher to judge their progress.
92. The pupils' attitudes to the subject and behaviour in the classroom are generally very good, are better in higher and middle attaining sets, and improve as the pupils grow older. These positive attitudes make a good contribution to pupils' learning. In virtually all classrooms there is a relaxed and business-like atmosphere, with the pupils clearly there to work. Standards of presentation are good at all levels and pupils take a real pride in the quality of their work, and try to be precise and accurate. Most manage to do a reasonable amount of work each lesson, and for homework. Pupils are free to contribute during lessons, and ask or answer questions, although the majority seem more comfortable as relatively passive receivers of knowledge and understanding. In a few classes a small number of boys, particularly in Year 6, take advantage of the teacher's attention being elsewhere to waste time talking amongst themselves, but this is relatively rare.
93. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. The attainment level of the pupils on entry and at the end of Year 6 has fallen from above average to average. However, by the end of Year 8 the attainment level is above average as it was at the time of the previous report. There have been some key improvements. The quality of teaching and the achievement of the pupils over the three years have improved from satisfactory to good. Departmental leadership and management are good. There is a good sense of teamwork, and sharing good practice, although more could be done to ensure that all good practice in the department is uniformly adopted. The curriculum followed by the pupils covers all the statutory requirements, although the use of investigational mathematics as part of the teaching and learning is underused. Information and communications technology has yet to be systematically and comprehensively integrated into the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Relationships and pupils' attitudes are very good, making a strong contribution to the purposeful working atmosphere in lessons
- Leadership is good and commitment to development is strong

Areas for improvement

- The full potential of ICT needs to be realised
- A greater variety of activities and tasks is needed to challenge all pupils

94. The results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were broadly in line with the national average, although the proportion of higher attainers reaching Level 5 was just above average. Results in 2002 improved further. This improvement has been continued more recently, particularly since staffing in science has become more stable, and evidence from the inspection indicates that attainment is above average overall. The progress of the current Year 6 is good. This is because teaching is now at least good and challenges the full range of pupils who are responding with enthusiasm. Pupils are particularly strong in investigative work where many are confidently able to devise a fair test, make predictions, manage their own investigations and draw conclusions. In Years 7 and 8 progress is satisfactory and in Year 8 attainment remains broadly in line with the average. However, the difference in attainment between the upper and lower sets is considerable. This difference was demonstrated in lessons on energy types and sources. In the top set pupils were able to apply their knowledge and understanding, making links across areas of the curriculum. In a lower set the understanding was weak and the pupils were not able to apply their knowledge to a range of examples.
95. The quality of teaching is good overall, but less consistently so in Years 7 and 8. The teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and their lessons are well planned, building in a systematic way on learning which has been acquired in the previous lesson. Classroom management and relationships are very good, and all teachers exercise quiet but firm control. This ensures a purposeful and co-operative environment for learning in most lessons. The most effective teaching observed struck a good balance between the teacher leading the learning on the one hand and giving the pupils autonomy on the other, whilst challenging them to think scientifically. For example in a Year 6 investigation on dissolving, the teacher involved the pupils in the planning process, gave clear instructions, allowed the pupils to choose the apparatus they needed and then used the results of one group to challenge the whole class to draw a conclusion. Effective teaching of this kind, which actively involves the pupils themselves, encourages an enthusiastic and keen response from them. In another Year 6 class, towards the end of an investigation, the teacher focused discussion on how the pupils' practical work could have been improved, the accuracy of the results and on seeing patterns from which predictions could be made. The teacher's effective questioning skills enabled the pupils themselves to evaluate the best methods to use.
96. In some other lessons, however, particularly those which do not involve practical and investigative work, work is not always planned to meet the needs of all pupils whatever their ability. In addition, there is insufficient variety in the activities to maintain the interest of all pupils. In one Year 7 lesson observed, for example, too much of the work was teacher led and the main pupil activity was merely to complete a textbook exercise. This resulted in some of the pupils, particularly the boys, starting to lose

interest and drifting off task. The systems for marking and grading pupils' work and for pupils to monitor their own progress are inconsistently applied. Homework is not always used to set challenging and interesting tasks which make use of resources outside the school. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Provision in Year 6 is very inclusive and pupils are extremely well integrated into the mixed-ability classes, contributing fully to activities and as a result making good progress. The work of the learning support assistants in the lower sets in Years 7 and 8 is very effective. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on particle activity in gases, the pupils getting this support were able to demonstrate that they had a better grasp of this difficult concept than other pupils.

97. The use of computers to support learning in science is unsatisfactory. The two computers in the department do not fully meet the needs. Only limited research is possible and they cannot be used to carry out the data logging which the department would like to use in investigations. However, Year 8 groups have made good use of the school's new computer suite when researching for and creating newspaper articles on fossil fuels. Numeracy skills are effectively reinforced. In one Year 6 lesson, the teacher used part of the lesson to discuss the appropriate use of line and bar graphs, the choice of axes and the rounding up of numbers, drawing out the knowledge and skills of the pupils.
98. Leadership and management of the department are good, although improvement overall since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator has quickly set in motion work on several important yet realistic priorities for improvement and development. A key aim is to make the curriculum more interesting, relevant and challenging to all pupils. A good team spirit has already been established. With this new leadership and the evident commitment of the team there is enormous potential for rapidly improving provision.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **excellent**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching promotes good progress and well above average standards
- The creative approach to projects, which stimulates interest and encourages imaginative work
- The study of art from different cultures which promotes wider learning and contributes well to the spiritual and cultural development of pupils

Areas for improvement

- There are no areas for improvement

99. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6 they have made good progress and standards are above average. By the end of Year 8 standards are well above average which is the result of very good teaching. Pupils' achievements are good in Year 6 and very good in Years 7 and 8.
100. At the time of the inspection pupils in Year 6 had only been in school for about five weeks. As a consequence only a modest amount of work of average standard had been completed. For example, the pupils' use of line in drawings of everyday objects demonstrated a limited understanding of tone. However, scrutiny of the work done at the end of Year 6 by older pupils is of above average standard. In the 'figures in action' project, for example, digital self-portraits are used very effectively as a basis for

paintings about movement and the action of figures. These are further enhanced by the imaginative treatment of backgrounds.

101. In the work seen of pupils in Years 7 and 8 standards are well above average. Some work was very imaginatively conceived. Year 7 pupils for example, were learning about the art of the Ndbele people. Responding imaginatively to the strong pattern and symbols of its work, the pupils interpreted their own world using a similar approach, with some most imaginative results. Pupils were led to very good understanding of how and why Ndbele art is made, and how they can connect with it. In the portfolios seen of the work done by older pupils who have completed the art and design course in Year 8, standards are well above average. Where pupils, for example, had made observational drawings of shiny objects, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, showed through their tonal drawings, a very good understanding of the qualities of these objects. Such well-developed skills of observation are also seen in the portrait work which demonstrated a good understanding of proportion, and a sensitive use of line and tone in the representations of facial features and the texture of hair and clothes.
102. The teaching and learning of pupils in Year 6 is good, and that of pupils in Years 7 and 8 very good. Some teaching is excellent. Characteristic of the most effective is the underlying respect of the teacher for the creative potential of each individual pupil. Planning for individual lessons and whole projects is very good. Resources are prepared, as in the Buddha project, to stimulate learning and encourage high levels of motivation. Skills are well taught, with pupils being encouraged to experiment with different media, alongside clear and appropriate technical guidance so that such experimentation is well focused. The texture and surface collections being made by Year 8 pupils and the experiments with materials such as pastel and oil crayon exemplify the high quality of work being achieved through this approach. A particular strength of teaching is the way projects are creatively managed, with pupils working from the same starting points but being encouraged to develop work in different directions. This means that teaching does not become stultified by repetition. It also widens pupils' learning and promotes enjoyment and high levels of motivation in lessons. ICT is used confidently and imaginatively in the teaching to support learning. Homework tasks are well designed, promote a very positive response from the pupils and contribute well to learning in class.
103. Leadership and management are very good. Courses are well planned and based on very good methodology, emphasising the importance of visual research using sketchbooks. The subject co-ordinator has a very good overview of the work of her teaching team, many of whom, in Year 6, are non-specialist teachers, but who are effectively monitored and supported and who, as a result, fulfil their role well. Development planning is very good, showing a clarity of vision and a perceptive understanding of what needs to be done to enhance further the experience of pupils.
104. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have improved, and the many positive features of the work of this department, such as the quality of teaching, have been maintained. At the time of the last inspection pupils had few opportunities to use computers to make and learn about art. Now all pupils use electronic sketchpads and create and manipulate digital images. This is an excellent department, providing pupils with a very good basis for their future education in art. It makes a positive contribution to the cultural development of pupils, not only by the work done in the art room but also through the many displays of pupils' work about the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Improving standards, particularly in resistant materials, because of the well-planned curriculum
- Computers are now more effectively used to aid learning
- The good teaching of skills ensures that pupils learn the right way to do things

Areas for improvement

- Ensure that all teachers fully understand the requirements of the National Curriculum
- Ensure that targets for learning are more clearly identified, particularly in food lessons

105. When pupils enter the school standards in design and technology are below average. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 good progress has been made and standards are above average. This is partly because pupils of this age are not normally taught by specialist design and technology teachers nor have access to specialist facilities. By the end of Year 8 standards are above average in resistant materials but only average in food technology. While pupils have good making skills, their understanding of the processes involved is more limited. Pupils' achievements overall are therefore satisfactory. By the time pupils reach this age the gap between the attainment of boys and girls has increased with girls doing better than boys.
106. Pupils in Year 6 at the time of the inspection were at the start of their specialist education in design and technology, and the work completed at that time is around the expected standard. For example, in the resistant materials electronic buzzer project, pupils understand the working characteristics of different components such as switches and buzzers, which they are able to connect appropriately using a simple electronic circuit. The accompanying folder work is satisfactory both in presentation and quality of design. In food technology, pupils' practical work is satisfactory. Pupils understand that ingredients can be combined in different ways to produce different products, as was seen, for example, in a biscuit making project. Pupils of all abilities currently in Year 6 show the potential to be above average by the end of the year.
107. In the lessons seen in Years 7 and 8 standards in resistant materials, both designing and making, are above average. In food technology the standards of making are average but levels of understanding are below average. In a resistant materials lesson observed, pupils were making a moisture tester. The pupils understood the need to wire circuits differently to produce a different result, and had a good understanding of what is, and what is not, a good conductor of electricity. By contrast, levels of understanding in food technology of the different physical properties of, for example, meat and vegetables, and how this information needs to be applied in making things, was below average.
108. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. However in resistant materials, teaching and learning are good. For example, in a Year 8 electronics project observed, planning was detailed and established clear learning targets. As a result pupils understood how to create a moisture or dry tester by changing the way their product was wired. Where the teaching had shortcomings, as in a Year 7 food technology lesson seen, where pupils were making burgers, the targets for learning had not been clearly identified with the result that pupils did not understand the way different cooking times of ingredients may affect the quality of their products. Skills are mostly well taught both in food and resistant materials. In a Year 8 lesson where pupils were making swiss rolls, the skills

of beating and folding ingredients were effectively taught and demonstrated. In resistant materials pupils solder circuits with confidence and to a good standard and use computer-aided design to create covers for their products. Pupils generally have a good understanding of how well they are doing and are familiar with their National Curriculum level. However by the end of Year 8, pupils should have one National Curriculum level for technology which covers all aspects of their work. Currently this is not the case. The day-to-day marking of pupils' work is less good, particularly in food technology where it is often superficial and gives little guidance to pupils on how they can improve. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology, show good levels of application and are particularly industrious in the practical sessions. Such attitudes make a positive contribution to learning.

109. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The day-to-day management of rooms and resources is good ensuring a positive impact on standards. The curriculum has been well planned and a particular strength is the way it has been matched to the curriculum of the next school the pupils will attend. The major weakness in management is that both food technology and resistant materials fail to exploit the areas of common learning which would help pupils make faster progress. There is also a need for more rigorous monitoring of teaching, appropriately matched to in-service training, to ensure that all teachers have appropriate subject expertise.
110. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Overall standards, particularly in resistant materials, have improved. The lack of challenge in homework tasks criticised at the last inspection is now much better with such tasks being well chosen to complement class work. At the last inspection the lack of resources for pupils' work with computers was affecting progress. Pupils now use computers to aid both design and manufacture and to analyse nutritional standards in food.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- High standards are being maintained
- The planning of schemes of work is good

Areas for improvement

- Greater use of National Curriculum criteria needed in assessment and target setting
- Teachers' expectations need to be higher and work needs to be more challenging to higher attaining pupils

111. Attainment in work seen during the inspection in Year 6 is broadly in line with the average. By Year 8 attainment is above the average. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Year 6 when much of the teaching is done by form tutors through the humanities course. Achievement is good in Years 7 and 8 when specialist teachers are involved. Overall pupils make good progress from the sometimes lower than expected skills and knowledge in geography that pupils have reached on entry to the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, achieve well in geography. High standards are being maintained.
112. During Year 6 the teaching of humanities does not focus sufficiently from the outset on pupils' comprehension and use of geographical terminology. Strategies need to be developed which ensure pupils retain earlier learning and use it subsequently. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, present their work with care. More

emphasis is needed on accuracy, precision and detail in using correct data in answers and descriptive writing. Year 6 pupils can empathise with issues which give rise to conflict between different interest groups in their study of the Aswan Dam and the Nile. Opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well integrated, although some writing is too general and lacks geographical content and relevance.

113. Year 7 pupils studying weather and climate know about cloud types and their link to precipitation. They co-operate well in practical data collection in the school grounds and record their findings accurately and are developing their ability to analyse and record their findings. Pupils use their numeracy skills with ease to interpret temperature and rainfall graphs for Ambleside as part of a study of the Lake District. They are developing their geographical skills well in one case by sketching and annotating a relief rainfall diagram.
114. Year 8 pupils learning about farming and landscape are able to analyse farming as a process. They debate issues such as organic as opposed to conventional farming and are able to give both sides to the argument. They develop their appreciation of cause and effect in case studies of deforestation in Nepal and farming in Kenya. They draw well on their earlier learning and benefit from good specialist teaching.
115. Teaching observed is satisfactory in Year 6 and good in Years 7 and 8 where more lessons are taught by specialist teachers. Lessons have good pace and pupils work well. Teachers have sufficient knowledge, understanding and experience of the subject and are very well supported by detailed schemes of work and good learning materials. Work is well resourced and activities are varied. While teachers have high expectations of most pupils, some tasks for higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently demanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, have access to the full curriculum and their learning is good. Good supplementary help materials are routinely used and these contribute to the success of lower attaining pupils. Teachers use questions skilfully to check understanding and give clear explanations of key ideas, new techniques and subject vocabulary. Relationships and behaviour of boys and girls are good and promote good and enjoyable learning. Internet research, homework and data collection activities around the school site afford good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. There are good opportunities for fieldwork but these need to be focused more on geographical content and skills development. ICT is very well used to give pupils access to up-to-date information presented using modern media, but more opportunities and equipment are needed to give pupils access to computers and Internet sources routinely as part of lessons. Teachers are conscious of their responsibility to develop both literacy and numeracy skills. Literacy development is supported by well-designed materials for writing to explain and consolidate new learning. Homework is used well to develop classroom topics. Marking of books encourages pupils and tells them how well they are doing but does not give sufficient guidance on how pupils can raise their attainment to a higher level. The use of National Curriculum criteria to measure how well pupils are doing and to set targets is underdeveloped.
116. The leadership and management of geography are good and the department is well organised. Teachers are very well supported by a detailed scheme of work and good resources but there are too few subject specialists and this has an adverse effect on standards in some classes. The head of department has a secure vision of the direction in which the department needs to develop. Action is being taken to raise the standards achieved by boys. The monitoring of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject
- There have been considerable improvements in the use of assessment to raise attainment

Areas for improvement

- Levels of achievement should be raised, particularly through the setting of more challenging tasks for higher attainers

117. Attainment overall in history is average. The 2001 teacher assessments suggested that a substantial number of pupils in Year 8, particularly girls, attained the higher levels. However, the inspection showed that the standards of pupils in the current Year 8 are in line with expectations for pupils of a similar age nationally in the key areas of knowledge and understanding and the development of appropriate historical skills. Pupils in the current Year 6 are not yet studying history, although the current Year 7, early in the school year, also attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils join the school with variable levels of knowledge and skills in history, and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, then achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. However, a minority of higher achievers, both boys and girls, underachieve in relation to their abilities, and therefore the history curriculum is not fully inclusive. Overall girls achieve better than boys, especially in the skills of extended writing.
118. The scrutiny of work of previous Year 6 pupils shows that they develop a satisfactory understanding of different types of historical evidence and learn how to analyse and evaluate it. When studying Ancient Greece and learning about a range of topics such as religion and the influence of Greece on language and the development of democracy, pupils improve their understanding of chronology and their basic factual knowledge. However, when doing extended writing topics there is insufficient emphasis on historical concepts such as cause and consequence.
119. Most pupils in Years 7 and 8 make satisfactory gains in their knowledge of particular topics or themes. In particular they learn about significant stages in the history of the black peoples of America. When studying issues such as the struggle for civil rights, they consider citizenship and moral issues about the relationship between individuals and societies. In British history, when studying topics such as religious change in England or the origins of the Civil War, they make satisfactory progress in learning to distinguish between short- and long-term causes and consequences, and they also improve their ability to evaluate the reliability of different types of evidence.
120. No history teaching could be observed in Year 6, but the overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory. Where the teaching is effective, teachers have high expectations of pupils and use a range of sources imaginatively so as to interest pupils and develop their skills of analysis and evaluation. For example, in a Year 8 lesson pupils learned to analyse the clash of old and new ideas during the Renaissance through studying a selection of graphic visual sources, whilst the teacher extended pupils' knowledge by means of effective questioning. However, in a parallel lesson, too much time was spent on comprehension, and opportunities were missed to consider the usefulness and reliability of the chosen evidence. Teachers' marking is often helpful in showing pupils how they can improve, although it is sometimes over-

generous.

121. Where teaching is less effective, teachers sometimes set inappropriate tasks. Whilst they give help particularly to lower attainers, for example using writing frames to help them improve the quality of their extended writing, teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of higher attaining pupils. For example, in a lesson on the Renaissance, the teacher asked a too limited range of questions. She also gave many of the answers herself without allowing well-motivated and articulate pupils the opportunity to explore further the ambiguities they recognised in sources showing the parallel forces of science and superstition in areas such as medicine. Higher attainers were given inappropriate low-level copying tasks in a lesson on the Norman Conquest.
122. Leadership and management in history are satisfactory, principally because the new curriculum leader has already formulated plans to address some of the issues identified in the previous inspection. For example, the improvement of boys' writing skills has been made a priority, with several pertinent strategies having been recently implemented. Therefore improvements in literacy are now targeted more effectively. The development of numeracy skills is less in evidence. ICT is being used to research information on the Ancient Egyptians and for word processing. There is now a more developed scheme of work. However, some of the history assessments have been overgenerous and standards are not as high as in 1997. Progress in history has been satisfactory since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Attitudes to learning by pupils in ICT lessons are good in both key stages
- Where ICT is taught as a separate subject, the teaching is generally good and often promotes high standards of work from pupils
- The quality and range of opportunities for learning are very good, both in taught ICT lessons and out of class time
- The use of ICT to store and assess pupils' work is very well organised

Areas for improvement

- Better and more co-ordinated use of ICT across all subjects
- Improve support during practical work in the computer rooms for lower attaining pupils

123. Standards are in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 6 and above average at the end of Year 8. Standards are good as a result of well-produced schemes of work in ICT and high expectations by the teacher. The use of computers in other subjects is growing as a result of the opening of a new networked computer suite giving significantly greater access to ICT resources across the curriculum.
124. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all years. Expectations of the teachers using ICT are high and pupils respond well to the challenges set. A number of teachers are using the new interactive whiteboards with imagination and involving pupils in the interaction. Year 6 pupils, after only one year in the school with a range of prior attainment, are able to create and interrogate a database of information and produce charts illustrating features of the data to a good standard. Year 7 pupils produce animated electronic story books with sound that is suitable for a younger audience and Year 8 pupils confidently enjoy modelling the running of a small catering business, using spreadsheets to predict profits depending on weather and other variables. In all

three years, higher attaining pupils are able to engage in extension activities, for example in Year 8, new columns are calculated in the spreadsheet to indicate the rise and fall of profit margins which are then graphed. Lower attaining pupils are sometimes frustrated by not being able to complete the basic work in the lesson time and consideration needs to be given to offering more support from the teacher or by paired peer support.

125. A number of departments are making good use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning, particularly in French and German, but the requirement for all subjects to provide suitable opportunities to use ICT is not being fully met. The impact of subject ICT training has not yet made a significant difference to the teaching of subjects, apart from in the modern foreign languages department. The allocation of laptop computers to all staff is having a positive impact on staff confidence and ICT capability. Mathematics teachers are using new software from the National Numeracy Strategy effectively with an interactive whiteboard. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the material on co-ordinates and show considerable insights when particular co-ordinates are not visible on screen or the software offers no 'undo' option.
126. Management of the subject and technical support for ICT is very good. Since the last Ofsted inspection, the school has provided a significant increase in up-to-date ICT resources, both in the appointment of an ICT co-ordinator plus an ICT technician and in equipping an additional computer suite to allow more access by subject teachers with their classes. However, there is no planned and co-ordinated use of computers across all subjects which will ensure progression through the school. The Internet, now available at all of the workstations throughout the school, is providing a rich resource in ICT and other subjects. Plans to develop the school's website and an Intranet are well in hand. The ICT provision in the school is good but the time is now ripe to broaden the impact of the excellent resources on teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **very good**.

Strengths

- All pupils benefit from the study of two modern foreign languages
- Leadership of the department provides clear direction
- The quality of the teaching ensures high standards

Areas for development

- Continued development of strategies to improve the learning of boys, higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs
- The use of assessment to track the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils and set challenging but achievable targets

127. By the end of Year 6, after one year of French, overall attainment is above average. Standards in listening and speaking are well above expectation, but as reading and writing skills are less emphasised in the first year of study, pupils' attainment in these aspects is satisfactory. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8 their attainment in both German and French is well above national expectations. Boys' attainment varies from year to year. In both 2001 and 2002, boys reached higher standards, but in the present Year 8, girls are well ahead. From Year 7 onward pupils are grouped according to prior attainment and at present higher attaining classes are largely made up of girls, whilst boys are over-represented in lower attaining classes.

128. In the lessons observed pupils' attitude to study was very good and their behaviour excellent. These factors, combined with the classroom management skills of their teachers, created a very favourable learning environment.
129. Achievement in the work seen in Years 6, 7 and 8 was very good. Pupils with special educational needs regularly benefit from the help of support staff and a language assistant. They are well integrated and progress well. In a Year 8 German class, for example, the confidence they gain from their success in oral work makes a significant contribution to their personal development.
130. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in all years. There is a distinctive departmental teaching style and pupils know exactly what is expected of them in lessons. All lessons have clear, specific objectives, which are explained to the class at the outset and reflected on by the pupils later in the lesson. Teachers employ a variety of activities, games and competitions, which maintain pupils' interest and focus. Grammar is taught in innovative and interesting ways. Lessons are characterised by meticulous planning, fast pace, maximum use of the foreign language and the good humour of teacher and pupils, all of which make learning a pleasure. Because pupils are accustomed to hearing the foreign language used for explanations and instructions and are themselves required to use it for routine communication with the teacher, they speak with confidence and can cope well with the challenging listening tasks set in class. Each lesson begins with quiet reading of a text in the foreign language and reading skills are rapidly improving as a result. From Year 7, pupils make rapid progress in writing in both languages. By the end of Year 8, higher attaining pupils write long, accurate pieces about themselves, their families, school and hobbies.
131. Improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 has been very good. The good quality of teaching has been further improved and a broader range of teaching techniques acquired. Standards, as reflected in teachers' National Curriculum assessments, are rising year on year. Plans for the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning are integrated into the new schemes of work, but need further development. Pupils now reflect on their own progress in every lesson and acquire a clearer understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses through the process of the department's assessment programme. A short, inexpensive trip to Germany is now available in addition to the annual five-day study trip to France. The quality of homework set has improved. Good examples were seen which extended and supported learning in class.
132. Curriculum provision is very good. All pupils study French from Year 6 as well as German from Year 7. This exceptional provision makes a major contribution to the literacy skills of all pupils, through its emphasis on accuracy, grammar, oral skills, the acquisition of a wide range of vocabulary and the opportunity to compare languages.
133. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The new subject leader has a wealth of innovative ideas, which have already made an impact on standards, and is actively addressing areas identified for development. New schemes of work are in place, which include an enhanced programme of assessment. However, the use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress and to set targets for improvement remains relatively undeveloped. The department has coherent strategies to accommodate the different learning styles of different groups of pupils. Teachers are used to seeing each other at work and share ideas to good effect.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The committed and enthusiastic curriculum leader
- Teaching which is well-organised and planned and ensures that pupils' learning is systematically developed
- The good attitudes and keen involvement of pupils in music
- Good attractive accommodation and good opportunities for learning instruments

Areas for improvement

- Raising attainment, particularly that of the boys, through greater attention to musical detail and the expressive quality of performance
- Giving more precise feedback to pupils and an indication of how performance might be improved
- A greater encouragement for pupils to be self-critical and to evaluate their own and each other's work in both performing and composing

134. Standards are average at the end of both Years 6 and 8, and the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. In general, girls reach higher standards in all aspects of the subject than the boys. Key factors in this achievement are the well-organised teaching and the enthusiastic management of the subject by the co-ordinator.

135. Instrumental skills vary widely but are average overall. Most pupils play the keyboards and melodic percussion with a reasonable proficiency. By Year 8, they play from simple notated scores, and many play with good rhythmic control and subtlety. An above average number of pupils take advantage of the opportunities to learn orchestral instruments with visiting teachers. Their instrumental skills are good. The quality of singing is also average. Pupils sing accurately, but the vocal quality is sometimes harsh and lacks expression and attention to the details of dynamics and phrasing. Composing skills are often more confident, with higher attaining pupils in particular demonstrating a good understanding of the use of different timbres in Year 6 work on 'Space Journeys', some understanding of musical structures and of compositional techniques such as variation. Listening skills are good, and pupils were observed listening with care and concentration to music. Year 7 pupils in particular were well prepared through their work on rondo form to listen with understanding to the third movement of one of Mozart's horn concertos. Appraisal skills are less well developed and opportunities in lessons to be self-critical and evaluative, and to use the musical vocabulary displayed were missed.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there were many good features in the lessons observed. Planning is detailed and thorough with clear learning objectives established and shared with the pupils. Explanations are clear both of the task to be done and of technical points. Throughout all lessons the learning is well managed and organised. Well-chosen musical examples are made to exemplify teaching points and to stimulate and motivate the pupils. The range of musical style for example used to demonstrate rondo form in the Year 7 lesson ranged from medieval singing through eighteenth century classical music to the more popular and up to date. In a Year 6 lesson, examples of African drumming and of Indian music were used effectively to test pupils' understanding of cyclic patterns. ICT is effectively used as a teaching aid, although its use as a compositional tool for pupils is less well developed. The teacher's own musical skills are evident and she makes good use of demonstration to exemplify musical points. In a Year 6 lesson observed, for example, the teacher's own demonstration of scat singing gave the pupils confidence to sing,

improvise and perform themselves. Interventions by the teacher in pupils' group work are usually effective, prompting, questioning and supporting their ideas. Sometimes, opportunities for pupils to discuss and evaluate their own work are missed. At other times, shortcomings in pupils' performance and composition are not identified by the teacher. Feedback sometimes fails to point out how their work might be improved and made more musical expressive through the use of the elements such as dynamics and phrasing. This was particularly evident, for example, in the Year 7 lesson observed, when pupils were singing with reasonable accuracy but with little attention to musical detail and expression.

137. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to provide a range of musical opportunities for the pupils, and there are good opportunities to play and sing in extra-curricular activities. She has a good awareness of what needs to be done to improve provision overall and there is good potential for moving the subject forward strongly. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- There is some very good teaching, leading to good or very good learning
- Leadership and management are very good, as demonstrated, for example, in the progress made in addressing key issues identified in the previous inspection
- Most pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject
- Assessment is used effectively as a means of raising attainment still further
- There is a very good programme of extra-curricular sport, which is popular with pupils

Areas for improvement

- The school should reduce the size of some teaching groups, which are disadvantaged by being too large, to make effective use of the limited indoor accommodation
- There needs to be the sharing of the best teaching practice across the subject so as to raise overall levels of attainment and increase the level of pace and challenge in a minority of lessons

138. Overall attainment in physical education is average, and pupils achieve well, mainly as the result of the good quality teaching. During the inspection, activities were observed in games and gymnastics. The teacher assessments for 2001 suggested that a substantial number of pupils, especially girls, achieved standards lower than national expectations, especially in the higher levels. However, pupils in the current Year 6 were observed developing controlled gymnastic balances and basic ball-handling skills in netball to levels in line with expectations. Standards of pupils by Year 8 are also in line with national expectations, with a narrowing gap in attainment between boys and girls. Pupils join the school with standards which are variable but overall slightly below expectations. Many boys join the school with lower standards in dance and gymnastics than in games. In contrast, many girls join the school with higher standards in dance and gymnastics than in games. Overall, in relation to prior attainment, pupils make good progress in developing more consistency in knowledge and in practical skills, especially in Years 7 and 8.

139. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, share in this good achievement, and so the physical education programme is very inclusive except where over-large teaching groups restrict pupils' opportunities.

Girls in Year 8 make very good progress in learning how to defend and attack effectively in netball, whilst reinforcing their ball-handling skills. In gymnastics, girls make very good progress in learning how to devise, perform and evaluate paired gymnastic balances with good poise and control. Boys make slower progress in gymnastics, partly because the teacher's expectations are less demanding. Boys make satisfactory progress in developing rugby skills such as rucking.

140. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is good, and the teaching is sometimes very good or excellent. Where the teaching is particularly effective, the teacher has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is good progression in the activities, enabling pupils to develop skills rapidly. This was seen, for example, in a Year 7 gymnastics lesson in which the teacher encouraged pupils to co-operate in developing their own balancing and movement routines on large apparatus. She also encouraged the pupils to evaluate each other's efforts constructively. A brisk, challenging pace, and very good use of questioning to reinforce and extend understanding, were other features of this lesson, as they were of a Year 8 netball lesson in which girls made very good progress in developing their defensive skills.
141. Where teaching is less effective, there is insufficient pace to challenge particularly higher attaining pupils, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to reinforce newly-learned skills, or to evaluate their progress. This was evident in some boys' gymnastics and rugby lessons, which were sometimes very teacher directed and occasionally lacked pace, although pupils' attitudes were mostly very positive.
142. Leadership and management in physical education are good. The curriculum leader is committed and enthusiastic, and has succeeded in developing the subject significantly since the previous inspection, although standards in the activities observed are currently not above expectations as they were in 1997. New, more focused schemes of work have been developed, along with a much more effective assessment structure which enables more precise targets to be set for pupils' progress. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the opportunity to share good practice are, however, less well developed. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills by encouraging pupils to evaluate each other's performance. Numeracy skills are developed effectively through the analysis of data gleaned during health-related fitness sessions. There is a varied programme of successful extra-curricular activities, such as netball, football and rugby. There is a good take up of these activities, and last year the current Year 8 reached the final of the county rugby cup. The good liaison in physical education with the local secondary school helps to achieve a balanced curriculum. Video and digital camera technology is used increasingly as an aid to effective evaluation of technique. The introduction of dance for boys and football for girls has broadened the curriculum. Some boys' groups are too large to make effective use of the facilities such as swimming and indoor gymnastics. Overall, taking account of the enthusiasm of the relatively new teaching team, there has been good progress in physical education since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **very good**.

Strengths

- The very good teaching promoting the aims of the locally agreed syllabus
- The standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8 which exceeds the expectations of the agreed syllabus
- The very good contribution made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring reports to parents always contain sufficient subject specific information

143. The overall attainment at the end of Year 6, and at the end of Year 8 when pupils leave the college is just above the expectations of the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement on the findings at the last inspection.
144. The standard of the work seen is due to careful planning and the very good teaching that involves a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Pupils make steady gains in knowledge and understanding as in a Year 8 lesson when they compare various creation theories including ideas of their own. They learnt that early peoples around the world shared the same struggle to make sense of the world and all the creation stories have similarities. They can find references in the Bible appropriately and use specialist vocabulary to express their ideas. The use of information and communication technology in a piece of work in each year enhances religious education learning as pupils experiment and discuss options on screen. The work in Year 7 involves using a publisher program to produce a professional looking newspaper.
145. Achievement in all years is good. Lessons have clear aims and high expectations for all pupils. There is emphasis on oral work that helps pupils of all abilities be involved in the lesson. The support available for pupils with special educational needs ensures their achievement is good. Higher attaining pupils rise well to the challenge of open-ended tasks. Appropriate homework is set and marked. The clear assessment procedures and appropriate use of praise makes pupil want to learn. The reports to parents do not always include sufficient subject specific information. In a Year 6 lesson observed, to enable the pupils to understand how people lived in Palestine at the time of Jesus, a boy and a girl were dressed in clothes worn 2000 years ago. This brought the lesson to life and the piece of work produced reflected their gains in knowledge and understanding on life and customs at the time of Jesus.
146. Pupils' attitudes are very good. Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy lessons. The respect shown by teachers to pupils is an excellent role model. Pupils answer questions willingly, confident that their response will be valued.
147. Overall, teaching is very good in all years. Non-specialist teachers receive very good support. Teachers share best practice and make full use of the much-improved resources that include modern textbooks and new bibles and a well-stocked section in the library. When teaching is very good, lessons have clear objectives shared with the class, high expectations for everyone and a brisk pace with every moment of the lesson fully used. Attention to literacy through a variety of written tasks ranging from short answers to extended writing in prose and poetry helps increase this skill. In very good lessons, there are several changes of activity and the opportunity for pupils to have a measure of responsibility for their own learning.

148. The contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There is ample opportunity to consider the purpose and meaning of life. The study of aspects of major world religions helps cultural awareness and the collections of artefacts enriches these lessons. The visits to places of worship, which occur in each year, provide first-hand experience of local churches, a synagogue and a Hindu temple and greatly increase pupils' cultural awareness.
149. The department is very well and enthusiastically led and supportively managed. The co-ordinator monitors the teaching and learning very effectively. Subject documentation is very comprehensive and clearly set out to enable non-specialists to follow it. The curriculum leader works very closely with all members of the department to ensure they all use the same approach to a topic and standards are consistent. When possible, non-specialists watch the curriculum leader teach. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The locally agreed syllabus is covered and the close working together of the school with the secondary and local primary schools benefits continuity of learning.