

INSPECTION REPORT

THE KING JOHN SCHOOL

Thrapston, Kettering

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122116

Headteacher: Mr A Dodds

Reporting inspector: Mr C Sander
4151

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd January 2003

Inspection number: 252914

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Market Road
Thrapston
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Paul

Date of previous inspection: 11th June 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4151	C Sander	Registered inspector		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?
12682	J Griffin	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32379	R Brewster	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30046	R Parker	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology	
31680	P Redican	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs	
19043	D Lewis	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	
11300	B Smith	Team inspector	Geography	
24887	Y Salmons	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
32324	F Buckler	Team inspector	Music	
1085	J Laver	Team inspector	History Physical education Citizenship	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20719	A Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The King John School is a foundation middle school of broadly average size for boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 13. It is situated in the expanding market town of Thrapston in rural East Northamptonshire. There are currently 395 pupils on roll, nearly all of whom are white British and none of whom uses English as an additional language. There are more boys than girls. The school has increased in size in recent years and a higher than usual proportion of the pupils come from beyond the immediate area. Standards on entry are broadly average as also are the pupils' social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, approximately four per cent, is well below average. Approximately one quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and approximately two per cent have statements of special educational needs, both broadly in line with the national average. In 2002, the school received a national achievement award that recognised its recent, significant improvements. Applications for places at the school are rising.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that provides well for its pupils. Good leadership has revitalised expectations and improved standards significantly. Overall, these are rising at a good rate. They are now broadly similar to those usually found nationally and higher than this in both English and mathematics. Good management has put very effective procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress and set challenging targets. As a result, the school fulfils very well indeed its aim to promote the personal development of all its pupils. The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and has a powerful impact on pupils' attitudes. The unit costs are lower than most other middle schools in the area. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership has revitalised expectations and good management has established strong procedures to raise them still further.
- National Test results in English and science are higher than those usually found nationally.
- Pupils achieve well at Year 6.
- Teaching in English and music is very good.
- Good teaching promotes very well the personal development of all pupils.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly in music and physical education.
- Links with parents, with the local primary school and the upper school are very good.

What could be improved

- National Test results at Year 6 in mathematics.
- The challenge offered to more competent pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, particularly in Year 8.
- Opportunities for all pupils to practise their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Opportunities to apply and develop numeracy skills in each subject of the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 2001 by a small team of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). Its improvement over the last four terms has been good. The governing body and the staff of the school have implemented the action plan well. Much has been achieved in a relatively short period. A longer-term development plan is now in place and arrangements to measure improvement are much better. Standards have risen further in English and significantly so in mathematics where the quality of teaching is much improved. Pupils' work is now well presented. There has been satisfactory improvement in the marking of pupils' work. Expectations are now much more consistent. The proportions of good and very good teaching have increased significantly. The well-planned building programme has started to bring about much needed improvements to the facilities. The determination to do still better is now firmly in place.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
End of Key Stage 2 tests	C	D	C	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results in the National Tests at Year 6 in 2002 were broadly in line with those for all schools nationally, higher than in the previous year but below average for similar schools. The latter comparison should be treated with caution because almost one third of the year group had identified special educational needs. The number achieving standards above those expected nationally was much lower in mathematics than it was in English and science. Overall, the results indicate satisfactory achievement when compared with pupils' earlier National Test results at Year 2. Those in English were broadly in line with the school's targets but those in mathematics fell short. The best performance was in English where the girls did particularly well. The girls continue to do better than the boys but the gap is closing. The trend in results over the last five years has been similar to that nationally but has gathered pace over the last two years. The standards of work seen during the inspection were higher than the most recent National Test results at Year 6 and in line with those usually found nationally at Year 8. Standards are very high in music. They are currently higher than those usually found nationally in English, science and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory overall and good at Year 6. Pupils achieve well in English, particularly in speaking and listening, and also in mathematics and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Many value highly what the school offers them. They are keen to take part in lessons and in many of the sports and musical activities. Nearly all enjoy coming to school and want to do well. Punctuality is good.

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most are very polite and keen to please. There is an orderly, purposeful atmosphere around the school. A small number of the boys who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are sometimes distracted in lessons. Exclusions are low. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last two years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. These are a strength of the school that help many to learn well because they value the help they receive and confidently ask questions in lessons. Pupils work very well with each other. Many are ready to take responsibility, helping others or as members of the school council.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The level of unauthorised absence last year was also broadly average and confined to just a few pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 5-6	Years 7-8
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in English where excellent use of assessment and marking motivates pupils very well and sets clear targets. A strength of the good teaching in mathematics is the effective use of questions that help pupils to understand and gain in confidence. The good teaching of science contributes very well to pupils' personal development by providing opportunities to work together and make decisions in investigative work. The teaching of music is very good. Learning resources are used particularly well to maintain interest and develop understanding in art and design, geography, history, religious education and French. Literacy skills are very well taught. Teaching methods encourage pupils to develop very well their speaking and listening skills. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall. Skills are well taught in mathematics but there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to apply them in other subjects. The strongest feature of pupils' learning is their very positive attitude, well demonstrated in their readiness to work with each other and to respond thoughtfully to questions. The use of ICT in each subject studied is currently unsatisfactory. In some subjects where there are no National Tests at Year 6, many pupils are not always aware of the standards they are expected to reach in the National Curriculum. The school generally provides well for the needs of its pupils but, in several subjects, the more competent are not sufficiently challenged, particularly at Year 8.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. An appropriately strong emphasis on English and mathematics whilst also meeting statutory requirements for other subjects. There is a very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, particularly in music and physical education and also very good links with other schools. There are not enough opportunities to use ICT or to develop numeracy skills in many subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual needs are well identified. Very good support by classroom assistants. The provision to withdraw pupils for extra help contributes to their good progress in numeracy and literacy but they miss part of the same lesson each week to attend them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school fulfils very well the high priority afforded to it in the aims of the school. Provision for citizenship is good. Lessons in personal, social and health education develop good knowledge and understanding and there are many opportunities to take responsibility, both individually and as part of a group. There are some missed opportunities to explore cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The monitoring of academic progress and personal development is well managed with a strong emphasis on pupils' attitudes as well as test results. There are very good arrangements to help pupils when they join the school and prepare to leave at Year 8. Good procedures to monitor and promote high standards of behaviour. Satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance. The partnership with parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has identified very clearly the school's longer-term direction, establishing across the school high expectations and the confidence to succeed. By developing very good teamwork, he has enabled key staff to manage their responsibilities well in fulfilling the aims of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have a very good understanding of the work of the school because they regularly monitor its performance and provision through a very well-managed committee structure. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities most diligently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and his governors monitor the school's performance most carefully and measure performance with increasing rigour through the thorough analysis of test results. The school applies most of the principles of best value well.

Aspect	Comment
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The number of part-time staff is greater than usual but they are well deployed with good specialist teaching in most subjects. Learning resources are particularly good in French and music but unsatisfactory in design and technology. Very good financial planning is well linked to the school's priorities. This is illustrated in the very well managed improvements to the school's facilities.

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 improvements since the appointment of the new headteacher and his good leadership. • Their children's positive attitudes to school and the progress that they make. • The approachability of the staff. • The good teaching. • The wide range of extra-curricular activities. • How the school helps its pupils to become more mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The regularity and amount of homework set. • Information on their children's progress. • The level and challenge of work for more competent pupils. • The behaviour of a minority of pupils.

The findings of this inspection confirm the views of parents about those features which most please them about the school. The inspection team agrees that the work set for more competent pupils is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly in Year 8. The homework arrangements are better than perceived by those parents who completed the questionnaire, with generally good use made of the pupils' planners to record work and a simple but effective notice board in school to record homework set. The frequency and quality of information on progress are now very good. Behaviour is good overall. Occasionally, a small number of pupils were distracted in lessons but behaviour was good or better in most of the lessons seen during the inspection and at other times around the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

- *In this report the word 'competent' refers to those pupils whose work is broadly in line with the standards expected or usually seen nationally. On entry to the school, they comprise approximately half of each year group, except in the current Year 6 where it is just over one third.*
- *The phrase 'more competent' refers to those whose work is higher than the standards usually seen or expected nationally. They comprise approximately one fifth of each year group on entry to the school, but a slightly smaller number in the current Year 6.*
- *The phrase 'less competent' refers to those whose work does not yet reach the standard expected nationally or is lower than that usually seen in other schools nationally. They comprise about one quarter of each year group on entry to the school.*
- *Approximately one quarter of the pupils have identified special educational needs.*
- *The word 'results' refers to how well the pupils do in National Tests at Year 6. Occasionally, the word 'performance' is used instead. Comparisons and evaluations are expressed in terms of averages.*
- *The word 'standards' is used to define how well the pupils do when their work is compared with what others nationally are expected to know, understand and do at Year 6 and Year 8. Occasionally, the term 'work' is used instead. Comparisons and evaluations are expressed in terms of the standards found, or expected nationally.*
- *The word 'level' refers to a particular standard of work described in the National Curriculum.*
- *The word 'achievement' defines how much progress pupils are making. It indicates whether they are doing as well as might reasonably be expected and whether they are working hard enough. It usually refers to how well they are doing at Year 6, compared with when they entered the school and, at Year 8, compared with how well they did in National Tests or other assessments two years before.*

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. A very high proportion of the parents who completed the questionnaire or attended the meeting before the inspection are pleased with the standards achieved. They recognise significant recent improvement, particularly in mathematics. Some expressed a degree of concern about the work and performance of the more competent pupils. The findings of the inspection confirm their views.
2. There has been good improvement since the inspection by HMI in June 2001, particularly in mathematics where the new subject co-ordinators have had an immediate and powerful impact on expectations and standards. In 2002, the school received a national achievement award. The gap in performance between the boys and the girls is closing and achievement is more consistent throughout the school. Overall, achievement is good at Year 6. Most continue to make good progress in Year 7 but, in some subjects, the more competent still do not achieve as well as they should and their progress slows, particularly in Year 8. Achievement at Year 8 is satisfactory overall.
3. Standards in work seen during the inspection in English, mathematics and science are higher than those usually found nationally at Year 6. Overall, they are higher than those recorded in the 2002 National Test results and in line with the school's targets for 2003. These provide a good degree of challenge with the expectation that just over four-fifths will reach the nationally expected standard, Level 4, in English and that just over three-quarters are expected to do so in mathematics. Standards are higher than those usually

found nationally in English and mathematics at Year 8 and broadly in line with the standards expected nationally in science.

4. Results overall in the National Tests in 2002 at Year 6 were broadly in line with the average for all schools but below those for similar schools. The comparison with similar schools should be treated with caution because almost one third of the year group had identified special educational needs, a well above average proportion. Overall, the results indicate satisfactory achievement when compared with pupils' broadly average standards on entry to the school and their earlier National Test results at Year 2 in the primary school. Results in English, mathematics and science were all higher than in 2001. Those in English were broadly in line with the school's targets but the school did not meet them in mathematics.
5. The best performance and most marked improvement in 2002 were in English where the girls did particularly well; results were above average for all schools and also for similar schools nationally. Both the boys and the girls performed better than their age groups nationally. They were similarly ahead of their age groups nationally in science where results were also above average. The girls continue to do better than the boys at this school but the gap is starting to close.
6. Performance in mathematics in 2002 was weaker. The results of both the boys and of the girls were below average for all schools. The proportion reaching the standard expected nationally, Level 4, was very close to the national average but far fewer reached standards higher than this compared with all schools nationally. Consequently, results were below the average for similar schools. The much improved standards in mathematics seen in pupils' work during the inspection are rapidly bringing both the boys' and the girls' performance more closely in line with their work in English and science.
7. The trend in the school's National Test results at Year 6 over the last five years has been broadly in line with the trend nationally. Performance in science has improved steadily, maintaining consistently above average results with the boys usually performing slightly better than the girls. In English, it has fluctuated within an overall improving trend that has gathered significant pace over the last two years, particularly in the performance of the girls. Performance in mathematics has also fluctuated with results of both the boys and the girls remaining below the average for their age groups nationally. There has been steady overall improvement with results in mathematics in 2002 broadly in line with the average for the last three years.
8. Standards overall in other subjects are broadly in line with those usually found nationally at Years 6 and 8. They are higher than this in music and physical education where the very good range of additional activities helps many to reach high standards. They are lower than the nationally expected standards in ICT where there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to apply and extend their ICT skills within all subjects of the curriculum.
9. Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is very good in music and good in physical education and citizenship because schemes of work are very well planned and teaching methods provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively with each other. In some subjects, particularly in Year 8, the more competent pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Consequently, the standards they reach are sometimes not as high as they could be.
10. Standards overall are rising at a good rate because teachers understand well the importance of planning learning so that gains in knowledge, skills and understanding go hand in hand with pupils' personal development. Progress in lessons was most marked

where confidence, concentration and pupils' active participation were encouraged, particularly through well-organised work in groups, and where the very effective use of questions probed and extended understanding.

11. Standards of literacy are higher than those usually found nationally. The pupils' skills in speaking and listening are the strongest feature. Where teaching methods make best use of them, the pupils make greatest progress and their learning is most effective. Many make good progress and achieve well in lessons because they listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They respond confidently to questions and develop good understanding, regularly speaking at length. These skills increase the pace of their learning and result in effective discussion work in groups. Standards in reading are higher than those usually found nationally. Many understand well the meaning of what they read as well as reading the text accurately. Consequently, they have a good grasp of a writer's intention and tone and can make decisions about the reliability of a particular source of information. Standards of writing are broadly in line with the standards that pupils nationally are expected to reach at Year 6 and at Year 8. Pupils can write notes in their preparation books which help them to learn. They can use their discussion and the other support available to produce longer pieces of writing. Presentation of final drafts is good overall.
12. Standards of numeracy are also higher than those which pupils are expected to reach at Year 6 and Year 8. Many pupils build on their good knowledge of tables in Year 5 and show a good grasp of methods for mental and written calculation at Year 8, at which time their knowledge and understanding of how to calculate areas are also good.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Those with statements of special educational needs make good progress in the objectives set at their annual reviews. Others make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. These often include targets in literacy and numeracy. For example, one pupil made 13 months progress in reading test scores over a period of only four months. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards work, particularly when in the smaller withdrawal groups. They make good progress in the great majority of their subjects, where work is well planned, and the classroom assistants support them very well.
14. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They do particularly well in music and physical education. The school is still in the early stages of planning provision for them. The most competent are not always sufficiently challenged, particularly at Year 8.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes towards school and their work, relationships and personal development are very good whilst their behaviour is good. The school's attention to pupils' personal development, as well as the very effective links with parents, make important contributions to these very positive attitudes. There has been steady, further improvement in the good standards prevailing at the time of the previous inspection.
16. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good overall. Based on questionnaire returns, nearly all like school. In the discussions with all year groups, pupils indicate a very good level of satisfaction with what is provided. They are very positive about the help they get and the fair and friendly way in which they are treated by staff. They are also very positive about fellow pupils and the wide range of lunchtime clubs and activities after school. Participation, especially in sporting and musical activities, is very good. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils' attitudes were very good or better. They listen sensibly and

show very good levels of interest, concentration and determination to complete set tasks. Most pupils' favourite subjects and lessons are those where they are practically involved, such as physical education, design and technology, music, art and design and working with computers. The best attitudes and behaviour occur in lessons where expectations are high, work is demanding and pupils are busy and engaged in a variety of practical activities that provide the right level of challenge for them. In some of the lessons which they currently do not enjoy, pupils sometimes speak of wanting more opportunities for oral and practical work and less copying from the board. Those with special educational needs are very positive about the extra support they get.

17. Behaviour is now good overall, having improved steadily in recent years. Throughout the day, nearly all pupils behave well. In corridors, at break-time, lunchtime and between lessons, a strikingly calm and orderly atmosphere prevails. In a few lessons, a small number of boys who have emotional and behavioural difficulties can become inattentive and occasionally interrupt the learning of others. Pupils in all year groups indicate that most get on very well with each other. Whilst there is some bullying, incidents are taken seriously by staff and usually resolved quickly and effectively. Pupils take good care of property and resources. In the previous school year, the level of fixed-term exclusions was below the national average, whilst there has been no permanent exclusion for over two years.
18. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are very good overall. Most adults act as very good role models. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. For example, pupils in all year groups mention the positive support provided by teachers and the fair way in which they are treated as an important reason for their liking school. As a result, the majority are comfortable expressing views and asking questions of their teachers. This assists their learning, particularly when they work very well in pairs and small groups, supporting each others' learning with explanations and suggested answers. The extent to which pupils work successfully in small groups is an important strength in the good quality of their learning.
19. Pupils' personal development is very good overall. The school's central aim to develop the whole person is being very effectively achieved. The wide range of provision to promote pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, has considerable impact on the day-to-day life of the school. Most pupils are comfortable speaking with visitors. When questioned in groups, most express comfortably their viewpoint and listen with respect to the views of others. Their views are clear and perceptive about both the things they like and the things they would change in their school. They routinely show thought for others. For example, most enjoy holding doors open for visitors and other adults. They show concern for others, if they are ill or otherwise upset. Older pupils are comfortable taking responsibility for themselves and others. Well supported by the headteacher, the recently formed school council, comprising one representative and a backup from each form, is making an effective contribution to pupils' understanding and skills in citizenship. Year 8 pupils support pupils in Year 5 who experience difficulties with reading. They also run a thriving games club at lunchtime, help look after areas of the school and help set up audio and other equipment for assemblies.
20. Attendance is satisfactory overall. It has been broadly in line with the national average for the last two years, as also has been the level of unauthorised absence. Where this occurs, it involves just a few pupils. Punctuality is good overall. Most pupils come to school on time and get to their lessons promptly during the day. There is no significant level of internal or external truancy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There has been good improvement since the HMI inspection in June 2001, at which time significant improvements were also reported. The very good response to the findings of the last inspection is well illustrated in the much improved quality of written presentation, indicating that nearly all now take pride in their work and expectations are consistently high. The quality of marking is also more consistent. The involvement of classroom support assistants is now much more effective because they are more fully involved in the planning of lessons. As a result, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
22. The quality of teaching and learning was good or better in approximately three-quarters of lessons seen. It was very good in almost one third and never less than satisfactory in the 75 lessons seen during the inspection. It was very good in English and music, and good in mathematics, science, geography, French and physical education. In all other subjects, it was satisfactory.
23. The strongest features that distinguish the best teaching and learning are:
 - The very good use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and to plan what they need to do next.
 - The very good teaching of literacy skills, particularly speaking and listening.
 - The very good use of questions to involve the pupils fully in the lesson.
 - The very good relationships in lessons that help nearly all to become confident learners.
 - The very skilful organisation of activities in lessons, particularly the use of group work.
 - The very effective contribution to pupils' personal development that encourages them to make decisions for themselves and to work well together.
 - The good use of a wide range of learning resources, particularly in geography, history, art and design, religious education and French that sustains their interest, develops understanding and appeals to their imaginations.
 - The very good contribution made by the classroom support assistants.
24. The most significant areas for further improvement are:
 - The use of ICT to extend the range of learning across all subjects.
 - The challenge provided to the more competent pupils, including the gifted and talented, and particularly in Year 8.
 - The planned teaching of numeracy skills in each subject.
25. There is a good level of specialist subject knowledge. As a result, the work in lessons is generally well matched to the required standards of the National Curriculum. This feature is strongest in French, music and mathematics. Activities in geography are less effectively linked to those standards and many pupils are unaware of what they need to do to reach them.
26. The planning of lessons is good. It is most effective when it builds on the pupils' very good oral skills, providing all with good opportunities for discussion both as a class and in smaller groups. The skilful use of questions is a very good feature in much of the best teaching and learning seen during the inspection. It was a good feature of many lessons in English, mathematics, geography and physical education. Many learn well in science and design and technology because the setting of precise targets helps them know what they have to achieve by the end of the lesson. The planning of most lessons now takes greater account of pupils' needs, consistently identifying what 'all will', 'most

should' and 'some could' achieve. However, the activities in the lesson are not always sufficiently varied to match the scale of objectives described in the planning. Consequently, in many subjects, the level of challenge provided for the more competent pupils is sometimes unsatisfactory.

27. Pupils' learning is generally well managed. The relationships between pupils and teachers are very positive and expectations are good. As a result, nearly all are well motivated and become more confident that they can succeed. The organisation of lessons frequently provides many opportunities for pupils to take an active part: answering questions; contributing to discussion and working with others on a shared task. This helps the school to fulfil very well its two key aims of achievement and personal development. As a result, nearly all develop and demonstrate very positive attitudes in lessons, listening attentively and speaking confidently. In physical education and music lessons, many show a high degree of maturity in making decisions and developing their own ideas. In science, the organisation of investigative work combines a clear framework for all with opportunities for pupils to make their own decisions and draw their own conclusions. In art and design, science, history and music, well-planned activities encourage an imaginative response. Very occasionally, in some lessons in design and technology and physical education in Year 8, a small minority do lose interest in the lesson. Sometimes, pupils with special educational needs have difficulty understanding and responding to questions at the start of lessons because they are not sufficiently matched to their level of understanding. However, overall, nearly all maintain good concentration and are keen to make progress.
28. The very good assessment procedures in several subjects set high expectations and support the accurate monitoring of progress. They are a good feature in the much-improved teaching of mathematics, supporting the effective monitoring of progress. Assessment in science and French is particularly well linked to the standards described in the National Curriculum. Excellent practice in English establishes good links with marking, providing very clear targets for improvement. Target setting is also a good feature in design and technology. The recently revised marking policy defines well the links between marking and assessment. Day-to-day marking is carried out conscientiously. Errors are indicated and the need to do corrections is identified, although sometimes those corrections are not followed up rigorously. Pupils are encouraged to do better through comments on the work. Procedures are less effective in religious education and ICT where current arrangements do not make sufficiently clear to the pupils, particularly the more competent, what they need to do to improve.
29. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good. Classroom support assistants provide very good support because they understand very well the learning needs of each individual whom they support. In the best lessons, there is a good match of work to individual pupils' needs. For example, in an English lesson, pupils worked in different groups, with different tasks. These were further matched to individuals needs by the very good use of the learning support assistant to manage one of the groups.
30. In most subjects, there is a good understanding of how ICT might be used to extend pupils' learning but too few opportunities to do so. This is because the range of facilities is insufficient currently to meet the demand. Plans are in place to improve provision following the completion of necessary improvements to the accommodation. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning in the small withdrawal groups, for example to help pupils to write in paragraphs.
31. Whilst the level of expectation across the school is generally good, and sometimes very good, there remain occasions, particularly in Year 8, where there is insufficient challenge in the work set for the more competent pupils. This is an area for improvement in nearly every subject.

32. Good leadership and management have produced significant further improvements over the last four terms. The National Literacy Strategy is now firmly in place. The strategy for numeracy has not yet been planned in each subject of the curriculum. Whilst the provision of additional activities for the gifted and talented pupils is good, particularly in music, design and technology and physical education, it is not defined with sufficient clarity in the planning of lessons.
33. Those parents who completed the questionnaire and attended the meeting prior to the inspection were very appreciative of the quality of teaching provided and the progress that this has helped their children to make at school. Some expressed a degree of concern about the setting of homework and the challenge provided to some pupils. The findings of this inspection broadly support their views. However, the arrangements for setting homework were found to be good overall, with a simple but effective recording system of what had been set. Because many subjects are taught for just one lesson each week, it is not possible to define the exact evening for its completion. This is left for the individual to decide, resulting sometimes in an uneven distribution over the week.

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

34. The overall provision is good. The planning of the curriculum is very thorough in mathematics and English and includes activities in science that stimulate pupils' imaginations. French is introduced from Year 5 with well-planned activities to develop speaking and listening skills. The allocation of time provides an appropriately strong emphasis on English and mathematics whilst at the same time meeting the statutory requirements for other subjects of the National Curriculum. The very good provision for additional activities, particularly in sport and music, is a strong feature that widens further the range of opportunities and promotes very well pupils' enthusiasm for school.
35. There is one ICT lesson each week for all pupils but there are not enough regular opportunities for them to develop and apply those skills in each subject, as required in the National Curriculum. Many use the Internet and computer programs for research, for example in history, and some schemes of work identify the need and opportunities to use computers. The facilities are not always available when required. Occasionally, during the inspection, they remained unused.
36. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. They are included well in lessons because they are very well supported by the classroom support assistants, and teachers are fully aware of their individual needs. There are regular opportunities each week for pupils to be withdrawn from lessons for additional help. This results in good gains in their literacy and numeracy skills but, because it occurs at the same time each week, they are always withdrawn from the same lesson. There is an enhancement group for some gifted and talented pupils, but the provision they receive is not part of their everyday lessons. The needs of the gifted and talented are not yet identified and provided for consistently across all subjects.
37. The school has an effective strategy for raising standards of literacy throughout the school. The impact on standards is well illustrated in the very good range of opportunities provided for discussion in many lessons and the very good use of questions that develop pupils' thinking skills. Research skills are particularly well developed in history. The school's strategy for promoting numeracy is less effective. Although provision is good in mathematics, the need and opportunities to apply and extend these skills in all other subjects are not made explicit in planning or in setting objectives for lessons

38. There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. This has a powerful impact on pupils' enthusiasm, contributing significantly to the high standards in music and physical education. There is a wide range of successful sports clubs and teams, and a high percentage of pupils take part in various musical groups, as well as individual pupils who benefit from instrumental tuition. There is a wide range of other clubs for activities such as homework, a pen friend club and an ICT club. Pupils also benefit from visits arranged out of school. A planned programme of visits throughout the year, including trips to sites such as Warwick Castle, is a strong feature of the history department. Visitors come into school, representing services such as the police, and theatre groups also perform in school. All these additional opportunities are very effective in broadening pupils' awareness and experience as well as capturing their interest and raising expectations.
39. The planning of the curriculum gains much from the very good links that have been established with other schools, including the adjacent primary school, the other local middle school and with the upper school which the pupils attend after Year 8. This has resulted in a shared and agreed understanding of the standards expected in several subjects of the National Curriculum and has contributed greatly to an agreed approach to planning provision for personal and social development, including, in particular, the recent introduction of citizenship. There has been good improvement in this provision since the last inspection.
40. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. It fulfils very well the high priority afforded it in the aims of the schools. The range and quality of opportunities provide very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
41. The organisation of many activities, in lessons and at other times, contributes much to pupils' rapid growth as individuals as well as their increasing awareness and understanding of what it means to be a member of a group and of the wider school community. Departments have audited provision and there is a strong emphasis on personal development in subject areas as well as in activities around the school generally. Activities such as the 'thought tree', succeed in helping pupils to reflect upon key events in their lives. Spiritual values are highlighted in assemblies, and the beliefs of different faiths are taught in religious education. Pupils are also encouraged to express themselves through activities such as poetry. The importance which the school attaches to personal development is well illustrated in the school's arrangements to hold an annual parents' evening for each year group specifically to discuss it.
42. The links in the very good provision for social and moral development are strong. Moral issues, such as the effect of prejudice, are frequently discussed, for example in personal, social and health education lessons. Discussions frequently centre on pupils' personal experiences, for example relating to issues surrounding family and friends, as well as being broadened out to encompass wider issues such as human rights. School rules and expectations of good behaviour are emphasised, and good relationships are very much based upon mutual respect between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils collaborate well in their learning. They are given frequent opportunities to learn in pairs and groups, and respond well to these opportunities, for example in physical education when developing gymnastic routines. Social responsibility and moral awareness are also fostered through charitable activities, such as fundraising for Euro-aid and putting together food parcels at Harvest Festival. Pupils have the opportunity to exercise responsibility in ventures such as the school council.
43. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. There are opportunities for older pupils to take part in a bi-annual, five-day visit to France, and opportunities to

go on visits to the theatre. There is a multicultural dimension to this provision, for example in work done in art and design on masks from Africa and New Guinea. However, there is relatively little attention paid to non-European music and, although multifaith issues are addressed in religious education, there is a limited emphasis put on the preparation for living in a modern multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school cares well for its pupils by linking very effectively the monitoring of their academic progress and personal development. The appointment of two co-ordinators, for Years 5 to 6 and for Years 7 to 8, has significantly improved the effective management of pupils' progress. Assessment data is used very well in English, mathematics, science and French but less consistently so in several of those other subjects where there are no National Tests.
45. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are very good because they emphasise improvements in attitude as well as progress in knowledge, skills and understanding. The monitoring arrangements recognise good attitudes to work very effectively. This recognition provides pupils with frequent and public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. Their annual reports place an important emphasis on personal development by explicitly assessing performance in relation to effort, organisation, motivation, presentation, behaviour and punctuality. The assembly programme, together with the good personal social and health education provision, give pupils good opportunities to reflect on the lives and needs of themselves and others. The school council now provides pupils with good opportunities to raise and help address a wide variety of issues. School provides a very good range of events and activities outside of lessons.
46. Procedures to promote and ensure pupils' wellbeing are good. Their management is very effective. There are very good arrangements to help pupils settle in when they join the school in Year 5 or at other times. Transfer arrangements at the end of Year 8, including links between subject leaders and those at the upper school, are very well established. There are effective links with social and health services. Child protection procedures and those for looked-after pupils are good. The procedures to follow and the designated staff member are known by adults in the school. Pupils are made appropriately aware of this issue as part of their personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils confirm that they are very well cared for when they are ill or otherwise distressed and would feel comfortable approaching adults should personal problems arise.
47. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are good. Teachers make pupils aware of health and safety issues in lessons such as design and technology, physical education and science. An important emphasis is placed on pupils taking responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. The responsibility and readiness to care for each other are shared. This effectively contributes to the development of a safety conscious attitude. Health and safety forms an important part of the governing body's deliberations. Fire drills, alarm testing and the inspection of portable electrical equipment are routinely carried out. First aid arrangements are well established and appropriate.
48. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory overall. The small number whose attendance records give cause for concern are well known by staff and carefully monitored. Parents are clear about the importance of contacting school in the event of absence. Nearly all do. Full annual attendance is recognised with certificates.

49. The well-planned arrangements to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are put into practice consistently through the positive behaviour policy, classroom expectations and associated commendation systems. These provide a well-understood and accepted framework that sets high standards for pupil behaviour, discipline and personal development. The main emphasis is on recognising and rewarding good behaviour and nearly all pupils respond positively. As part of the school's partnership with parents, they are informed regularly about their children's good behaviour, appearance and attitudes.
50. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying, are very good overall. The sanctions for unacceptable behaviour in lessons or at other times are clearly stated and applied fairly. Parents are effectively involved where concerns arise.
51. Clearly defined referral arrangements are in place. Lunchtime staff feel well supported and involved in measures to recognise good behaviour and address unacceptable behaviour. Because some also fulfil other roles within the school, they are well known to the pupils and establish good relationships with them.
52. Pupils confirm that their work and discussions within personal, social and health education lessons make a very positive contribution to preventing bullying. They also confirm that the measures taken to resolve incidents of bullying, racism or other anti-social behaviour are usually very effective. Reporting arrangements are in place to deal with any racist remarks or behaviour, should they arise.
53. There are very good systems to assess pupils' progress. The procedures for collecting and using data across the school are very good overall. Levels of attainment for each pupil across the curriculum, collected centrally each term and overseen by the co-ordinators for Years 5 to 6 and Years 7 to 8, enable the progress of individual pupils to be tracked with increasing rigour. The use of that information by pastoral staff to mentor individual pupils and involve their parents is an example of very good practice.
54. In English, mathematics and science, very good use is made of test marks at regular intervals during the school year. These are compared carefully with National Test results and those from standardised tests of pupils' cognitive ability (CATs). This information is increasingly well used to inform planning, including the identification of underachievement, the monitoring of specific groups of pupils and also to identify any subject where progress is slower than elsewhere.
55. The use of assessment data is less well established in some other subjects. There are good procedures in French, history and physical education but generally its use is less effective in those subjects where there are no National Tests at Year 6 or optional National Tests in other years.
56. There are good arrangements to assess the progress of pupils with identified special educational needs. Annual reviews are managed well to include the contributions of teachers, parents, learning support assistants and pupils. There is a good level of attendance by parents. The school also makes good use of the services of outside agencies, for example by using the psychological service and the speech and language therapy service. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are clear and thorough, and the individual education plans are well written. These give good advice to parents, for example encouraging them to help pupils improve their reading by asking them questions about the book after each short passage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

57. There is a very good partnership with parents, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Its increasing strength is an important feature of the school's overall continuing improvement. The school works hard and very effectively to inform and involve parents. They contribute well to this effective partnership by getting pupils to attend school regularly, checking that homework is done and supporting pupils' progress by attending progress reviews.
58. Many of the large number of parents who returned the questionnaire prior to the inspection appreciate and value what the school provides and achieves. The findings of the inspection support fully the parents' positive views and one of their main concerns. Most consider that their sons and daughters like school, make good progress and are expected to work hard. They value the approachability and helpfulness of staff. Most agree that their children are taught well and that the school is well led and managed. They appreciate the significant improvement under the leadership of the current headteacher. They are very positive about the opportunities outside of lessons and the school's effectiveness in helping pupils become mature and responsible. However, a significant minority have well-founded concerns about the lack of challenge in some lessons for more competent learners. Their other concerns about homework levels, the information on pupils' progress and pupil behaviour are not confirmed by the findings of this inspection.
59. Links with parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Staff are approachable and generally responsive to parents' concerns. Pupils' homework planners enable very effective two-way communication between school and home. The school has begun to regularly seek the views of parents on issues such as the change to the school uniform and Year 5 induction arrangements. The quality of information to support pupils' progress, including pupils' annual reports, is very good overall. There are termly updates on progress through the pastoral parents' evening, subject parents' evening and the written annual report. The pupils' annual reports are of good quality. Current performance and effort level, together with areas for improvement, are effectively shared with parents. Half-termly newsletters, together with other letters and notes, keep parents very well informed on ongoing school life and planned curriculum work. The prospectus gives a very clear outline of the school's expectations and character. The governors' annual report very clearly informs parents on the work of governors and school improvements and achievement. The arrangements to involve and inform parents of those pupils with special educational needs are very good.
60. Parents' involvement with the work of the school makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school. They respond positively to individual requests to discuss issues such as pupil progress, behaviour and attendance. Parents routinely contact the school in the event of absence and, as a result, unauthorised absence is confined to very few pupils. Parental attendance is high at parents' meetings, including those for Year 5 induction, and meetings with form tutors once pupils have settled into their form. A range of productions is well attended and highly regarded. They respond well when invited to attend assemblies. A group of enthusiastic parents in the home/school association make a valued contribution through fundraising and social events such as monthly pupil discos, pupil talent shows, quizzes and raffles. These activities, also help to establish and maintain good informal links between staff, parents and pupils, as all parties are involved in many of the events. The events, therefore, also contribute to pupils' wider social and personal development and the positive sense of community that prevails.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The headteacher provides good leadership. He has very successfully revitalised the school by defining precisely what needs to be done and communicating very clearly his expectations. His thoughtful, sensitive, supportive leadership has done much to renew the morale of the staff, giving them confidence to succeed as well as to identify where they need to improve. He has managed the contribution of the senior management team very well, including the appointment of two key stage co-ordinators to further improve the monitoring of standards and the fostering of positive attitudes to learning across the school. He has been particularly successful in encouraging his colleagues to reflect upon and evaluate carefully the impact of their teaching on the progress of the pupils. Consequently, the rate of improvement is good.
62. The school development plan provides a well-defined agenda for action. Its priorities are very well linked to the aims of the school; raising achievement and promoting the personal development of all pupils. Responsibilities, timescales and the intended improvements are well defined. The very thorough arrangements to monitor teaching, together with well-organised arrangements for performance management and staff development, have had considerable impact on standards in a relatively short space of time. This owes much to the very good teamwork that is now a hallmark of the school.
63. The headteacher has identified clearly the school's longer-term direction, establishing across the school high expectations and the confidence to succeed. The very good teamwork and well-defined delegation of responsibilities enable key staff to manage their responsibilities well in fulfilling the aims of the school.
64. The positive response to the findings of the last inspection has resulted in a well-documented analysis of the school's longer-term development, and planning for the forthcoming year is to include more measurable indicators by which to evaluate the impact on standards, the quality of provision and the overall success of actions and decisions.
65. Current arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are very thorough, including the regular observation of lessons and the sampling of pupils' work. Most recently, the impact of the new policy for marking has been monitored by the senior management team, and increasingly effective use is made of assessment data to monitor progress, particularly in English, mathematics, science and French. As a result, both standards and expectations are rising and regular checks ensure that policy is put into practice with increasing consistency. The use of ICT, including the use of commercial software, is broadly satisfactory in managing information about the pupils' progress.
66. Teamwork is particularly effective across the school and within the many small subject departments, in several of which there are part-time teachers. Subject leadership is good, as is also the leadership of year groups. This was well illustrated in the very accurate self-evaluations undertaken as a contribution to the inspection. Many defined very accurately what they do well and where they need to improve further.
67. Leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. Leadership is purposeful and the learning support assistants are well trained, and used very well in the great majority of lessons. The new Code of Practice is in place, and the procedures and principles are very well understood. The school is aware of the requirements of the Disability Act 2001, and has made efforts to improve access for pupils with disabilities. Some problems remain, however, in providing suitable access to the upper floors of the school.
68. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors work very effectively with the headteacher and staff, readily sharing information and views that are informed

by regular visits to school and subject departments. As a result, governors have a very good understanding of school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have a firm grasp of their major responsibilities which they discharge effectively through departmental links and well-run sub-committee and governing body meetings. Meeting agendas are shaped by governors and the headteacher is very clear about what is expected by the governing body. There is a strong strategic element to their work. They have established effective practical measures to hold school to account, in relation to identified areas for improvement. For example, the action plan, arising from the previous inspection, has been regularly monitored and reviewed. Three-year financial projections and premises plans are further significant examples of their increasingly effective strategic approach.

69. Financial planning is good, combining very well administered controls with the careful allocation of income to match the school's planning priorities. The headteacher and governors demonstrate a very good understanding of financial planning and are very well supported by the school's finance officer. Budgets are monitored regularly. The slightly higher than usual amount of money left at the end of the last financial year results from the planned expenditure on improvements to facilities and buildings and to some funding that is allocated for more than one financial year.
70. Most of the principals of best value are applied well. In addition to the careful application of those involving expenditure, the school consults regularly with its parents about how well it is doing and the governors set challenging targets for further improvement. Because there are relatively few middle schools nationally, comparing performance with other schools is more difficult but attention is given to comparing performance and provision with other local middle schools.
71. The school manages its resources well. Recent appointments in mathematics have further improved the quality of specialist teaching. Overall, provision is now satisfactory to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The timetable is designed to overcome any particular difficulties arising from the higher than usual number of part-time teachers, and the deployment of classroom support assistants is very effective. The staff development needs of both teachers and support staff are well met. The arrangements help them to fulfil the objectives of the school development plan. Newly appointed staff are well supported. As a result, the aims and policies of the school are implemented consistently.
72. Resources for learning are satisfactory. Most subject areas have adequate books to enable teachers to teach the subject effectively. Resources are good in English and in music. The music department is well equipped with disk drive keyboards, and many students have instrumental music lessons. The quantity and quality of tools and utensils are unsatisfactory in design and technology.
73. There is good provision of computers within specialist facilities but it is insufficient to meet the needs of every subject in addition to the timetabled ICT lesson for all each week. There are additional computers in many areas of the school, but nearly all of them are unsuitable for running modern software. There are insufficient opportunities to cover robotics, and control. The library needs to be developed further if it is to provide the resources which students need for research and private study.
74. The accommodation is very well managed. The recently appointed site manager has introduced very good arrangements to support the well-planned improvement of services in order to achieve efficiency savings. Provision is now satisfactory and improving.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. In the short time since it was last inspected by HMI in June 2001, the school has made good improvement, consolidating what it does well. In order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:

(1) Improve the National Test results in mathematics at Year 6 by:

- a) setting and sharing with pupils and their parents the targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils;
- b) defining in schemes of work the expected standards for different groups of pupils; and
- c) concentrating in particular on providing still more challenge for those pupils who are working at levels about those expected nationally.

(Paragraphs: 6, 7, 87)

(2) Increase the challenge offered to more competent pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, particularly in Year 8 by:

- a) providing activities and targets in lessons that match the most challenging objectives set;
- b) promoting consistently the development of thinking skills across the school;
- c) providing additional challenges within the homework set;
- d) identifying the gifted and talented pupils in each subject;
- e) seeking additional funding for their mentoring; and
- f) setting additional research tasks and group activities that help these pupils to pursue their special interests in the subject.

(Paragraphs: 2, 9, 14, 24, 31, 32, 36 107, 108, 121, 131)

(3) Improve the provision for ICT, including opportunities to practise those skills in all subjects of the curriculum by:

- a) increasing further the specialist facilities;
- b) providing more computers within subject areas;
- c) defining more fully the needs and opportunities for ICT in schemes of work; and
- d) monitoring the impact of ICT on standards in each subject.

(Paragraphs: 8, 9, 24, 30, 35, 111, 127, 142, 151, 157, 162)

(4) Provide planned opportunities for all pupils to apply and develop numeracy skills in each subject of the curriculum by:

- a) setting key numeracy objectives for each year group in each subject;
- b) identifying those opportunities in each subject's scheme of work, particularly those which require pupils to demonstrate and apply their understanding of number; and
- c) designing activities and learning resources that promote numeracy skills in each subject.

(Paragraphs: 24, 37, 102)

In addition, the inspection team recommends the governing body to consider the following other matters when drawing up its action plan:

- The use of the standards described in the National Curriculum to inform assessment and set targets in those subjects where there are no National Tests.
- The pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in British society.
- The development of the school library to support pupils' research skills.
- The quality and quantity of tools and utensils in design and technology.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	23	30	21	0	0	0
Percentage	1	31	40	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	395
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	97

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

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.3

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	58	44	102

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	44	42	55
	Girls	40	30	42
	Total	84	72	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (75)	71 (67)	95 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	37	52
	Girls	43	31	44
	Total	84	68	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (74)	67 (72)	94 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
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 of pupils on roll
389
0
1
0
0
0
1
2
1
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
10	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

No ethnic group recorded

0

0

0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.24
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	291

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	83.4
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	28.6
Key Stage 3	25.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	1,179,413
Total expenditure	1,087,958
Expenditure per pupil	2,932
Balance brought forward from previous year	51,050
Balance carried forward to next year	142,500

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.72
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.44

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	437
Number of questionnaires returned	251

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	37	56	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	30	60	8	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	57	15	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	52	23	5	2
The teaching is good.	24	69	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	54	23	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	43	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	51	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	52	20	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	29	60	7	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	57	10	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	51	5	1	2

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 **very good**.

Strengths

- Results in national tests are above average and standards of work are higher than usually found nationally.
- Very good teaching methods support very effective learning and personal development.
- Assessment is used very well to set individual targets for improvement.
- Very good leadership has identified the right priorities for further improvement.

Areas for improvement

- The use of ICT to widen the range of pupils' learning.
- More emphasis on the needs of the less competent pupils in order to raise standards still further.

76. Results in the National Tests at Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average for all schools and for similar schools. This was an improvement since the previous inspection. Approximately one third reached standards higher than those which pupils nationally are expected to reach; this is broadly in line with the national average. Results have risen significantly over the last four years. Improvement has been ahead of the national trend.
77. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm these results. They are higher than those usually found nationally at Year 6 and at Year 8. Pupils achieve well. Standards on entry to the school are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6, and maintain it through to the end of Year 8. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall.
78. This is primarily because of very good teaching. Teachers manage behaviour very effectively so that pupils spend the maximum amount of time learning. They move quickly from one activity to another and settle down promptly to concentrate on their work. This enables teachers to plan a variety of activities for different groups and to direct their own attention to the specific needs of individuals in each lesson.
79. Standards of speaking and listening are a particular strength throughout the school. Teaching methods make very good use of the pupils' readiness to respond orally in lessons. Pupils extend their answers to questions, often to several sentences, and this increases the pace of learning when the teacher talks with the whole class. They also use discussion very effectively in small group activities. This builds confidence and helps the less competent to make good gains in understanding.
80. Most pupils' reading skills are higher than those usually found nationally. Many learn quickly to appreciate the features of different types of writing. This helps them to see the writer's intention. Teachers use questions very effectively to help the more competent to examine the text in order to grasp its full meaning. In one Year 5 lesson, the more competent readers responded quickly to some dark humour in an unusual version of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. One of the effects of this well-planned questioning is that it promotes skills of deduction and reading between the lines. It gives less support to the

less competent pupils who are still trying to understand what actually happens in the story, and they can become too passive in these parts of the lesson.

81. Standards of writing are average. They are higher when pupils follow a particular model, such as preparing a formal report or a letter of application. More competent writers in Year 8 successfully imitated the way Charles Dickens structured sentences within a paragraph. When writing spontaneously to express their own ideas, pupils make more errors, particularly with basic punctuation.
82. Teachers make excellent use of marking and assessment to motivate pupils by linking their praise to very specific achievements and by setting very clear targets. They discuss the work frequently and help pupils to evaluate their own work. However, they do not identify the standards which the most competent pupils should aspire to in every lesson.
83. Leadership and management are very good. One of the strongest features is the way teachers use the data which is collected when they mark and assess pupils' work. They watch progress from every angle, identifying emergent weaknesses and adapting their plans to deal with them. As a result, there has been good progress in improving the presentation of written work, and there is a strong emphasis on improving the boys' writing. In particular, they are concentrating on improving punctuation.
84. The teachers' planning of the curriculum fulfils very well the aims of the school. They select which texts and materials to study, not only to illustrate skills and techniques, but also as a carefully planned contribution to personal development. For example, a specially collated series of writings about slavery provides Year 8 students with insight into evidence of bias within factual reporting. It also enables pupils to talk and write about moral issues and the effects of slavery on our culture and history. There is an appropriate range of additional activities, including theatre visits and competitions, as well as a popular pen-pal link with a school in Turkey. However, there is too little emphasis on the use of ICT. Insufficient use is made of drama to support the learning of the less competent.
85. The principle improvements since the previous inspection have been the use of data and the greater emphasis on teaching basic literacy in Years 7 and 8. Both of these improvements have led to very effective planning for every lesson so that teachers are sustaining good progress by meeting continually changing needs.

The provision for literacy in other subjects of the curriculum

86. The school provides very good support for literacy skills within the literacy hour in Years 5 and 6, and within English lessons. It has made a good start putting the National Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy into effect. A very detailed audit of current standards enabled teachers to select some appropriate priorities. Progress over the first year was very carefully audited and progress within lessons was monitored across every subject. The co-ordinator provided good support through guidance and materials for use in lessons. Subject teachers, for example in art and design, make good use of frameworks to help pupils to write about their practical work. Others, for example in science, make good use of discussion to improve the quality of learning. Most subject areas teach and display the spelling of crucial vocabulary. There is good additional support for pupils who are not reaching expected standards by Year 7, but the library does not support effective independent study.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards of work seen are higher than the most recent National Test results and above those usually found nationally.
- There is very good use of assessment to analyse pupils' needs and inform planning.
- The contribution of classroom support assistants supports well the progress of less competent pupils.
- Classroom management and relationships between pupils and their teachers are good.

Areas for improvement

- National Test results, particularly the proportion obtaining levels higher than those expected nationally.
- The level of challenge provided for the more competent, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

87. Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with those usually found nationally. National Test results in 2002 at Year 6 were below average for all schools and for similar schools. The proportion attaining levels above those expected nationally was well below average, and approximately one third had identified special educational needs.
88. Since then, standards have risen. Pupils now achieve well so that standards of work seen during the inspection at Year 6 and at Year 8 are now higher than those usually found nationally. Standards at Year 6 are significantly better than the most recent National Test results. The less competent work out accurately groups of equivalent fractions and the majority of pupils calculate with good understanding the equivalence of percentages, decimal and vulgar fractions, using graphical methods to convert from one system of units to another. At Year 8, many calculate accurately the areas of circles and plot mappings given algebraically in all four quadrants. The trend of improvement in standards over the last four years has been steady. It has risen significantly since the last inspection in 2001 as a result of the good leadership of the two subject co-ordinators.
89. Good progress was demonstrated in many pupils' written work. They were able to deal with increasingly difficult examples on the topics learnt, for example from mappings using only positive numbers to ones that included negatives. Much of the work sampled during the inspection included topics at National Curriculum levels higher than expected for the age of the pupil. For example, areas of circles, a Level 6 topic, were covered in Year 8. For the most competent, however, the level of challenge was inconsistent. Orally, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of previous learning and were confident in applying it to new work.
90. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 was good overall with some satisfactory lessons. The very good use of assessment ensures that teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils' needs and they plan accordingly. In good lessons, the grouping of the pupils according to their levels of competence and the careful matching of questions to their level of understanding provide a good degree of challenge and pace. These factors result in pupils making good progress. Where lessons were judged satisfactory, this targeting was less successful and the level of challenge offered to the most competent was inconsistent. Good liaison with the special educational needs department ensures that mathematics staff are aware of individual pupil's needs. Close co-operation with

classroom support assistants means they are well prepared for lessons and make a valuable contribution to the teaching and learning. As a result, those pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning.

91. The quality of teaching and learning was good in Years 7 and 8. Lessons proceeded at a good pace on topics presenting an appropriate level of challenge. For example, the less competent pupils achieved well in a lesson on linear equations while the top Year 7 set achieved well when plotting linear graphs. Teachers' expectations of all pupils were high. Very good use of open-ended questions challenged very well the understanding of the most competent.
92. Lesson planning was good with learning objectives matched to the different levels of competence within the group. Appropriate use of the three-part lesson, often used to develop appropriate numeracy skills, and good use of homework both aided learning.
93. Presentation, an issue across the school at the previous inspection, has improved to the extent that it was never less than satisfactory and nearly always good or better, indicating a good level of expectation. Sometimes, the worksheets did not encourage good habits of presentation because they provided insufficient space for setting out calculations. The marking of work is regular and helpful with errors indicated and required corrections identified, although there is no formal system of following up corrections to see that they have been done. Comments are used to encourage pupils, but not to advise on how to improve performance.
94. The quality of learning is consistently well managed. A strong feature is the considerable gains made in confidence that result from the very good relationships between the pupils and their teachers and the very good use of discussion that engages everyone in the lesson and helps to clarify and confirm a good level of understanding. As a result, nearly all enjoy their lessons in mathematics.
95. Good teaching contributes much to pupils' personal development. Many confidently gave articulate explanations in front of others in lessons. The good use of questions, carefully matched to meet individual needs, encouraged them to think for themselves and to reason logically. The good use of display further promotes high expectations and positive attitudes.
96. Basic numeracy skills are taught well as a natural part of the subject. As a result, the pupils' attainment in numeracy is in line with national expectations. The development of literacy skills is supported by displays of technical words. Staff are careful to use the required vocabulary and take steps to ensure that pupils understand and use it. The formal checking of spelling is less well established.
97. Basic equipment for teaching and learning is satisfactory but provision for ICT is currently unsatisfactory. Plans are in place to improve the facilities.
98. Leadership and management are good. Very effective teamwork and the regular monitoring of teaching and learning contribute much to improving standards, consistent practice and high expectations. Planning to improve results at Year 6, including the setting of targets, is very thorough and is already having a powerful impact on the quality of work seen. The progress of the pupils is monitored rigorously. This information is used very well in the planning of lessons. With the good support of the senior management team and with appropriate use of outside consultants, strategies have been prioritised in a strategic plan that supports the school development plan. Extra funding for more equipment has been sought successfully from the school and the parents association.

99. With two specialist mathematics teachers, the staffing of the subject is much improved and now good. Very good relationships within the department and with special educational needs staff are a strength. Teamwork is good and all are involved in decision making concerning the work of the department. The monitoring of teaching and learning through classroom observation is well established. Feedback is used appropriately to raise standards. All staff are committed to improvement and are working hard to bring it about. They give freely of their time outside lessons to support the pupils' learning.
100. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' presentation of their work is no longer an issue. Poor behaviour has been eliminated in lessons, the gap between the standards of the boys and the girls is closing, standards are rising and achievement is good.

Numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum

101. Standards of numeracy across the curriculum are in line with those expected nationally. Most are competent in both their written work and in dealing with mental calculations. Year 5 pupils know their tables and can perform simple multiplication and division and can measure accurately. By Year 8, pupils are able to substitute numbers into simple formulae, plot graphs in all four quadrants and calculate areas and perimeters of plane shapes. A good feature is their confidence in using the skills they have to give answers in class. This ensures that the progress of pupils is not hindered by lack of appropriate numeracy skills in any curriculum area.
102. In mathematics, numeracy skills are taught well. The beginnings of a three-part lesson often incorporate activities to develop an understanding of some aspect of numeracy. Numeracy skills are used in the different subject areas as the need arises but there are no formalised attempts to plan opportunities within schemes of work to develop numeracy skills further. In science, there is a good use of numeracy and the pupils' understanding, including that of the least competent, supports the learning of science. In French, the 24-hour clock and shopping situations practise mental arithmetic skills, while in art and design, pupils practise estimation and symmetry skills. The overall quality of provision to teach numeracy skills across the school remains unsatisfactory.
103. A start has been made to co-ordinating the teaching of numeracy skills across the curriculum. This has included several training activities for teachers and for classroom support assistants. An evening event to raise parents' awareness about the teaching of mathematics was held immediately prior to the inspection.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Standards and National Test results at Year 6 are above average.
- The quality of the curriculum, which fires pupils' imagination and leads to good or very good learning.
- The excellent procedures for assessing standards and progress help pupils to know how well they are doing and raise motivation.
- High-quality teaching contributes to students' scientific and personal development, improves their study skills and creates a positive environment for learning.

Areas for improvement

- The rate of progress and achievement at Year 8.
- The use of ICT to extend the range of learning.

104. Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with those usually found nationally. Achievement is good at Year 6 with standards higher than those which pupils nationally are expected to reach. Standards are similar to the 2002 National Test results which were above average for all schools and broadly in line with similar schools. A small number of pupils gain very high results. When compared with the results of standardised tests taken on entry to the school, the work seen during the inspection in Year 6 represents good achievement. In Year 7, nearly all continue to make good progress but it slows in Year 8 so that standards are broadly in line with those found nationally and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Their rate of progress is greater at Year 6 than at Year 8 where it is satisfactory.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All lessons seen during the inspection were good or better, and a quarter were very good. Teaching is slightly better in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 7 and 8. The new curriculum has a lot of activities which stimulate pupils' interest, so that they work hard and learn well. They gain a good understanding which makes learning easier. Learning is consistently good or very good in lessons throughout the school, and pupils are particularly good at understanding the ideas which underpin the subject, for example about the particulate nature of matter, or about respiration.
106. Teachers plan lessons well and use the same style in all lessons, which gives pupils a good sense of security. They know what each pupil should achieve during the lesson. In the best lessons, pupils have the learning objectives in mind throughout the lesson and, at the end, they know that they have achieved what was intended. All teachers know their pupils very well. They adapt their questions carefully to the needs of individuals in the class and support all pupils very well, including those with special educational needs. More competent pupils are well supported within the framework of the lesson, through questioning and through additional challenges.
107. More could still be done for the more competent to help them to reach their full potential, for example in terms of independent learning and research. Assessment is of excellent quality and based on national standards. Teachers use the results of assessment to inform their lesson plans. This helps to make sure that pupils make good progress because they always have something to do and are rarely left waiting long for the teacher's attention. All these good features were illustrated in lessons in which pupils planned investigations using a template which directed them very clearly to the correct method but which challenged them to make the important decisions themselves. In one of these lessons, the teacher took the opportunity to develop pupils' personal skills further, including those of citizenship. This helped pupils to work harmoniously together, contributing much to their personal development.
108. In lessons which were good, rather than very good, teachers gave less support to the most competent. They made generally good progress but some would have benefited from attempting a computer- or book-based research activity. Specialist teachers, some of whom are especially skilled in working with younger pupils, carry their skills into working with Year 8 to good effect. However, the pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and their progress slows. In all lessons, there is good support for numeracy and very good support for literacy. However, many opportunities for using ICT are missed because of lack of equipment in laboratories and the difficulties associated with booking the computer room for lessons.

109. Leadership and management are very good. There is a very good sense of direction in the department, which the head of science communicates very well to her colleagues. The department has very well-defined priorities for development. National guidelines are used skilfully and thoughtfully to develop schemes of work that are very well matched to the particular needs of all pupils. This is a major strength. The head of department has also recognised that the school should do more to raise standards, especially of the more competent. A very good system for assessing pupils' progress has an excellent impact on learning and helps pupils to understand how well they are doing, but the effects of this have not yet been seen in test results. The department has identified the areas where professional development is needed and has forged good links with the upper school and with the co-ordinator for the National Numeracy Strategy to support this process.
110. The new curriculum involves a lot of practical activities and the regular use of ICT. Currently, resources are inadequate to cope with these needs in terms of access to ICT, technician time for preparation of equipment and in terms of levels of general laboratory equipment and consumables.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The paintings of many pupils are bright and colourful.
- The good use of stimulating resources results in the best lessons.
- The good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough use of ICT to support and extend pupils' work.
- Insufficient opportunities to experiment adventurously with materials.
- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to experience at first hand the work of other artists.

111. Standards on entry to the school are in line with those found nationally and are similarly so at Year 6. Pupils' achievement at Year 6 is satisfactory. They make steady gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject. They learn to make clay masks, based on the study of the art of Africa and New Guinea, which are carefully made and brightly coloured. Their printed textiles work shows a sound grasp of the use of colour and pattern, and their collage work is lively and bright. However, they do not make enough progress in their skills in investigating the work of other artists and using this to inform their own work. This is because they do not use sketchbooks to bring together their ideas and influences, which means that their research is limited in scope and does not have enough effect on their own work. In addition, not enough use is made of ICT to provide alternative approaches to designing and developing pupils' ideas. Overall, achievement at Year 6 is satisfactory.
112. Standards in Year 8 are in line with those found nationally. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most make sound gains in skills over time. Many make good gains in their skills in painting. Their landscape work is bright, colourful and atmospheric, representing the effect of sunlight shining through a stormy sky. Pupils also learn to make small sculptures, based on the work of the pop artists, which show a growing awareness of three-dimensional form. The most competent produce closely observed drawings from shoes, which accurately record the fine details of laces and patterned stitching. The drawing of competent and less competent pupils, however, lacks confidence and variety in scale and materials. In addition, pupils' experimentation with materials lacks excitement and a sense of discovery. Pupils with special educational needs make

satisfactory progress overall but the work set is not always well matched to their particular needs.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons, interesting resources, such as brightly patterned plates and vases, are used as subjects for drawing. These create good levels of interest, pupils are keen to work and they try hard, building up their drawings by carefully following the patterns and shapes. This produces good learning and contributes very well to their imaginative development. Teachers also give good individual advice, such as how to blend colours evenly by using thin washes of colour, and pupils make good gains in their skills in painting as a result. In other lessons, however, the tasks set are not exciting enough and materials are used in very ordinary ways. This is particularly so in drawing, which too often is carried out on a small scale. This means that pupils begin to lose interest and concentration and they begin to chat, without concentrating fully on their work. The pace of the lesson then slows and learning is no better than satisfactory as a result.
114. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is now established, although it is too early for the impact to be seen on standards of work. While the accommodation is satisfactory overall, the teaching room is rather cramped and a lack of storage facilities means that equipment is stored around the room. This produces a rather cluttered effect, reducing the impact of the displays of work and making it harder to exemplify high standards. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development, particularly by encouraging pupils to appreciate the beauty of landscape and to reflect on the moods created by music and pictures. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to experience the work of other artists at first hand, for example by visiting galleries or workshops. This limits the subject's contribution to their cultural development to a level that is no better than satisfactory overall.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship in Years 7 and 8 is **good**.

Strengths

- Good leadership which clearly defines the aims and expectations for both pupils and teachers.
- Thorough planning and monitoring of citizenship provision.
- In subject areas in which citizenship issues are explicitly addressed, pupils make good gains in understanding, and particularly in personal development.

Areas for improvement

- Some subject areas do not make sufficiently explicit reference in their planning to how they will contribute to the citizenship programme.

115. Standards at the end of Year 8 are similar to those usually found in schools nationally. Nearly all pupils show sound knowledge and understanding of several aspects of society. Those in Year 7 understand well how rules and discipline helped to mould the society of Ancient Rome. Through imaginative discussion and writing, most learn some of the ethical and moral dilemmas which face soldiers in a conflict such as the Falklands, or when considering an emotive topic such as killing animals for fur. As part of the personal, social and health education programme, pupils are keen to discuss a range of issues; they are encouraged to reflect on their self-esteem and learn the rights and responsibilities implicit in being a responsible member of society. Much of the debate and writing is of a high quality, for example when pupils communicate with

Turkish pen friends or when contributing to a school newspaper, because they have good literacy skills.

116. Gifted and talented pupils have the opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding of citizenship issues in enhancement group sessions although, during the inspection, it was not possible to observe these and evaluate pupils' progress.
117. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 also make good progress in learning to be responsible citizens through involvement in a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. The school is very successful in giving pupils confidence and good communication skills. For example, they represent their views on the school council.
118. Citizenship is taught both as a timetabled lesson and as a feature of lessons in many other subjects. The teaching observed during the inspection was mostly effective in developing good social awareness, for example in science, when the issue of pupils working within peer groups which they would not necessarily have chosen for themselves was discussed. In a personal, social and health education lesson, the teacher handled the sensitive issue of prejudice effectively. Overall, provision makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development because it concentrates on nurturing positive attitudes, a readiness to work with each other and a good knowledge and understanding of a wide range of social issues.
119. Leadership and management are good. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress in citizenship are at an early stage of development. However, the school is actively evaluating its citizenship provision and how pupils' achievements can be effectively recorded and used to inform planning. Provision has been audited and a coherent programme put together, although some subject areas such as mathematics, design and technology and religious education do not always make explicit in their lesson planning how citizenship issues are to be addressed. However, the success of the school's approach thus far is evident in the fact that the implementation and monitoring of its citizenship programme were important factors in its winning of the Healthy Schools' Award.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- A varied and interesting curriculum motivates many pupils well.
- The support which teachers give to pupils offers them a sense of security and introduces them to the notion of making design decisions and taking responsibility for their own learning.
- Some of the work produced is of very high quality.

Areas for improvement

- To raise the quality of the work produced, so that pupils are proud of it.
- To improve the quality of assessment of pupils' work, to link assessment to national standards and to use the assessment information to improve pupils' awareness of their own progress.
- To make more use of ICT, particularly in designing, robotics and control.
- To improve the quality and maintenance of tools in the workshop and in the food and textiles area.

120. Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with those usually found nationally and similarly so at Year 6, representing satisfactory achievement overall. Nearly all

continue to make satisfactory progress thereafter to reach standards in line with those expected nationally at Year 8. Achievement is satisfactory overall with some producing work of a very high standard. Some work is, however, below the nationally expected standard, Level 4. Those pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

121. In lessons, pupils are confident in working in resistant materials, food technology and textiles. Some work of a very high quality is produced and pupils regularly enter for, and reach, the finals of national competitions. They sometimes use a variety of techniques in a single project, including electronics. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were working on a 'steady hand' game involving working in acrylic plastic, wood and metal. They were confident in using a hand drill and a jig to bore holes in a piece of acrylic and appreciated the working properties of the plastic. But some lose interest, especially in Year 8, and fail to appreciate the importance of really careful working to produce the best results.
122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in both resistant materials lessons and in textiles. Teachers explain very clearly what pupils have to do. They set precise targets for the lesson so that pupils know what they are expected to have achieved by the end of the lesson. However, the culture of celebrating high quality is underdeveloped except for a few pupils whose enthusiasm is fired by the prospect of entry to competitions outside school. Year 8 pupils sometimes become careless and slipshod in their work, failing to pay attention when the teacher is explaining a new technique. In a satisfactory food technology lesson, most pupils made really good progress in planning a pasta dish, but a minority made little progress, preferring to sit chatting when they did not know what to do next. On the other hand, in a good textiles lesson, the good use of a learning support assistant and a project to which pupils could relate well meant that pupils remained on task and made good progress.
123. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has a good vision for the subject and communicates it well to his colleagues. The schemes of work are good and cover all the main areas of the subject. Although he monitors the progress of his pupils well in lessons, assessment is insufficiently linked to the standards described in the National Curriculum and there is no portfolio of work to illustrate those standards.
124. Resources for teaching design and technology are unsatisfactory. Access to computers in lessons is very difficult as those in specialist classrooms are unsuitable. Tools in the resistant materials workshop are poorly maintained. It is almost impossible for pupils to produce high quality work with them. There are often insufficient suitable utensils in the food technology room.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and the expectation of pupils to think for themselves are good.
- Provision to help more competent pupils reach their full potential.
- The development of literacy skills at all levels is good.
- Behaviour, attitudes and relationships are good.

Areas for improvement

- The development of ICT skills in everyday geography work.
- The use of the standards described in the National Curriculum to set targets and assess progress.

125. Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with those that pupils are expected to reach nationally. The work observed in lessons and the sampling of work during the inspection confirm that standards at Year 6 are similar to those usually found nationally. Achievement is satisfactory. At Year 8, standards are broadly in line with those usually found nationally, but the more competent achieve well and standards are higher than this. Overall, achievement is satisfactory.
126. In Years 5 and 6, most make good gains in geographical skills, becoming familiar with maps, plans, measurement and the use of co-ordinates. Many applied these skills well in a Year 5 lesson, using the local ordnance survey maps to locate types of settlement. They gain good spatial awareness through mapwork and they develop number skills well, using percentages and constructing and interpreting graphs of various types, for example when analysing car ownership, population pyramids and company share values. Literacy skills are taught well, particularly in Years 7 and 8 where many produce a good volume of written work in a variety of styles covering such topics as 'The Green Revolution in India'. Many illustrate their work well with maps and sketches, showing increasing understanding of geographical processes and patterns. Less competent pupils make good progress in the organisation of their written work through the use of writing frames, and extension work is provided in order to challenge the more competent. As a result, the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well met.
127. Many make particularly good progress in developing investigative skills. Very good examples were seen in the Year 7 project work on national parks. Literacy skills are further improved by encouragement to use a correct vocabulary, which is further strengthened through good reading aloud and the use of glossaries. The standards of presentation are high in Years 7 and 8 but, currently, pupils make insufficient use of ICT.
128. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It was never less than satisfactory in lessons seen during the inspection. Lessons are well prepared and consist of a number of activities supported by good use of audio visual aids and simple demonstrations. In a Year 8 lesson, the teacher used a skipping rope and blocks of wood to very effectively demonstrate features of an earthquake. Lessons move with pace and pupils are interested and concentrate well as a result. Good question and answer sessions and final plenary sessions reinforce and confirm the understanding of the work. Teaching methods and the organisation of lessons encourage all to participate in the lesson. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute and many present and defend orally their own opinions. Lessons are well managed and delivered with humour and understanding. Teachers have high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Day-to-day marking is regular, and constructive comment is a good feature. However, the standards expected are not linked closely enough to those described in the National Curriculum. As a result, most pupils are insufficiently clear about what they need to do to improve and reach the nationally expected standards.
129. The contribution to pupils' personal development is very good. Nearly all are well motivated and behaviour is good. Attitudes are positive and many show real enthusiasm for the work. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and result in high levels of co-operative learning in group work. The pupils are happy to talk about their work and are very obliging and helpful in and out of the classroom. They are inquisitive and happy to use their own initiative in work.

130. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The schemes of work are sound. Those who teach the subject have other responsibilities and only one is a subject specialist. Provision is well managed in the circumstances but the subject currently lacks full-time, specialist leadership.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching in many individual lessons, leading to good attitudes and achievement.
- A rich programme of visits as part of the curriculum.
- Good progress in developing pupils' independent research skills.

Areas for improvement

- Raising the expectations of more competent pupils, and setting more challenging work for them, especially in Year 8.
- Improving the accuracy of assessment.
- Increasing the use of ICT.

131. Standards on entry to the school are broadly in line with those usually found nationally. They are similarly in line at Year 6 and Year 8 in the key areas of knowledge, understanding and the development of historical skills. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, some more competent pupils make unsatisfactory gains in learning due to the unchallenging nature of some of the tasks set, especially in Year 8.
132. Pupils who study aspects of Ancient Egypt and Victorian England in Years 5 and 6 make good gains in their understanding of chronology, for example through making timelines. They also make sound progress in identifying change, for example between education in Victorian times and today. By the end of Year 8, many are beginning to distinguish between different causes, for example when examining the growth of the Roman Empire. More competent pupils begin to distinguish between the short- and long-term causes of complex events such as the English Reformation. They also show understanding of terms like Protestantism and Catholicism. However, most are not yet able to make links between events. They communicate well their knowledge and understanding, both orally and in writing, because the teaching of literacy skills within the subject is good.
133. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It was frequently good in individual lessons observed during the inspection. Where the teaching is most effective, teachers make good use of resources, for example portraits of Elizabeth I to increase pupils' understanding of the use of propaganda in Elizabethan England, and school log books to teach about life in Victorian schools. The skilful use of such resources maintains pupils' interest, appealing to their imaginations and promoting a good level of understanding. As a result, the subject makes a good contribution to their personal development. Other imaginative strategies include the use of role-play when investigating archaeological activity in Egypt. Teachers develop most pupils' research skills well, encouraging them to do independent work, sometimes using computers.
134. Where the teaching is less effective, teachers do not address the needs of more competent pupils sufficiently and allow pupils to spend too long on simple copying tasks instead of challenging them to use their skills of analysis and evaluation. Sometimes, methods do not match objectives. For example, Year 8 pupils investigated sources on

Elizabethan royalist propaganda without being taught about the nature of Tudor monarchy, which was the objective of the lesson.

135. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The department makes very good use of visits to sites such as Warwick Castle and the British Museum to contribute to pupils' understanding and enthusiasm. It contributes well to increasing pupils' literacy and citizenship skills. The use of ICT is unsatisfactory because there is currently limited provision of computers. Whilst marking is sometimes informative and detailed, it is inconsistent. It is also overgenerous in assessing pupils' skills and knowledge.
136. Since history was not inspected in the previous inspection by HMI, it is not possible to make a judgement on improvement since then.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- The teaching is based on a high level of technical knowledge.
- Pupils use computers confidently and competently.
- Lessons make a strong contribution to pupils' very good personal development.
- The thorough marking of pupils' work.

Areas for improvement

- Reference to the skills identified in the National Curriculum in lesson objectives and assessments of pupils' work.
- The progress made by the more competent in lessons.
- The setting of more short-term targets in lessons for the boys.
- The development of ICT skills in all subjects of the curriculum.

137. There is no evidence to confirm standards on entry to the school. At Year 6, they are similar to those that pupils nationally are expected to reach. Most pupils use some basic computer applications and become competent and confident users. Standards at Year 8 are also broadly in line with those usually found nationally. Many of the more competent pupils broaden their experience but do not yet demonstrate the confident application of more advanced skills. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory.
138. Teaching in timetabled ICT lessons has many strong features. Based on a high level of technical knowledge and good class management skills, the teacher presents new ideas and information very effectively. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons. They behave well and collaborate effectively to further develop their good relationships. There is a good concern to develop pupils' personal awareness of moral and ethical questions and of current affairs. Lessons include a good emphasis on bias in communications and on the reliability of information from the Internet. For example, one Year 8 class researched for information to create their own biased presentation about a possible war with Iraq.
139. The quality of learning is satisfactory overall but planning is unsatisfactory because it does not always ensure that the more competent pupils extend their grasp of the skills identified in the National Curriculum. Planned activities do not include enough short-term targets to ensure that boys in particular make enough progress. Consequently, they often explore busily throughout a session without actually acquiring more advanced skills.

140. Nearly all pupils work hard and demonstrate a range of practical competence. Their work is marked thoroughly and they are encouraged to evaluate their own progress. However, marking does not provide the more competent pupils with sufficiently detailed information about what else they should do to improve.
141. The course of lessons covers the requirements of the National Curriculum satisfactorily, but the emphasis is uneven. The skills of communicating and presenting information take precedence over other aspects. This is partly due to the unavailability of equipment. It is also linked to some delay in adopting the published National Strategy that provides guidance and support to teach the whole range of skills and concepts in Years 7 and 8.
142. Teachers in other subjects have made appropriate plans to use ICT in their lessons, but this has not had sufficient impact because there are insufficient computers available for general use by individual subject departments.
143. There has been a range of improvements since the last inspection. These have principally involved upgrading equipment and software so that lessons are smooth running and enjoyable. There has been some good collaboration between subject areas, such as a series of lessons focused on creating and promoting a new soup. There has also been an increase in training available for teachers who want to use ICT.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

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

Strengths

- The pupils' very good progress in listening skills.
- The teachers' very good use of French in lessons.
- The teachers' good use of resources in developing pupils' listening, speaking and reading skills.
- The teachers' strong, shared commitment to the success of the department.

Areas for improvement

- The standards of the more competent pupils, especially at Year 8.
- Including in lesson planning more tasks which develop pupils' writing skills.
- Increasing pupils' independence in writing and speaking in Years 7 and 8.

144. Overall, pupils are as competent in French as is expected nationally, and their achievement is good.
145. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in mixed ability groups. All pupils, including low attaining pupils, make very good progress in speaking and listening skills, mainly because of the teachers' very good use of French in lessons. At Year 6, pupils can understand basic language and answer questions confidently with good pronunciation. This was seen in a very good Year 6 lesson describing bedrooms. In writing, all pupils make good progress and, at Year 6, most copy French accurately and write brief phrases using familiar vocabulary. The less competent pupils, including those with

special educational needs, make good progress in writing because of the extra attention the teachers give them with spelling.

146. In Year 7, pupils learn French in mixed ability groups. In Year 8, pupils are in ability groups based on their competence in English. This disadvantages some able linguists who are placed in middle groups. By the end of Year 8, pupils generally are as competent in French as is expected nationally for their age, and their achievement is satisfactory; however, the more competent do not reach high enough National Curriculum levels and their achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because teachers do not include in their lesson planning tasks which fully extend the able pupils. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on using the 24-hour clock, pupils did not use the new phrases to form more complex and personal sentences. In listening, all pupils, including low attaining pupils, make very good progress; they can understand tapes of short passages and conversations in familiar language, and they readily understand the teachers' spoken French. In speaking, most pupils, especially boys, answer questions confidently, but there are few opportunities in lessons for pupils to develop their responses using personal language. Pupils generally are less competent in writing than is expected nationally and their written work shows that the writing tasks teachers give them are limited and infrequent. In reading, pupils in Years 7 and 8 are as competent as expected nationally. The less competent pupils make satisfactory progress overall.
147. All pupils are enthusiastic about learning French. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. French lessons contribute occasionally but effectively to pupils' basic numeracy, for example in shopping transactions. Lessons support pupils' literacy well, for example by emphasising accurate spelling and raising pupils' awareness of grammar. Gifted and talented pupils have good learning opportunities in lunchtime clubs, but few in lessons.
148. Teaching is good overall; in Years 5 and 6 teaching is good, and in Years 7 and 8 teaching is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Half of the lessons observed were good or very good. Teachers use their own enthusiasm effectively to motivate and inspire their pupils and use resources well to develop pupils' language skills, for example using the flipchart, board, guidance sheets and colourful reading cards. Very good use of praise and encouragement for pupils' correct responses creates very good relationships and makes the pupils feel valued. Pupils are very aware of their learning because the teachers make constant reference in lessons and in exercise books to the National Curriculum levels at which the pupils are working.
149. Leadership and management of French are good overall. There is a strong team commitment to raising standards. Procedures for assessment in French are very good. However, the department does not always act on the results of such procedures, for example in improving writing. Departmental policy documents, assessment procedures and records are constantly being reviewed and improved and the department has strong links with the local upper school.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Students make very good progress and reach very high standards, especially in performance.
- Students engage in a broad range of additional activities of very high quality.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good with excellent features.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for ICT.
- Resources for non-western music.
- Arrangements to set targets and monitor progress.

150. Standards on entry are slightly higher than usually found nationally. At Year 6, they are above those at which pupils nationally are expected to reach. At Year 8, they are well above. They are well above expected levels in performing and composing, and are above expected levels in listening and responding to music. Achievement is very good. The range and quality of provision for music have shown very good improvement over the last two years, resulting in some outstanding features.
151. Nearly all pupils learn very well in response to well-planned teaching. In Year 6, they experiment with sounds and discuss improvements to their compositions with confidence and, at Year 8, many perform independent parts in groups from notation. Listening skills are taught well, helping many to respond accurately and sensitively. When they evaluate music, many use technical vocabulary well and show great maturity in their responses to their own work and that of others. Many lessons make a very good contribution to their personal development because the pupils are encouraged to explore their own interests, and the more competent frequently support the composition work of others with their very good instrumental skills. This leads to very good progress by all because they co-operate enthusiastically in practical work, respecting the contributions of others. There are currently insufficient opportunities to use ICT to refine sounds, compose more complex music and store work between lessons.
152. The quality of teaching is very good because it is based on very good knowledge and understanding combined with strong practical skills and professional experience. It was very good or better in all lessons seen during the inspection, with particular strengths in vocal work and instrumental performing. Work is well matched to pupils' interests, and pace is very well maintained with a variety of activities. Assessment and record keeping are effective, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to set their own short-term targets and review them at the end of lessons. The progress made by students with special educational needs is good and the progress made by the gifted and talented is very good.
153. Visiting instrumental teachers make a very good contribution to the curriculum and their work is very well managed and integrated into the work of the department. Six teachers visit and the number of students taking tuition is very high. Instrumental teaching is of a good quality, including arrangements for assessment and reporting. Instrumental tuition is well supported by opportunities for appropriate ensemble playing in very good extended curricular activities. Students work with excellent concentration to make progress in rehearsals, reaching very high standards, for example in three-part harmony choral singing. Instrumental work has a very strong impact on raising standards for all students through its integration into lessons.
154. Leadership is very good, setting high standards and continually raising the profile of the subject in the school. Very good management is reflected in the very well-planned schemes of work and the high quality of resources and displayed work within the specialist rooms. Music lessons and the use of music in assemblies contribute very positively to students' spiritual and moral development. Opportunities for learning outside lessons are open to all, and students' music making is celebrated in many school and community events. Such opportunities benefit students tremendously in their cultural and social development and foster important links with parents and the community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good standards, representing good achievement for most pupils.
- A very good range of extra-curricular sports, in which many participate enthusiastically, contributing to good standards.
- Good teaching, contributing to good learning.
- Good assessment, helping to raise standards.
- The very positive attitudes of pupils.
- Very good leadership and management in developing a department with high expectations.

Areas for improvement

- Improving the attitudes and quality of participation of a small minority of pupils.
- Improving the quality of indoor accommodation, which currently restricts progress in some activities.

155. During the inspection, the activities observed were gymnastics in Years 5 and 6, and games and health-related fitness in Years 7 and 8. Overall, all pupils, including more competent pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well in developing performance skills, knowledge and understanding. Standards in gymnastics at Year 6 are in line with expectations overall, although several girls achieve standards considerably above those which are expected of similar pupils nationally. Pupils develop the ability to compile a small group gymnastic sequence, demonstrating increasing poise, balance and control as they incorporate turning and rolling. They also learn to analyse and evaluate each other's performance more effectively. At Year 8, pupils' standards in health-related fitness are in line with those usually found nationally and higher than this in games. Pupils of all levels of competence make good progress in increasing their knowledge of muscle groups and their understanding of the impact of exercise on the body. In hockey, all boys make very good progress in developing a good stick-handling technique and in learning how to analyse and further adapt, particularly when passing a ball and tackling under pressure. Girls make good progress in improving the skills of defending and attacking in basketball. Nearly all develop good collaborative skills.

156. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with many very good features, particularly a high level of subject knowledge, seen for example when explaining or demonstrating techniques. Teachers use questioning effectively to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding, as in health-related fitness. Pupils' attitudes are very positive as they respond well to teachers' high expectations. Many lessons contribute very well to pupils' personal development, encouraging them to make decisions and take responsibility. In a Year 7 hockey lesson, pupils led warm-up exercises themselves and engaged in a vigorous debate about good stick technique. Where teaching is less effective, a small minority of pupils are not fully involved in the lessons, losing concentration and not making as much progress as they should.

157. Leadership and management are very good. The department has paid good attention to improving literacy, for example by encouraging speaking and listening skills. The use of ICT remains unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers assess pupils realistically, involving them in setting appropriate targets for improvement. Very good liaison with local schools has resulted in improved assessment. A particular strength of the department is the very good programme of extra-curricular sport, involving a high

proportion of pupils. The school has had many successes in inter-school sport, for example recently winning local athletics and six-a-side tournaments. The department works hard to counteract the negative impact which the inadequately sized hall has upon certain activities such as basketball.

158. Provision for physical education was not evaluated in the previous HMI inspection, and therefore it is not possible to judge improvement since then. However, physical education currently has a high profile in the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Achievement at Year 6 is good.
- The very good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment to raise standards.
- The challenge offered to the more competent pupils.
- The use of ICT.
- The opportunity for pupils to become independent learners.

159. The overall standard of work seen at Year 6 and Year 8 is satisfactory and in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The boys and the girls achieve broadly similar standards.

160. Achievement is good in Year 6 and satisfactory in Year 8. Pupils respond well to the expectations of their teachers. They sustain interest because of the variety of tasks and because no time is wasted. The plenary session helps consolidate learning. The continuity between Year 6 and Year 7 is very good but, by Year 8, the most competent are insufficiently challenged. The attention to oral and written skills is good. Pupils make good gains in specialist vocabulary. When they are active learners, they make most progress, as in a Year 6 lesson following a visit to St James' church when they prepared a newspaper article about the visit using a range of writing frames. There is a need for more opportunities when pupils can take responsibility for their own learning and become independent learners. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work matches their level of competence. Lesson objectives are graded and pupils with special educational needs achieve the basic lesson objective. In a Year 7 lesson on the divine and human aspects of Jesus, they put attributes correctly onto masks to show their understanding. Target setting following an assessment places insufficient emphasis on the development of skills.

161. Pupils come to lessons eager to learn and are very courteous. They show an obvious pleasure in religious education lessons and behave very well. Teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' self-worth by valuing their efforts and respecting their views. The alternate seating of boys and girls helps motivation and productivity. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

162. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In lessons observed, it was always satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. Teachers have a sound knowledge of

the subject and manage their pupils' learning well. A range of objectives is set but the tasks set do not sufficiently match the needs of the pupils, particularly the more competent. Good use is made of the much-improved resources in preparing lessons that stimulate interest and good participation by all the pupils. The lack of ICT facilities sometimes restricts the variety of learning opportunities. Work is corrected regularly and consistently with encouraging comments. Assessment tasks test both knowledge and understanding but pupils lack awareness of their own learning and exactly what they need to do to improve their work. The portfolio of exemplars needs to be shared with them to show exactly what is expected. Appropriate homework is regularly set.

163. The leadership and management of the department are good. Leadership sets a clear direction for the subject. The provision is well managed with good teamwork within the part-time teaching arrangements. The department monitors teaching and learning thoroughly. The excellent scheme of work and lesson plans ensure that best practice is shared. The close liaison between the primary school, King John and the local upper school ensures continuity of learning. Provision in the subject was not reported at the last inspection by HMI. Consequently, improvement over the last four terms cannot be evaluated.