

INSPECTION REPORT

CANFORD HEATH MIDDLE SCHOOL

Poole

LEA area: Poole

Unique reference number: 113701

Headteacher: Mr P Harris

Lead inspector: Rosalind Johns
22745

Dates of inspection: 29th September to 2nd October 2003

Inspection number: 255704

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Middle deemed primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 8 to 12 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 524 |
| School address: | Learoyd Road Canford Heath Poole |
| Postcode: | BH17 8PJ |
| Telephone number: | 01202 676393 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body, Canford Heath Middle School |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs J Hodges |
| Date of previous inspection: | 21 st September 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Canford Heath Middle School is larger than most other schools of the same type. There are 14 more boys than girls on roll with no significant imbalance in classes or year groups. The school serves a mixed area of private and local authority housing. Eighteen pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is below average. Only one pupil is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school has 139 pupils on its register of special educational needs (SEN) which is broadly average. Pupils with specific learning needs such as dyslexia are among the largest group. There are two pupils with statements of SEN which is below the national average. The school received the Healthy Schools Award in 2003. During the last school year, 15 pupils joined and 16 left the school other than at normal times which is a low rate of mobility. Pupils enter the school at broadly average levels of ability.

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| 14596 | Tony Fiddian Green | Team inspector | Science, geography, music, personal, social, health and citizenship education, special educational needs. |
| 15271 | Brian Farley | Team inspector | Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education. |
| 18083 | Judith Howell | Team inspector | English, art, history |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Canford Heath Middle School provides a sound education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory so that, overall, pupils make sound progress. Pupils with SEN (special educational needs) make good progress but more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leadership and management are satisfactory and are giving a clear direction for the work and development of the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils reach above average standards in science and art.
- In other subjects, notably English and mathematics, standards are average and some pupils are not reaching their full potential.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to work and their good behaviour are firmly rooted in the school's friendly ethos and good overall provision for personal development.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the school so that pupils make uneven progress.
- The school's very good specialist accommodation and good resources greatly add to pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Good provision for pupils with SEN means that they achieve well but more able pupils are not always making the best use of their skills and talents.
- The school has good systems for analysing its performance and tracking pupils' progress but it does not use this information sharply enough to plan pupils' work and improve results.
- Some subject leaders have flair and experience but their role is not developed well enough to share their expertise with other leaders and to raise standards.
- The governors are not meeting legal requirements in some aspects of their work.

There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in 1998. Senior staff now have more time to manage the school's programme for improvement, the overall quality of teaching and learning has improved and standards in science, ICT (information and communication technology) and art have risen significantly. The school has taken seriously the importance of raising the achievement of more able pupils but its efforts have not been successful enough.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

| Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with: | all schools | | | similar schools |
|---|-------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2003 |
| English | B | C | C | C |
| Mathematics | E | E | D | D |
| Science | D | C | B | B |

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Achievement is satisfactory. It is satisfactory in Years 4 to 6 and good in Year 7. During the inspection, in both Year 6 and Year 7, standards were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards in art were also above average and in all other subjects, they were average. Standards in science and art are the result of strong teaching and leadership.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good and very good relationships mean that they cooperate happily with each other and with their teachers. Attendance is very good

but pupils are not always ready to start their lessons on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is satisfactory overall in Years 4 to 6 and good in Year 7. Teachers have good subject knowledge so that new learning is introduced clearly and in depth. However, many do not use information about pupils' previous learning accurately enough to provide the right blend of help and challenge in lessons. In Year 7, lively and well-organised teaching is helping pupils to become confident and independent learners. A good range of activities outside the classroom broadens pupils' experience effectively. Satisfactory levels of care mean that pupils support one another and learn together in a happy atmosphere. There are sound links with parents and the community which have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff are continually seeking ways of raising pupils' achievement especially in English and mathematics. There are some good systems in place to achieve these goals but they are not being implemented sharply or actively enough to be completely effective. The school improvement plan clearly reflects the school's main priorities. The leadership and management of the school's provision for pupils with SEN are good. There is a real commitment to the professional development of staff. The skills of subject leaders are not being used enough as models of good practice. Governors are committed, use their interests and expertise to help the school and support the headteacher and staff well. However, they are not carrying out all their legal responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with most aspects of school life but some do not feel well informed about their children's progress and are unhappy about homework in some year groups. The school does not canvass parents' opinions enough. The vast majority of pupils are happy with the school and many commented in the questionnaires and in discussions about how much they liked their teachers and coming to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in English and mathematics at a faster rate particularly at the higher levels.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in some year groups so that it matches the good teaching found in other parts of the school.
- Use assessment information much more precisely so that all pupils, but especially the more able and gifted and talented, are given work that has the right level of challenge for them.
- Use the skills and experience of some subject leaders more effectively so that they can act as models for other leaders to follow.

Statutory requirements

- Make sure that governors carry out all legal responsibilities in respect of health and safety administration and information to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, achievement is satisfactory for pupils in Years 4 to 6 and good in Year 7. This also includes pupils from minority ethnic groups. Achievement for pupils with SEN and for the pupil with English as an additional language (EAL) is good. Overall, standards are average in Year 6 and Year 7.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above average standards in science and art.
- Pupils in Year 7 achieve well.
- There has been a good improvement in pupils' standards and achievement in ICT since the previous inspection.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in basic skills and in confidence and attitudes to learning.
- Although standards are average in many subjects, some pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable especially in English and mathematics.
- In some classes and sets, more able and gifted and talented pupils are working well within their limits.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 27.1 (26.9) | 27 (27) |
| Mathematics | 26.3 (25.7) | 26.7 (26.6) |
| Science | 29.4 (28.4) | 28.3 (28.3) |

There were 126 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Standards in the end of Year 6 national tests in 2003 were average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science compared with all schools and with similar schools. Standards show an upward trend similar to the national trend. Results for the 2003 Year 6 national tests show that standards have improved in English and mathematics and have risen significantly in science.

2. The findings of the inspection are that standards are above average in art and science and average in all other subjects in Year 6 and Year 7. Achievement is very good in science and good in art, geography and music and for pupils with SEN. In other subjects, it is satisfactory for pupils in Years 4 to 6. Overall, pupils' achievement in Year 7 is good because of the nature of teaching and learning in that year group. However, at this early stage in the year, it has not had sufficient impact for standards to be raised. Standards have risen in mathematics because the school has had an intensive drive to improve pupils' results with an appropriate programme of support. In spite of this, there are still too few pupils achieving the higher levels. This was also noted at the previous inspection in mathematics and English. Standards in science have risen significantly because of the improved quality of teaching and learning, effective use of specialist accommodation and dynamic subject leadership. Standards in art and achievement in geography are the result of good quality teaching and leadership. In Year 7, inspectors did not gather enough of the evidence available to make a judgement about design and technology and physical education. The school has put satisfactory strategies in place to address boys' underachievement in English and mathematics.

3. These findings are broadly the same as the standards reported at the previous inspection although, at that time, standards in ICT were below average and progress was unsatisfactory. This improvement to average standards and progress has resulted from a focus on raising standards in the subject and because the subject leader was released from classroom teaching for a year to concentrate on developing teachers' knowledge and expertise in ICT.

4. Standards in many subjects have not risen since the last inspection because of variations in the quality of teaching and learning across the school and because assessment information is not used precisely enough to adjust teachers' planning if necessary, adapt teaching styles and match work carefully to individual pupils' level of understanding and need. This is especially significant in the case of more able pupils. As a result, more able pupils are working well within their limits, for example, when they are all given the same task within large ability sets for English and mathematics in Year 6 and Year 7. Pupils who are gifted and talented have not been identified and there is no policy or register. Although pupils in discussion appeared confident about what they had to do to improve their work, targets are sometimes too general to be helpful and do not outline clearly the specific skills necessary to move on to the next stage. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used satisfactorily to support their learning in other subjects although undemanding worksheets limit their depth of subject knowledge and experiences of writing in some year groups. The use of ICT is well developed across the curriculum.

5. Pupils with special educational needs in all year groups make good progress towards their targets. They achieve well when their progress is measured against the specific targets set out in their individual education plans. This is because targets are realistic and well-trained teaching assistants support pupils so that they have the skills and confidence to answer questions.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are good. Attendance is very good. Punctuality in arriving at school is good but is unsatisfactory in some lessons. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The level of attendance is well above the national average.
- The majority of pupils have very positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school.
- The school's good overall provision for pupils' personal development leads to good behaviour and good relationships in the school.
- Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported well.
- The start of lessons is sometimes delayed.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils' spiritual development.
- Pupils are not being sufficiently prepared for life in a multicultural society.

Commentary

6. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The level of attendance has improved since the last inspection and the school is in the top ten per cent of schools around the country. Absence is usually due to the usual childhood illnesses but, despite the school's efforts, a number of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term time. The efforts of the school in monitoring absences, such as first day telephone calls home, result in unauthorised absence being below the national average.

7. Punctuality at the start of the day is good. Pupils respond very well to the carefully organised routines which result in a very smooth and prompt start to the day. Some ten or fifteen pupils are late most days, though normally by only a few minutes. The excellent procedure of checking apparent absentees during the early morning assembly ensures that any late arrivals who have avoided the office are recorded in the registers. However, punctuality during the day is not satisfactory. The changes of classroom can result in a loss of five or even ten minutes' teaching

time for individual lessons and some younger pupils are casual in their approach to arriving promptly after break.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
| School data: | 5.0 | School data: | 0.2 |
| National data: | 6.1 (previous year) | National data: | 0.3 (previous year) |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

8. Throughout the school, most pupils’ attitudes towards learning are good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs who often concentrate well and show interest in what they are doing. Pupils generally show great enthusiasm, are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute their ideas. However, in some of the lessons seen, the work was not presented in a stimulating way and pupils’ initial interest and enthusiasm were soon lost. In the questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of pupils said how much they liked coming to school and how much the new specialist accommodation increased their enjoyment of learning.

9. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in ‘circle time’, group work, paired discussions and monitor tasks within each class. The pupils in Year 7 show maturity in undertaking the range of responsibilities around the school such as taking registers round the classrooms, helping to tidy up the dining hall and maintaining the pond area. They also provide good support to younger pupils when helping with games at lunchtimes. The school council enables pupils of all ages to work together. Good relationships were also evident at the last inspection, and contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress pupils make. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, the good rapport with the teacher led to pupils wanting to work hard and helped them to have confidence in what they were doing. In their questionnaire, pupils stated how much they liked seeing their friends in school and how kind teachers and other adults were to them.

10. The school stands for positive values and there are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct to which the pupils usually respond. In particular, playground supervision and support have improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils are well mannered, polite to adults and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way even when not supervised. They show respect for property, for example, when using the computers and take care collecting and putting away instruments during music lessons. A significant minority of pupils in the questionnaire commented that there were some pupils who had difficulties with their behaviour. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well supported by the staff who have developed a good expertise in pastoral care and can call upon outside agencies for guidance where necessary. Pupils and parents can recall occasional instances of bullying which the school usually deals with promptly and effectively. Last year, there was one exclusion as can be seen in the table below.

Ethnic background of pupils

| |
|---|
| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
| White – British |
| White – other |
| Mixed – other |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |
| Chinese |
| Any other ethnic group |
| Parent/pupil preferred not to say |
| Information not obtained |

Exclusions in the last school year

| No. of pupils on roll | No. of fixed period exclusions | No. of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 429 | 1 | 0 |
| 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 75 | 0 | 0 |

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

11. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Religious education lessons enable pupils to appreciate and respect the beliefs of others. Nevertheless, the short time available for assemblies limits the possibilities for spiritual growth and self-knowledge. In addition, there are not enough planned opportunities in lessons for pupils to appreciate fully the order and mystery of the natural world and to reflect upon their own experiences.

12. Many subjects provide pupils, irrespective of their age, ability or ethnic background, with a fuller understanding of the world around them, for example, the Egyptians and Tudors in history, work on Mayan art, a visiting choreographer specialising in street dancing and studying the poetry of Benjamin Zephaniah. Discussions with older pupils showed they respect people with other cultural backgrounds. Nevertheless, the limited displays highlight that the school is not doing enough to prepare pupils for life in multicultural British society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The strongest features are activities provided for pupils outside the classroom, specialist accommodation, resources and assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science. Areas most needing improvement are provision for more able pupils, teaching and learning in some year groups, the pace of improvement, the monitoring of health and safety, seeking the views of parents and governors ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Assessment is good in English and mathematics and ICT, very good in science and satisfactory in all other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Year 6 and 7 and satisfactory in other year groups.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge so that they introduce new learning in a clear and structured way.
- The good relationships in the school mean that pupils are happy, secure and ready to learn.
- Teaching in science is sharp and exciting so that results have risen significantly.
- The good teaching and learning of pupils with SEN who are involved well in all aspects of the school's work.
- The pace of some lessons is comfortable rather than demanding.
- Assessment information is good in English and mathematics but it is not being used precisely enough to give pupils the right blend of help and challenge in lessons.
- All teachers do not consistently apply the links between, marking, teaching and targets.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 63 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1(2%) | 1 (2%) | 34 (53%) | 27 (43%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Teaching and learning have improved overall since the previous inspection as there is now a higher proportion of good or better teaching and none was found to be unsatisfactory. Teaching across the school has common strengths including good partnerships with teaching assistants, effective use of resources and support and encouragement for all pupils. Ninety eight per cent of

pupils said in their questionnaire that they mostly found lessons interesting and fun. Teachers' good subject expertise means that presentations are lively, explanations and demonstrations are confident and well-informed and specific language is used well. Linked to this good command of subjects are teachers' skills in asking questions which make pupils think and work things out for themselves. When Year 6 pupils were recognising equivalent fractions, taxing questions made them recall their earlier work and apply their skills of calculation and problem solving. Most teachers have a relaxed and natural control of pupils, value their contributions and treat mistakes sensitively. This creates an enjoyable atmosphere for learning where pupils are not afraid to ask questions or say when they do not understand. In the questionnaires, 95 per cent of pupils and parents felt that children were treated fairly. Homework, which was a concern for some parents was judged to be satisfactory across the school.

14. Although teaching is good in both Year 6 and Year 7, there is still not enough very good or excellent teaching. A weakness found among all year groups is the pace of teaching. Some teachers move lessons along briskly by their spirited approach but in some lessons, the pace is too comfortable and pupils relax into a leisurely rate of working.

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year 4 and Year 5. Teaching is less effective than at the top of the school because some teachers do not lay down firm guidelines for pupils' response and behaviour. This results in valuable time being lost and pupils choosing their own pace of learning. Sometimes, there is no sense of urgency in teaching and pupils are quick to pick this up. This means that the content of the lesson could have been covered in less time with more focus and rigour. Teachers do not always give explicit expectations about the quality and quantity of work so that pupils do not have a clear idea what they are aiming for.

16. Teaching and learning in science are very good because pupils are treated as young scientists. There is a strong emphasis on investigative science and a very good balance between practical work and acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' ability to plan an investigation and carry it out in a methodical way was seen in a Year 7 lesson on acids and alkalis involving neutralisation. High quality provision in science including dynamic leadership and very good specialist accommodation have led to pupils' very good achievement in the subject.

17. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good and gives rise to good progress and standards relative to pupils' previous attainment. Overall, teachers use methods and resources that enable pupils to learn effectively. Teaching assistants give very good support and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment, particularly in English, mathematics, and science. Teachers take account of the targets set out in individual education plans, but sometimes do not provide a sufficient range of activities that are suited to all levels of ability.

18. Good assessment procedures in English and mathematics and very good assessment in science are building up an accurate profile of pupils' individual performance. However, in English and mathematics, this information is not being used effectively enough by teachers to adjust the next stage of their planning and to ensure that the level of challenge is right for individual pupils. In the ability sets in Year 6 and Year 7 in English and mathematics, the work is the same for all pupils although these large sets encompass a fair range of ability. For example, in a Year 7 English set, the most able pupils were clearly frustrated by the limits placed on their learning as they studied *I am David* while other pupils were passive and gave limited answers. In mixed ability classes, where extension work is given, it is not always sharp or imaginative enough to provide the right degree of challenge. This means that standards in English and mathematics have not risen quickly enough as pupils are not encouraged to be adventurous in their learning. Marking is also too variable in quality. Some teachers give pupils constructive and clear explanations of how they can improve their work but others give praise when the level of work does not merit it.

19. Pupils' targets are pasted into their books and are linked directly to the levels of the National Curriculum. They are also linked to the test results that teachers keep in their record books. However, this system is new. In class, most teachers do not raise pupils' awareness of their targets

enough to make them an integral part of their learning. Not all teachers match marking, planning their teaching, and their assessments with pupils' targets.

The curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision is satisfactory. Opportunities for the enhancement of pupils' learning outside of the school day and for their interests to be developed are good. Accommodation and resources are good and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is carefully planned and then reviewed as priorities for development are identified.
- Work is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of more able pupils.
- Many classes have physical education lessons that are too long.
- Curricular provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- The opportunities for participation in sport are very good.
- The school's accommodation is very good.
- Resources for learning are good.
- The school has a good number of teachers.

Commentary

21. Teachers increasingly work together to plan the curriculum and their teaching. This helps to ensure that teaching matches the needs of pupils and helps them to learn skills and knowledge in a structured way. Curricular planning for subjects is reviewed, when appropriate, so that improvements to teaching and learning can be made. However, although the school is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils, the more able pupils do not always have work in English and mathematics and in some other subjects that provides enough challenge. This is because when they work in sets, as well as in mixed ability classes, their work is not matched closely enough to their individual needs. Pupils do not benefit from physical education lessons that occur only once a week. This is because they are too long and pupils become too tired.

22. The curriculum is organised well for pupils with special educational needs, and provision is good overall. The quality of individual education plans is also good. Support assistants work well with teachers to provide the extra help needed by these pupils. The coordinator tracks pupils' progress and is very efficient at analysing their results.

23. The school supports the curriculum well through a good range of educational visits. Pupils in all year groups normally have several day trips out each year. Pupils in Years 5 and 7 also have a residential visit. The school offers a good range of clubs such as newspaper and chess and draughts, and other activities at lunchtime and after school. In particular, a variety of different sports are available and are enhanced by matches against other schools. The provision for musical activities includes choir, recorder and dance and the school will be expanding its provision this year. At lunchtimes, in addition to structured clubs, the playground has a good range of markings for such games as draughts, snakes and ladders. Conversations with pupils showed that they valued and enjoyed these activities.

24. Since the last inspection, there has been a great deal of improvement to the school's accommodation. Science, art and design, design and technology, music and information and communication technology now have specialist work areas. Consequently, pupils have the opportunity to do more practical work to develop creativity and capability. This has given an additional incentive for teachers and, as a result, the quality of pupils' learning has improved. There is now a new library that has been extensively upgraded. Pupils particularly enjoy working in all these areas. The accommodation is maintained to a high standard.

25. The school has a good number of teachers, which enables them to organise classes and groups of extra teaching sets for English and mathematics in Years 6 and 7 in a manner which supports the needs of most pupils well. As a middle school, the school has number of subject specialists, which enables it to provide an appropriate curriculum for pupils in Year 7. It also allows for the sharing of their expertise, to the benefit of other pupils in the school. Teaching assistants' skills and expertise are used effectively by teachers, so that they are contributing positively to the learning process. However, the number of teaching assistants is relatively small for the size of the school.

26. Overall, resources for learning are good. In science, they are very good and play a significant part in helping pupils to achieve high standards. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be generally satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are satisfactory overall and support pupils' learning appropriately. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective arrangements for following locally agreed child protection procedures.
- There are some weaknesses in the monitoring of health and safety.
- Pupils feel secure and well supported by staff but there are no formal records of their personal development.
- The school does not always use assessment effectively enough to provide pupils with very specific help about how to improve their achievement.

Commentary

27. The staff generally know how to deal with any situations that may arise on child protection issues and who to report to in the school if necessary. Two staff have attended appropriate courses and provide guidance to others. The school also follows the correct procedures for looked-after children. The arrangements for first aid are appropriate with several fully trained first aiders and staff also know pupils' allergies and dietary requirements. Staff are aware of health and safety issues. However, a recent health and safety audit found a number of weaknesses including no recorded evidence of safety inspections and incomplete risk assessments. These are a legal requirement. The governors have accepted most of the priorities suggested in the audit but in one area they are not progressing with sufficient urgency. The headteacher accepts that risk assessments in those areas not adequately reviewed need to be carried out at once followed by regular reviews.

28. Pupils consider that they are supported well by the staff and know to whom they would go if they needed help. Their self-esteem is raised by the way they are supported by the staff and by the range of rewards such as praise and team points. The school monitors any pupils showing extremes of behaviour and supports them well with behaviour improvement plans. In particular, pupils consider that they are well supported when moving into the school on transfer from the first school. Staff know the pupils well and help the development of their personal qualities. However the school does not have a structured approach to record their personal development and to provide targets for improvement in this area.

29. Pupils are encouraged to influence what happens in the school. In the questionnaire, the great majority of pupils considered that the teachers listened to their ideas. The school council meets regularly with representatives from all classes. The representatives are elected by their classmates and discuss matters raised with them in 'circle time'.

30. Overall, the school has good systems to assess, analyse and monitor pupils' standards of attainment and progress in English mathematics and science. Pupils know which National Curriculum level they have reached and that their target is based upon the next level. In the questionnaire, the vast majority of pupils said that teachers showed them how to improve their work. In discussion, they are confident about what to do next. However, their comments about what they must do to improve, for example, in English "Improve my spelling", are too broad and do not contain the precise focus needed to improve their rate of progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory overall. Links with the local community and with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in good regard.
- Pupils with SEN benefit from the school's good links with their parents and other schools.
- The annual reports provide insufficient information on children's progress.
- The school does not seek the views of parents enough.

Commentary

31. As at the time of the last inspection, parents are pleased with what the school provides. They consider that their children like school and make good progress and the staff expect them to work hard and encourage them to become mature. Some parents consider they are not well informed about their child's progress. The school provides a range of information about the school. It sends home regular news and other letters including a summary of what is to be taught. Consultation meetings take place each term with the annual report in the summer term. Nevertheless, this report is inadequate as it provides too little information about the knowledge and skills the pupil has developed. A number of parents are dissatisfied with the homework. The inspectors consider that the school sets homework appropriately. In addition, the homework diary was seen to be a useful source of information though its effectiveness as a means of communication between school and home depends on the teacher and parent.

32. Parents' involvement with the school makes a satisfactory contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Conversations with pupils showed that their parents actively encourage and help them at home. The Parent Association is very supportive in arranging both fundraising and social events. As is not uncommon in a middle school, few parents come to help in the classroom on a regular basis although some other family members such as grandparents make a useful contribution.

33. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in their child's support. They are consulted in all procedures, and kept well aware of the school's targets for the pupils. Parents are encouraged to share in these targets by helping at home with aspects such as reading, speaking and listening, and any other work that pupils may bring home. They have indicated their appreciation of the school's support and the encouragement of the school to be involved in their child's care. The coordinator has established good links with the upper schools, and with the first schools that send pupils. These good links make sure that pupils' transition is as smooth as possible.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is satisfactory. The school's governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The thoughtful leadership of the headteacher gives sure direction for the work and development of the school and a clear focus on raising standards.
- The school has built up an accurate and objective picture of its performance.
- The school improvement plan clearly reflects the school's priorities.
- There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff.
- Good systems are in place for checking the quality of teaching and learning but sometimes they are not carried out rigorously enough.
- Some subject leaders have a good range of skills and experience but the school does not draw on their expertise sufficiently to improve aspects of its work.
- The pace of change and improvement is not quick enough in terms of raising standards across the curriculum especially in the case of more able pupils.
- The leadership and management of the school's provision for pupils with SEN are good.
- Careful financial planning, administration and monitoring of expenditure ensure that the school's resources are used well to further pupils' learning.
- The governance of the school has strengths but governors are not meeting all their legal responsibilities.

Commentary

36. The headteacher combines a concern for the well being of pupils and regard for the professional needs of staff with a quest to raise standards in the school especially in key subjects like English, mathematics and ICT. His vision for guiding the school through a period of transition to a smaller one with mixed ability classes has been shared with staff and governors so that there is a real sense of teamwork and a determination that pupils should come first. The school has adopted an increasingly self-evaluative approach so that there is a climate of openness and willingness to learn. The school improvement plan has a clear focus on raising standards in key subjects and states specifically how success will be objectively measured. Performance management is an integral part of the school's work. There are close links between targets and the school improvement plan so that teachers are encouraged to take collective responsibility for raising standards.

37. The very close analysis of data and careful tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the different year groups mean that the school has built up a realistic picture of its own performance. Consideration of this information leads to clear programmes of action being put in place but the school does not always ask itself challenging enough questions. Good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science provide the school with an accurate profile of each pupil's progress which is also given to teachers. However, this information is not always used in a systematic and analytical way so that planning can be altered if necessary, teaching styles adapted and work closely matched to pupils' needs. This is particularly true in the case of more able pupils as learning objectives are not sharply defined enough to allow them to forge ahead and use their initiative. Inclusion is judged to be unsatisfactory because the needs of this group of pupils are not being fully met. This was also noted in the school's last inspection report. Some pupils' targets are too vague to act as a real springboard to improved standards.

38. The school has made a satisfactory improvement in the key issue for action from the last inspection to monitor the effectiveness of classroom teaching. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now systematic and regular. Strengths are recognised and built on and best practice in the classroom is being used increasingly. However, some monitoring is not rigorous enough to identify real weaknesses so that problems are not confronted and plans put in place to address them. The headteacher and subject leaders have made good use of external consultants to improve their own practice in classroom observations. In the school's self evaluation report, it states that there are no significant barriers to improvement that cannot be overcome with sufficient effort and determination.

39. Some leaders in the school have a dynamic and imaginative approach to their subjects which has led to rapidly improving standards. However, the school does not sufficiently enable other members of staff to draw on the leaders' wealth of ideas and experience as a model for improving their own practice. All these factors relating to teaching and learning, assessment and subject leadership mean that, although standards are rising in English and mathematics, they are not doing so at a fast enough rate.

40. The coordinator for special educational needs carries out her responsibilities effectively and efficiently. She tracks pupils' progress carefully, and keeps careful records of all their results. The reports from outside agencies are used well and inform reviews about pupils' progress and future needs. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. There is a designated governor, who has good involvement in the work of the school because she is a teaching assistant and knows the school very well. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect, with some additional finances being designated for support assistants.

41. Good financial planning and administration ensure that spending is focused appropriately on priorities in the school improvement plan and is carefully monitored through the year. This has led to a number of major improvements which have enhanced the learning environment for pupils. However, it does not compare costs with other schools or canvass parents about major planned developments.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Total income | 1287833 | Balance from previous year | 80511 |
| Total expenditure | 1225408 | Balance carried forward to the next | 62425 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2003 | | |

42. Governors work closely with the headteacher and staff and use their interests and professional expertise well to support the school. They obtain a sound overview of the school through informal visits, scrutiny of assessment data, reports from the headteacher and staff and regular meetings of the full governing body and its committees. However, there is no structured programme of classroom visits to enable them to get a clearer overview of the school's strengths and needs. Governance is judged to be unsatisfactory as the governing body is not carrying out all statutory requirements in aspects of health and safety, risk assessment and information to parents.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 and 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enjoyment of, and interest in, books is a strength of their learning.
- There are good resources and good use of ICT to support the teaching and learning of English.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to teach at the required depth
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons.
- The tasks set for pupils' individual work are not always sufficiently focused to match their attainment levels especially in the case of the more able.
- Pupils' use of punctuation in their writing is weaker.

Commentary

43. Overall, standards in English are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the school's last inspection so that improvement in the subject is satisfactory. Standards in reading are average in Year 6 and Year 7. The school has, however, made a considerable effort to develop pupils' interest in books and reading by providing additional guided reading times and planned opportunities for pupils to explore the library and use it for personal research. As a result, in Year 6 and 7, many pupils read widely for pleasure and for information. Most pupils read with a suitable level of fluency and reasonable accuracy. They show understanding of the main ideas, talk readily about what they read and express their views about books that they have enjoyed. Teachers challenge them to think carefully for themselves and to concentrate closely on the text. This means that pupils are learning to develop their abilities to discover deeper issues and meaning in the text although some cannot do so without supportive questioning. As a result, by Year 6 and 7, many pupils are reading more widely and are developing a mature response to literature.

44. Standards in writing are average in Year 6 and Year 7. In Year 6, the analysis of work showed that pupils write for different purposes, such as poetry, plays and non-fiction. In the best writing, there is a good range of vocabulary and a lively use of language to create deliberate effects. However, whilst the choice of vocabulary is improving, for many pupils it is not rich enough to reach the higher standards. In Year 7, pupils are learning to master and manipulate language for their own purposes from designing persuasive advertisements to creative work inspired by *The Dancing Bear*. In both year groups, pupils know how to develop their ideas from notes taken in lessons and improve their work to present a clear final copy. There is a good emphasis on pupils' editing and redrafting their work. However, there are variable levels of accuracy in the work of many pupils, particularly in

the consistent use of basic punctuation. There were many examples of pupils using information and communication technology skills to support their work in English.

45. Standards in speaking and listening are average in Year 6 and in Year 7. In Year 6, pupils listen attentively and productively in lessons. They respond thoughtfully and readily. More able pupils express their ideas confidently and talk enthusiastically about their work and the books they have read. However, the average and lower attaining pupils need encouragement to expand on their ideas and develop their skills further. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils contributed well to a discussion about what features make a good headline for a newspaper report. In Year 7, some pupils express their ideas confidently and thoughtfully and use language in a considered and balanced way. However, others use a limited range of words and their good behaviour masks passive listening. Although there are appropriate planned opportunities for pupils to speak in more formal contexts, these are not having sufficient impact on the range of vocabulary used by the majority of pupils.

46. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features in classes at the top end of the school. In the best lessons, teachers' lively presentations and imaginative use of resources quickly engage the interest of pupils, channel their enthusiasm and sustain their concentration. In these lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to use questions skilfully to reinforce pupils' learning and to check their understanding. Having identified the need to address weaknesses in writing, particularly amongst boys, teachers are beginning to provide a more active approach to learning. There were many examples of teachers using information and communication technology confidently to present information to pupils, which was often a key factor to learning in the lesson. This occurred in Year 5 lessons based on *The Iron Man* and helped pupils to bring their own characters to life. Some lessons move along at a crisp pace but where there is a lack of urgency in the teaching, pupils relax into a leisurely pace of working. In some lessons to older pupils, teachers talk too much or focus on the work of individual pupils so that others become passive and distracted. In some mixed ability classes, the group tasks provided are not always sufficiently well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all capabilities. Also, in large sets in Year 6 and Year 7, the same work is given to all pupils in spite of the wide range of abilities within the set. In particular, the tasks given to the more able pupils at times lack challenge so that they do not always achieve as well as they can. This weakness was identified by the previous inspection.

47. The process of setting targets for pupils to achieve in English is new and the use of them is not yet sufficiently rigorous to raise standards in writing. The school has adopted the good system of using assessment books to record pupils' progress through regular writing tasks. The subject leader manages the subject satisfactorily. She has observed teaching throughout the school and has fed back to each teacher areas for improvement. The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality: some is good and shows pupils clearly how to improve their work but, in other cases, comments are too vague.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The development of literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Although teachers' planning and pupils' work show that appropriate links are being made in reading and writing, it is not developed sufficiently well in all subjects. Some overuse of worksheets in Years 4 and 5 in history and religious education, particularly for the more able pupils, restricts learning. In science however, it is good, as pupils have developed a good way of writing up experiments that also includes prose.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' obvious delight in learning a new language.
- The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject is conveyed well to pupils.
- The teacher's easy rapport with the pupils gives them confidence in speaking.

- Activities are not always well matched to the needs of more able pupils.
- There is not enough use of ICT.

Commentary

49. At this point in the school year, pupils had only had four lessons of French previously. Standards in Year 7 are average which represents a satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes towards the new language are very positive and they are careful and responsive listeners. Many speak confidently and their pronunciation is sound considering their early stage of learning. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of language structures and how to use them and an increasing range of appropriate vocabulary covering topics like age, greetings, birthdays, school equipment, months of the year and colours.

50. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen during the inspection was good. During these lessons, there was a good element of fun and enjoyment which sparked pupils' interest as they held up items representing the colours called out by the teacher. She valued pupils' contributions which gave them the confidence to make simple conversation and used mistakes sensitively as learning points. The teacher always interspersed the conversation with French so that even those who did not understand were made aware of the quality of the intonation and pronunciation of the language. Clear learning objectives set the scene well so that many pupils made good progress in their confidence and ability in conversational French and in practising new vocabulary associated with colour. However, pupils were not always challenged to write their responses in French so that the more able were not encouraged to be more adventurous in their learning. The teacher's spirited approach moved the lesson along briskly so that pupils' interest and involvement in the language never waned.

51. The subject is satisfactorily led. ICT is used in class but it is not fully exploited to improve language skills. There are links with a school in Cherbourg but there are no visits or visitors to support teaching and learning in the subject and to enable pupils to use their growing knowledge and understanding of French in real situations.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are average, but not enough pupils reach the higher Level 5 in Year 6 and pupils in Year 4 do not achieve as well as they should.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and often good in the upper part of the school.
- In general, pupils are well managed, well behaved and have good attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory, but there is insufficient guidance for teachers on how to raise standards.
- Work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' individual needs in Year 6 higher sets.

Commentary

52. Standards in Year 7 are average overall, but more able pupils do well. Achievement in Year 7 is good, including those pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils in the top set in Year 7 are keen to work out square numbers to 100 and enjoy problem solving by multiplying and dividing two and three digit numbers and then checking by inverse operations. Standards are average in Year 6 where pupils recognise equivalent fractions, reduce them to their simplest form and order them in sequence. However, not enough pupils reach the higher Level 5. This is because, in the higher sets, pupils often do similar work although there is a wide range of ability. Pupils' achievement, which takes account of their capabilities, is satisfactory overall, but less so where teaching is undemanding.

53. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 7 lessons is good. Teachers in Year 7 plan well and use methods that help pupils to understand the work and make good progress. They take good care to see that pupils set out their work logically and clearly. In Year 6, lessons were characterised by good pace, concentrated effort by pupils and mostly good gains in understanding. Teachers often used a good range of teaching methods. They were particularly successful in the use of questioning to assess what pupils knew. Good questioning also helped pupils to develop their understanding of important ideas such as equivalence in decimals and fractions. In Year 4, although teaching was satisfactory overall, pupils did not always concentrate well enough when being taught. Teachers' expectations of what they should achieve were not high enough and pupils were not told what was expected of them. Analysis of their work indicates a lack of demand to produce enough of good quality. Across the school, in almost all lessons seen, pupils' attitudes to learning were very positive except when teaching was undemanding.

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is new to the post and enthusiastic, but there is not enough clear and structured guidance for staff on how to develop teaching and learning in order to raise standards. Mathematics sets in Year 6 do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able because planning does not take account of the wide range of abilities within these large sets.

55. However, the key to the successful learning in Year 7 mathematics is the match of teachers' methods to the needs of pupils. For example, in the top set, the teacher constantly challenged pupils to explain their thinking and, in a lower attaining group, the teacher used a very clear, consistent method of setting out decimals in columns to avoid confusion.

56. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. There has been some monitoring of teaching, the use of assessment is improving and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. This is satisfactory. Pupils use mathematics in aspects of science and in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in both Year 6 and in Year 7.
- Teaching overall is very good.
- Results in the National Curriculum tests have risen considerably between 2001 and 2003.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The use of ICT is of a very high standard.

Commentary

58. In Year 6, standards of attainment in science are above average, and have improved since the last inspection report. There have been many initiatives and improvements over the last two years, since the co-ordinator was appointed, and these are resulting in the raised standards. In the National Curriculum tests in 2002, results were average, but the 2003 tests show that standards have risen to above average. In Year 7, this high standard is maintained and pupils attain above average standards and achieve very well. Pupils have acquired most of their knowledge and understanding through investigation and observation. Their ability to find answers to scientific questions themselves was seen in a lesson about neutralisation with acids and alkalis where learning was linked to everyday life.

59. Pupils' achievement and progress are very good by Year 6. This includes pupils who have special educational needs, and also more able pupils. Year 6 pupils know what plants need to grow successfully and use this knowledge to predict what will happen to seeds in different growth conditions. The significant improvement in science is largely due to the high quality of leadership and management by the subject leader. In addition, he sets a very good example in the quality of his teaching.

60. The great majority of teaching is done by the subject leader but a few classes are taught by other teachers. The quality of teaching and learning is, overall, very good. One very good feature is the use of ICT in lessons. By preparing material on a laptop computer and using a data projector to show the material on the whiteboard, such as tests, experiments, laboratory rules and expectations for the lesson, pupils are enabled to learn very well. Planning for lessons is meticulous, with always a careful reminder about safety. Lessons begin with a timed, multiple-choice test. It serves the dual purpose of recapping previous work and finding out what pupils have learned and retained. This test is excellently presented via the data projector. Pupils know the routines very well and settle down quickly upon arrival in the laboratory. Expectations, pace and challenge for high attainment and good behaviour are also strong aspects of teaching. As a result, pupils behave very well, focus on the tasks in hand and work very well.

61. A very good aspect of the science teaching is that pupils are taught to follow a very clear set of rules, including the writing of the experiment afterwards. For example, in Year 7 lesson, pupils followed written instructions very carefully, were very aware of health and safety, set up their apparatus, carried out the experiment and recorded findings very carefully.

62. The subject is very well led and managed, and the leader supports other teachers fully in science. He has added a science website to the resources of the subject, and pupils can access this from home to check on work done in school. This is a very good addition to the use of ICT in science, and it helps pupils to learn very well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' typing and keyboard skills are underdeveloped.
- Resources are very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The improvement in pupils' attainment since the previous inspection.
- The increasing use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

Commentary

63. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is average. In the lessons seen, pupils were writing autobiographies. They used the skills of word-processing, of creating pictures and then importing them into the text. However, most had underdeveloped typing and keyboard skills and this often made their progress too slow. Standards in Year 7 are average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

64. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in lessons seen was good. Teachers make good use of all the high quality available resources and present lessons confidently and skilfully. Lessons are well organised; direct instruction is clear and this ensures that pupils know what to do. They concentrate well because teachers expect them to and, therefore, most make good gains in knowledge and understanding. Very occasionally, teaching was less effective when there was too little insistence that pupils listened carefully to instructions.

65. Leadership and management are good and have made a significant contribution to raising standards of attainment. Priorities for further development have been identified and include setting individual targets for pupils and the greater use of information and communication technology in other curriculum areas. The subject leader has begun to monitor teaching and learning and this has also had a positive effect upon the way in which the subject is taught. Because the subject leader teaches a class in each year group, she is able to assess what pupils know and can do and has, therefore, already identified their lack of keyboard skills.

66. The previous inspection judged that standards in Years 6 and 7 were below average and that pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Because of the changes noted above, improvement since the previous inspection is judged to be good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum.

67. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is good. Its use is progressively being extended. Examples were seen in science, creative writing in English, religious education, history and French. A small computer suite provides good additional support for pupils with special educational needs.

HUMANITIES

During the inspection, three lessons of geography and four lessons of both history and religious education (RE) were seen. Inspectors also talked to pupils, looked at pupils' books and displays and held discussions with subject leaders.

History

Provision for history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The work provided interests the pupils.
- They have a secure knowledge of the periods of history that they have studied.
- Good use is made of visits to places of historical interest.
- Pupils' history work in Years 4 and 5 is often only recorded on worksheets.
- Pupils' ability to interpret historical evidence for themselves is weaker.

Commentary.

68. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is average, although pupils' knowledge of the periods of history they have studied is better than their skills in interpreting historical events. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrate an increasing depth of knowledge of the Medieval Realms and are developing a greater understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the structure of a Motte and Bailey castle. Standards are similar to the previous inspection and improvement since that time is satisfactory.

69. The analysis of work showed that pupils are making satisfactory progress. They are building appropriately on previous knowledge and understanding of events and changes in the past as they move through the school and are achieving satisfactorily.

70. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 compare their own experiences with events in the past. Using time lines, they understand the chronology of events. Pupils' understanding of what life was like for the people of Ancient Egypt is extended by using books, pictures and artefacts for research. They compare and contrast the everyday life in Tudor times and are beginning to find out more about what Henry VIII was like as a person by studying his portrait. Year 6 pupils' work has been closely linked to literacy. For example, when studying the Victorians, pupils wrote diaries as if they were a child

working in a factory. Pupils in Year 6 have gained a real sense of the Victorian period and understand that ways of life differed greatly across Victorian society. Their understanding of social and cultural differences is developed well through history.

71. From samples of pupils' work and in the lessons observed, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the lesson observed in Year 7, teaching was good and enabled pupils to learn effectively. In this lesson, the teacher's good questioning helped pupils to think things through and reason for themselves. Her secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject captured the imagination of the pupils and had a major effect on the pupils' achievement in the lesson.

72. Although literacy skills are used well in Year 6, pupils' past work showed that teachers in Years 4 and 5 rely too much on worksheets that do not allow the pupils to become active enquirers.

73. The school uses the nationally recommended guidelines, which have been amended in some instances to utilise the history of the immediate area, such as the smuggling work unit. Visits to places of historical interest such as Scaplan's Court for a Victorian Schoolroom day and the residential visit to Hooke Court where pupils become immersed in Tudor life, enrich the curriculum. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader's file shows that appropriate attention has been given to the monitoring of pupils' books and to identifying the levels they are achieving.

Geography

Provision overall for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching overall.
- Good provision for fieldwork.
- Good use of resources, including local features such as the coastline.
- The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils do not always work out geographical outcomes from the information given to them.

Commentary

74. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are average, and this broadly matches the findings of the previous inspection report. In Year 7, pupils also attain at broadly average levels, although some are beginning to edge above average. Based on the lesson observations and on the analysis of pupils' work, pupils make good progress and achieve well. This includes those who have special educational needs. One of the reasons for this good achievement is that pupils are being taught a range of geographical skills, including the use of maps and matching photographs, and collecting and using evidence from various sources such as reference books and field trips.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection when it was reported as being satisfactory. Most pupils are being stretched by the challenges that teachers give them, and they use geographical vocabulary well. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, pupils were seen using Ordnance Survey maps. They understood a four-figure grid reference and were beginning to use the key to discover the correct symbols. The challenge was to find various features and they learned well and made good progress through this good use of resources.

76. Pupils in Year 7 are preparing to visit the Dorset coastline at Lulworth. They have already increased their knowledge about erosion, the origins of the chalk in the area, and how arches and stacks are formed through the action of sea and weather.

77. Analysis of pupils' past work shows that they study the rainforest in some detail, and understand the 'layers' or sections. They know and list some of the creatures that live in each layer. A good feature is the addition of some work about one of the peoples who live in the rainforest. This

includes some work about their possessions and where they have settled. However, pupils do not draw out enough conclusions from the information. Pupils have used atlases and have an outline knowledge of the British Isles, and can name and place the capitals. Likewise, they name capitals in Europe and mark rivers on a world map. In the accounts written about past field studies, pupils wrote such things as "I could see..." when they visited the coast. They produced sketch maps and labelled the various features they had recorded.

78. Leadership of the subject is good. The leader has a clear overview of where she wants to take the subject. For example, she has noted that pupils do not draw sufficient geographical conclusions from the evidence given them, and has added extra parts to the curriculum for teachers to address this. Management is also good. Resources have been added to and these are now sufficient for the lessons planned. The additions of visits and fieldwork are good features of the curriculum and bring the subject to life for the pupils. The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory and used in very few of the planned topics. However, there are plans to extend the use of the Internet now that the school is on Broadband.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are mature in their response to the subject.
- Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to answer important questions.
- Pupils are encouraged to respect the rich diversity of religious beliefs.
- Too often, tasks provided are undemanding.
- Too little use is made of pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

79. Pupils' attainment in the subject is average and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement across the school is satisfactory. Many of the findings of this inspection reflect those of the last inspection so improvement is, therefore, satisfactory.

80. The overall quality of teaching and learning in the four lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. These observations and the analysis of work showed that pupils have a sound understanding of the basic concepts of world religions and faiths such as Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and Judaism. They are aware of the universal values and messages of stories like the *Ramayana* and how parables like 'The Prodigal Son' can relate to forgiveness in their own lives. In class, teachers create an atmosphere of mutual support and encouragement where pupils feel confident to develop their responses to important questions. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson about Creation stories when pupils asked themselves: 'How did the world begin?' and the teacher constantly asked them to justify their opinions. Similarly, Year 7 pupils had a mature grasp of the significance of Shema as the teacher's open ended questioning developed their thinking well.

81. Discussions with pupils and the analysis of work also show that pupils are encouraged to respect different world religions and their core values such as an appreciation of home and family, honour and selflessness. They are soundly aware of the importance of prayer, special books, festivals and rites of passage for believers. Year 5 pupils studying Islam were fascinated by the role of prophets and Year 4 pupils are beginning to understand why the Bible is a source of inspiration and learning to Christians.

82. Although there is a good degree of challenge in teachers' thought provoking questions and in discussions, this is not reinforced in pupils' written work. Sometimes, pupils are given low level tasks such as colouring in which waste valuable learning time. In some year groups, there is an over use of undemanding worksheets which result in superficial coverage of the topic and limit the

scope and imagination of more competent writers. There was little evidence that ICT skills are being used adequately in the subject.

83. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The leader has a wealth of experience which is not being passed on sufficiently to colleagues by more intensive monitoring of the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection, two lessons were seen in art, one in design and technology in Year 6, four in music and three in physical education. Inspectors also examined work in the practical subjects and talked to pupils and subject leaders. No definitive judgement could be made about pupils' work in design and technology in Year 7.

Art

Overall provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- The quality of pupils' art work is good.
- The spacious specialist studio for art and design work is an additional incentive for teachers and pupils alike.

Commentary

84. Pupils' attainment is above average in Years 6 and 7, as at the time of the last inspection so improvement is satisfactory. In Year 6, pupils achieve good standards in their observational drawings and watercolour paintings of roses. Their work shows great attention to detail and high levels of skill in colour mixing to match the different shades of colour in the roses. They have a wide experience of using a range of materials with some good results. For example, the clay models of Victorian houses and Egyptian cats modelled with 'mod-roc'. Pupils make effective use of bold colour in their paintings, as seen in the Mayan artwork on display and that of Year 4 pupils who are studying the work of the artist 'Hundertwasser'. Older pupils learn about the work of William Morris, Monet and Lowry and their skills in sketching and painting develop well, so that by Year 7 they are beginning to draw and paint more complex still life objects.

85. Teaching and learning are good overall, with the result that pupils are now most often making good progress in lessons and achieving well in the development of their skills as they move through the school. Lessons are introduced, prepared and resourced very well. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher explained the purpose of the lesson clearly and then used a wide range of very stimulating materials and techniques to illustrate how to use them in varying ways to create fantasy three-dimensional flowers. Pupils were keen and interested, gasping in amazement at the effects they could achieve. In Year 7, the good teaching enabled pupils to improve their observational drawing skills so that, by the end of the lesson, they produced some drawings of a cheese plant that showed good attention to line and form.

86. Art is well supported by the scheme of work that provides good coverage of all aspects of the subject. Effective links with other subjects such as history, science and information and communication technology make pupils' learning meaningful. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Pupils' work is displayed to good effect around the school. In addition, the teachers and pupils benefit from the opportunity to work in a spacious, well resourced art studio.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**. The inspectors did not gather enough of the available evidence to make judgements about Year 7.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning for the subject.
- Good improvement in resources and development of food technology.
- Too little emphasis on the quality of pupils' work in design.
- Too few opportunities for the subject leader to monitor teaching and learning.

Commentary

88. Only one lesson was seen in design and technology. The standard of attainment was broadly average for Year 6 pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. However, examination of work completed in the previous Year 6 and in Year 4 indicates that the 'design' element is generally unsatisfactory. This is because pupils did not cover work in sufficient depth and with appropriate attention to precision and the quality of design.

89. The quality of teaching and learning seen in one lesson in Year 6 was good. It was carefully planned, and particularly good use was made by the teacher of showing pupils how to carry out the various practical activities such as marking out, cutting and sewing. Pupils, therefore, settled to work with good concentration and worked with appropriate accuracy as they began to make patterns for their slippers. Because of the good teaching, pupils explained what they did clearly and with a good level of confidence.

90. Design and technology is well planned. There is a good focus on the need to develop the subject, but little indication that the design element requires major improvement. Some teaching has been monitored by the headteacher. However, there have been insufficient opportunities for the subject leader to focus on improvements to the subject, particularly design, by direct observation of teaching and regular examination of pupils' work. There has been a good improvement in resources and the specialist room for the subject is well equipped.

91. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection when standards of attainment were described as below average. Resources are significantly improved and there is now provision for food technology in Years 4 to 6. However, teachers' expectations are still not high enough for pupils to produce design work of good quality.

Music

The overall provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- A very good start has been made by the new co-ordinator in leading and managing the subject.
- Some very good, imaginative ideas for activities in the lessons.
- Good planning of the curriculum, providing teaching of the required topics and skills.
- Singing, when the whole school meets together, is not as good as it could be.
- The use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

92. In Year 6 and in Year 7, pupils' attainment is average, and this matches the findings of the last inspection report. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. However, the

indications are that the work of the new subject leader in post for three weeks is having a good impact on learning, and a few pupils are already attaining above average standards. The leader, who is a music specialist, has introduced some imaginative ideas into lessons. For example, in Year 4, pupils were asked for a list of animals that have easily recognisable characteristics. This was to introduce them to the skill of representing things, stories or situations in their short compositions. Pupils are achieving well and making good progress, including those who have special educational needs. This is because teaching involves everyone and pupils are being given plenty of opportunities for hearing music, composing and performing.

93. The quality of teaching and learning is good, but there are also some very good features. During the inspection, only the teaching of the subject leader was observed. The lessons are challenging and move at a good pace. The teacher's very good subject knowledge is combined with an ability to find good activities that introduce the skills she is teaching. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the performances from one or two of the groups were above average. Overall, the class did well and portrayed the sounds on various instruments, inventing their own sequences, and also producing a graphical score.

94. Pupils are given the chance to hear songs and music and this listening is extended to composing. In Year 6, pupils had heard various folksongs and were seen using one as a base for their own composition. The lesson provided a further example of the very good and inventive methods used by the teacher. Year 5 pupils listened to Tudor music and heard some music called a pavane, and named "Hampton Court". Using a tuned instrument such as a xylophone, and untuned percussion, pupils worked in pairs, reading from the score written on the board.

95. In terms of leadership and management of the subject, it is far too early to make judgements, but the subject leader has made a very good start. She has already revised all the schemes of work and added her touch to them so that they contain interesting activities as well as taking pupils further in the acquisition of musical skills. However, there is insufficient use of, or planning for, information and communication technology.

96. Singing by the whole school in assemblies is weak. Pupils lack enthusiasm and do not sing with much conviction. To counter this, the new subject leader has already established a choir, and 40 pupils were observed at a lunchtime session learning different types of songs. This is already laying the foundations for some improvement in singing, even if for a comparatively small number from the total in the school. The resources, including the music and practice rooms are very good and enable pupils to learn well in pleasant surroundings. Some pupils have instrumental lessons in such as violins, wind instruments and guitars. Music is an emerging subject with many good features.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**. Lessons were seen only in games and dance. No lessons were seen in Year 7.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of direct teaching and demonstration by teachers.
- The management of pupils and their enjoyment of the activities.
- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils lose concentration.
- Some lessons are too long and pupils tire and lose motivation.

Commentary

97. Pupils' attainment in physical education is average. Their achievement in the subject is satisfactory. In Year 6, pupils have appropriate physical coordination and control. They use this to learn specific skills, for example, in hockey where they link sequences of movement together to develop their understanding of tactics and teamwork.

98. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching was good in the Year 6 games lesson seen. This was because the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm were conveyed through practical demonstration and direct instruction. Pupils, therefore, responded well and applied themselves with good physical effort. They enjoyed the various activities and most made good progress in acquiring appropriate hockey skills. In a Year 5 dance lesson, the teacher provided effective support for pupils to develop their ideas for imaginative dance sequences set to the 'Dorset Ring'. Pupils worked hard to do this, but where progress was slow, this was because they forgot that teamwork was very important. At times, too long was given for pupils to work out their ideas and this resulted in unnecessarily complicated movement sequences. They had sufficient opportunities to evaluate the efforts of their classmates. In a Year 5 games lesson, the teacher spent too long telling pupils what to do. This meant that they became restless and had too little time to engage in the planned activities.

99. The subject is satisfactorily managed, has effective curriculum planning and a good range of extra-curricular activities. The action plan for development is useful, but has no indication of how improvements will be managed and evaluated. Where pupils have only one lesson each week, the time allocated is too long. This means that they become tired, and can lose concentration and enthusiasm. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social, health and citizenship education

Overall the provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good, imaginative programme.
- Citizenship is well planned for Year 7.
- Plans for visiting speakers and organisations enrich the curriculum well.
- The assessment of pupils' skills and understanding is not planned well enough.

Commentary

104. Three lessons were observed in PSHCE and two of these were in the same year, Year 5. Also, at this time of the school year, there is very little work to be seen in pupils' books. No overall judgements can, therefore, be made about standards of attainment. In the lessons seen, pupils achieved satisfactorily and made sound progress in the topics they were studying. They were learning about bullying in the Year 5 lessons and about relationships in the Year 6 lesson. They are encouraged to express a range of feelings and give their own opinions. They sometimes have activities that require sharing, teamwork and collaboration.

105. The quality of teaching and learning in the three lessons seen was, overall, satisfactory. In Year 5, pupils were confidently expressing their views about bullying, and some engaged in role-play, which made a lively end to the lesson. Most were able to see how it might feel to be bullied and they showed sympathy and understanding. The Year 6 lesson began with a clear briefing and pupils listened quietly. They worked in small groups in order to make a greetings card. This was to test their ability to work as a team. While they worked, the teacher moved round assessing their performance and noting noise levels, whether anyone emerged as a leader, and whether the task was completed satisfactorily. They learned to co-operate well.

106. Scrutiny of planning for PSHCE shows that much time has been spent providing an imaginative programme that covers all requirements. It is good. For example, Year 4 study such topics as alcohol and its dangers, taking responsibility, and various aspects of health and hygiene. In Year 5, pupils learn about sex education and drugs awareness and think about topics such as self-esteem and stereotypes. They have the chance to be on the school council, which gives them

opportunities to serve the community and to learn about taking responsibility. Year 6 consider aspects of safety, peer pressures and children's rights and do more work about growing up, and puberty, and adolescence.

107. By the time pupils are in Year 7, they are moving into the required aspects of Citizenship. They study aspects of government and the law, drugs and medicines, and in their sex education they consider relationships and responsibilities. Citizenship is specific and meets the legal requirements well. However, in all the planning, there are few opportunities to assess what pupils know and understand. Much work is oral and there is little written work to go on for marking and assessment. The co-ordinator has noted this and is finding ways to address this in her plans.

108. The curriculum is well managed by the subject leader who frequently updates the work planned and keeps pace with new initiatives well. The school has now gained Healthy Schools status and this has meant much work and input into the planning and lessons for PSHCE. Visitors coming into the school include the police, the fire service, the Health bus, and medical personnel. On occasions, a drama group comes to the school to work on themes such as bullying or alcohol abuse. Overall, PSHCE is central to the ethos of the school, and is well planned to have a good effect upon pupils' growing up.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

| <i>Inspection judgement</i> | <i>Grade</i> |
|--|--------------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 4 |
| How inclusive the school is | 5 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 4 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 4 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 2 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The quality of education provided by the school | 4 |
| The quality of teaching | 4 |
| How well pupils learn | 4 |
| The quality of assessment | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 4 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 3 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 4 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 4 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 4 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 4 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 4 |
| The leadership and management of the school | 4 |
| The governance of the school | 5 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 4 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 4 |
| The effectiveness of management | 4 |

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).