

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITE WOMAN LANE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sprowston

Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120914

Headteacher: Mrs A Best

Lead inspector: Mike Capper

Dates of inspection: February 23rd – 26th 2004

Inspection number: 258403

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 primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 8 - 12
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 329

School address: White Woman Lane
Sprowston
Norwich
Norfolk

Postcode: NR6 7JA

Telephone number: (01603) 419 203

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Leggett

Date of previous inspection: January 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized middle school, which admits pupils between the ages of 8 and 12. There are 329 pupils on roll, and they are taught in 12 single-age classes with 3 classes in each year group. Pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics throughout the school and in science in Year 7. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds and the percentage eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There are 68 pupils on the register of special educational needs, with four of these having statements of special educational need. As a proportion, this is broadly average and most of these pupils are identified as having moderate learning difficulties. When they start school, pupils' attainment is above average. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are of white British origin and there are no pupils with English as an additional language.

The school received a Healthy School Award in 2002 and a Sport England Activemark Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9545	Kevin Greatorex	Lay inspector	
23658	Stephen Parker	Team inspector	English Religious education (RE) Personal, social and health education (PSHE)/Citizenship
23609	Alison Cartlidge	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Good teaching means that pupils achieve well and attainment is above average in many subjects. The school is very well led by the headteacher and there is a clear understanding of how the school can improve further. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership by the headteacher has ensured rapid school improvement.
- By the end of Years 6 and 7, pupils' attainment is good in English, mathematics, science, ICT and French but is unsatisfactory in geography.
- Very thorough monitoring by the headteacher has helped to establish a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; monitoring of teaching and learning by other members of staff is not yet as well developed.
- Teachers do not always plan work that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to take responsibility. There has been a very successful focus on listening to pupils' views and developing their confidence and self-esteem.
- There is good enrichment of the curriculum through very well established community links and a wide range of clubs and other activities.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 2002. Pupils' attainment is higher and there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. Leadership and management are now good and the governing body has established clear roles and responsibilities. Spiritual development and the quality of information provided to parents have improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	B	A	B
mathematics	C	A	B	D
science	A	B	B	D

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.

Pupils' achievement is good overall, although there are some variations throughout the school. In Years 4 to 6, pupils are now achieving well in English, mathematics and science. National test data suggests that in 2003, although achievement was good in English, there was some underachievement in mathematics and science, when progress is measured against attainment at the end of Year 2. However, pupils do not join the school until the start of Year 4, and the school's own data indicates that pupils who took the tests in 2003 had made at least satisfactory progress in mathematics and science, with many less able pupils making good progress.

Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average overall in English, mathematics, science, ICT and French. In English, there is a strength in reading skills, which are well above average. Writing skills are above average, but attainment in speaking and listening is only satisfactory. In physical education, pupils have very good skills in games lessons. In art and design, pupils in Years 5 and 6 produce some very good examples of three-dimensional models.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 7, with pupils maintaining the above average standards found at the end of Year 6. In geography, pupils' attainment is below average by the end of Year 6 and Year 7 and pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Although teaching of geography is satisfactory, weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum are limiting pupils' overall achievement. Pupils produce too little recorded work and topics are not covered in sufficient detail, leading to learning being superficial.

There is **good provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are good overall. Pupils show great interest in school life and take responsibility very well. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall, although a few Year 7 boys do not always meet the school's high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are keen to come to school; attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good quality teaching and good levels of care and support mean that pupils are able to learn well throughout the school. A strength in teaching is the way that the school makes very good use of teachers' specialist subject knowledge to support learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. However, there are occasions when work is not matched closely enough to ability. When this happens, the pace of learning is slower than it should be for some pupils.

There is a good partnership with parents and the school works very closely with the local community. There are good links with other schools. The school offers a stimulating range of high quality learning experiences to enrich the curriculum.

Accommodation is unsatisfactory. Classrooms are cramped and the hall is too small, limiting opportunities for physical education and whole-school activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is good at utilising the individual skills of members of staff and has built an effective team who have embraced a range of special educational needs. Management is good and the headteacher is supported well by other key staff. Governance is good and statutory requirements are met. Governors take an active role in leading and managing the school and planning for school development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire and those attending the meeting were very supportive of the school. They feel that the quality of teaching is good and consider the school to have improved considerably in the last two years. Most pupils are happy at school. They are pleased that the school listens to their views and feel that learning is made fun.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in geography.
- Ensure teachers plan work that consistently meets the needs of all pupils.
- Implement plans to further develop monitoring procedures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils' attainment is **above average overall** in English, mathematics and science by the end of Years 6 and 7. Achievement is **good overall** although there are some variations throughout the school. Achievement is **good** in Years 4 to 6 and is satisfactory in Year 7, where the **good** standards found in Year 6 are maintained.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are well above average in reading and above average in writing, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' achieve well in Years 4 to 6.
- Pupils make good progress in ICT, applying their skills well to a range of activities when they are working in the ICT suite.
- Pupils make a good start to learning to speak French, especially in Year 6.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.1 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.7 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Test results confirm that there are no significant differences between the attainment and achievement of pupils from different backgrounds or between boys and girls. Taking the last four years together, the improvement in the school's test results is broadly in line with national trends. In 2003, test scores at the end of Year 6 show that attainment was:
 - In English, well above average when compared with all schools, above average when compared with similar schools and well above average when compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds.
 - In mathematics, above average when compared with all schools, below average when compared with similar schools and above average when compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds.
 - In science, above average when compared with all schools, below average when compared with similar schools and well above average when compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds.
2. Inspection findings show that in the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average overall in English, mathematics and science. In English, there is a strength in reading skills, which are well above average. Writing skills are above average, but attainment in speaking and listening is only satisfactory.
3. In Years 4 to 6, pupils are now achieving well in English, mathematics and science. National test data suggests that in 2003 there was some underachievement in mathematics and science, when progress is measured against attainment at the end of Year 2. However, pupils

do not join the school until the start of Year 4, and the school's own data indicate that pupils who took the tests in 2003 have made at least satisfactory progress over time in mathematics and science, with many less able pupils making good progress.

4. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 7, with pupils maintaining the above average standards found at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science.
5. In ICT, pupils achieve well throughout the school and attainment is above national expectations by the end of Years 6 and 7. Pupils have good levels of confidence and apply basic skills well to a range of activities. Their word-processing skills are well developed and they have a good understanding of the many applications of ICT.
6. In geography, pupils' attainment is below national expectations by the end of Years 6 and 7 and pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Although teaching is satisfactory, weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum are limiting pupils' overall achievement. Pupils produce too little recorded work and topics are not covered in sufficient detail, leading to learning being superficial.
7. In French, pupils' attainment is above average in both Years 6 and 7. In Year 6, pupils show a very positive attitude towards learning a second language. They achieve well, quickly developing new skills. This is because of the very good quality of teaching. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 7, where a small number of pupils show less positive attitudes towards learning. On occasions, this slows the pace of learning.

Pupils with special educational needs

8. Pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Pupils are given appropriate support and this contributes to the good results they achieve for their ability in national tests for English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. The school uses a range of school-based and national tests to determine pupils' needs. Most individual education plans contain clear targets, identifying areas for improvement, although there is sometimes a lack of consistency in their style and quality.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are good overall. There is good provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is very good and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very successful in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Pupils show great interest in school life and take responsibility very well.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall, although a few Year 7 boys do not meet the school's high expectations for behaviour.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is very good.

Commentary

9. The school is very successful in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility and they show that the trust is well placed. Apart from the wide involvement in the school council, pupils perform many tasks around the school, with the older pupils acting as 'buddies' for the younger ones. The development helps the pupils to become more confident, articulate and mature. Pupils are also active in supporting pupils in a school in Kenya.

10. Pupils' good attitudes and values have been maintained well since the last inspection. From the start in Year 4, they come happily to school and are eager and ready to learn. They are fully prepared to work hard and participate happily in all activities. They show good levels of independence and persevere well with their tasks. This early enthusiasm continues throughout the school, although a very few boys in Year 7 show less positive attitudes to their learning, especially when the school's behaviour policy is not followed carefully.
11. Standards in behaviour throughout the school have also been maintained since the last inspection and continues to be good. Most pupils rise to the challenge of high expectations set by the school and as a result, their behaviour in lessons is good apart from the disruption caused by a small number of boys in Year 7. When they come to school, in assemblies, in the dining hall, on the playground, and even in the closely confined cloakroom areas, pupils show that high levels of orderly behaviour are consistently achieved. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment being commonplace. Pupils understand what they should do if they have a concern. The two incidents of exclusion from the school in the recent past reflect the school's determination to use the sanction only as a last resort.
12. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to improve the provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development, with effective results. Themes and messages in assemblies are used well to promote the understanding of human feelings and emotions. Pupils learn to respect the views of others and understand the importance of traditions and festivals of other religions. Pupils regularly support fundraising for charities throughout the year. There are now many more opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. The visits to museums, churches and temples all further their cultural development. Moral and social skills are promoted effectively. Members of staff are good role models and encourage pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong, to support each other and to take responsibility.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
National data	6.0	National data	0.3

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

13. Attendance is within the highest ten per cent of schools across the country and is very good. Virtually all pupils are punctual and many arrive early, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	306	1	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Good quality teaching and good levels of care and support mean that pupils are able to learn well. There is a good partnership with parents and the school works very closely with the local community. There are good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, with most very good and excellent teaching being in Years 4 to 6. There are satisfactory assessment procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn best in English and mathematics, where classes are organised according to pupils' prior attainment.
- Very good use is made of teachers' specialist subject knowledge.
- Whole-class teaching at the start of lessons is effective in increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teachers do not always plan work that meets the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers have good relationships with the pupils, but inconsistencies in expectations for behaviour management sometimes slow the pace of learning, especially in Year 7.
- Homework provision is well planned and makes a good contribution to learning.
- There are good assessment procedures in English, including writing targets. These have a good impact on learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	7 (14%)	20 (40%)	21 (42%)	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.

14. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the time of the last inspection, when it was satisfactory with a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. Ninety-eight per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are pleased with teaching, and, along with the pupils, appreciate the teachers' good sense of humour.
15. Throughout the school, the organisation of classes according to pupils' prior attainment for English and mathematics is successful in enabling teachers to extend the learning of pupils successfully. Work between the classes is significantly different and provides challenge and support where it is needed most. However, in mathematics, the most able pupils within each class are not always challenged enough, and sometimes complete the same tasks as other pupils before moving on to activities planned to extend their learning.
16. Teachers support each other very well by planning and teaching lessons to other classes in subjects that are their particular strengths. For example, classes in Years 6 and 7 are taught music, French and physical education by different teachers. This arrangement is effective in reducing teachers' workload for planning and in ensuring that their very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm is shared successfully with the pupils, improving knowledge, understanding and skills effectively.
17. In all subjects, teachers are especially effective when teaching the whole class. They provide clear explanations and instructions, ensuring that pupils understand the purpose of work, use questioning to extend pupils' learning and make effective use of learning resources to make lessons interesting.
18. Skilful teaching assistants provide sensitive support for lower-attaining pupils or those with special educational needs. They use praise effectively to raise self-esteem and give clear explanations so that pupils can understand and take part in all activities. This has a good impact on learning.
19. Teaching is less effective when pupils are working individually or in small groups. At these times, as at the time of the last inspection, teachers do not consistently use assessment information to provide work that meets pupils' differing needs. This has greatest impact on the learning of more able pupils, who are not always challenged enough.
20. Throughout the school, teachers are kind and caring and this contributes to the building of the pupils' confidence and trust. However, there are some inconsistencies in expectations, resulting in the presentation of work varying in quality. In addition, in some lessons, especially in Year 7, teachers do not insist on the usual good standards of behaviour and allow pupils to become inattentive and off-task. Nevertheless, in most lessons, pupils work sensibly without adult support and collaborate well with each other.
21. Homework makes a good contribution towards pupils' learning. Tasks are relevant to work being completed in class and most parents are keen to support their children at home.
22. As at the time of the last inspection, assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, with good procedures in English. More use is being made of test data to analyse strengths and weaknesses in provision and pupils are involved in setting their own literacy targets. There is a

whole-school marking policy that is understood by pupils, helping them to understand what they have done well and how they can improve. However, information collected by teachers is not used consistently to provide suitably challenging work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. Learning is extended through a very good range of out-of-class activities. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Accommodation continues to be unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of special events and activities is planned to stimulate pupils' interest.
- Teaching time is not appropriately balanced across the range of subjects.
- Planning is not always adjusted appropriately to meet pupils' differing needs.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- A good personal, social and health education programme has been developed.
- Weaknesses in accommodation have an impact on learning.

Commentary

23. The school offers a stimulating range of high quality learning experiences to extend the curriculum. Special focus days through the year are designed to boost key skills, such as investigating problems in mathematics and science or creating works of art. Visitors with special expertise deepen and broaden pupils' understanding, for instance of Hinduism. There are three residential visits, each focused on aspects of the school curriculum.
24. The school has shown energy and imagination in adopting new initiatives. For example, pupils in Year 5 have written an opera and performed it in Norwich's Theatre Royal. The school has boosted interest in art by creating a corridor "art gallery" and an Internet website. Gifted and talented pupils benefit from a course in philosophy and take part in a project based on design and technology and ICT. There is a "Revise-wise" booster club for selected Year 6 pupils before the national tests, and the extra tuition has been effective in raising standards.
25. A large number of pupils take part in after-class clubs. The quality and range for sports is very good, and teams represent the school in many competitions. There is also very good provision for the arts, with clubs for drama and art, and opportunities for pupils to learn to play a wide range of instruments.
26. The taught curriculum is satisfactory overall, and fully meets statutory requirements. However, there are some imbalances. Not enough time is allowed for geography, and pupils do not reach the expected standards by Year 6 or Year 7. Other lessons are sometimes shorter than the intended thirty minutes because of time taken to change classrooms or activities over-running. As a result, several instances were noted where pupils failed to complete tasks or did so superficially. Some lessons are as long as two hours, making it difficult for pupils to sustain concentration, for instance in French or science. One class has two physical education lessons on the same day.
27. In other respects, provision has improved since the previous inspection. Weaknesses in art and design, design and technology and ICT have been corrected and coverage is now satisfactory. A good programme has been developed for personal, social and health education, including citizenship. Planning from year to year has improved and now sets out a clear path for pupils' progress. French is well provided for as an additional subject in Year 6, leading on to the required coverage in Year 7. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary education.

28. Provision for all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are provided with detailed individual education plans, setting out clear targets to guide their progress. These targets are focused on their identified needs and adjusted in the light of assessments so that they make good progress as their needs change. There is also good provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented, and they achieve well. Provision for other pupils is inconsistent. Many teachers consistently plan appropriate work for groups of differing ability so they work at the right level. For English and mathematics and for science in Year 7, pupils are taught in “sets” with pupils of similar ability, and this is generally effective. Nevertheless, at times, all pupils are given the same task, which may be too difficult for some and too easy for others. This weakness is evident in other subjects, notably geography, history and religious education. Higher attaining pupils are most affected because the lack of challenge in some tasks limits their opportunity to reach their full potential.
29. The school is appropriately staffed, and good use is made of teachers’ subject specialisms in teaching classes other than their own. Teaching assistants play a good supporting role in lessons though planning does not always specify that role clearly enough. The new location for the library is an improvement and its stock is now adequate. However, the cramped accommodation continues to be a weakness, restricting movement in corridors, classrooms and playground, and limiting opportunities for physical education and whole-school activities in the hall.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of the children’s personal needs. It effectively promotes the pupils’ welfare in a secure and caring environment. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils. The school is meticulous in its involvement with the pupils in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good procedures for taking into account the views of pupils.
- The school offers good quality support and guidance for pupils’ welfare and pastoral needs in a safe and secure environment.
- There are good induction procedures for when pupils start school.

Commentary

30. There are very effective systems in place to take account of the ideas and opinions of pupils. The school council, supported by the class councils, is instrumental in providing the opportunity for pupils’ views to be considered. As well as fund-raising activities, pupils have obtained new physical education equipment and books for the library. Pupils have been successful in obtaining refurbishment of the boys’ toilets.
31. As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides good quality support and guidance and effectively promotes the welfare of the pupils. Members of staff know the children extremely well and are well equipped to offer support when it is needed. All staff counsel pupils well, offering good quality support to those most in need. Stemming from the very good relationships and led by the headteacher, all staff set good examples of how to have trusting relationships, enabling the pupils to develop very good self-esteem. Pupils confirm that they know whom to approach if they have a problem.
32. There are good levels of care shown to pupils with special educational needs. The school keeps records and documentation on all these pupils; all class teachers have their own special needs information. This ensures they are knowledgeable about individual difficulties pupils might encounter and ensures they receive the appropriate support and guidance. Pupils have their own individual targets that are reviewed regularly. This all contributes to the good care

pupils receive. There are good opportunities in lessons for pupils to respond to questions and to share their work, and this contributes to their growing confidence.

33. The effective induction procedures enable the children to feel comfortable from the moment that they first start at the school. The information provided by the school enables parents to be reassured and, in turn, to reassure their children.
34. The school continues to have effective systems to handle child protection issues. All members of staff are aware of the signs to look for and the procedures to follow if suspicions are aroused. Site inspections and risk assessment reviews are regularly carried out to ensure that the site is a healthy, safe and secure environment in which the children can learn.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has effective links with parents and other schools. Links with the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of information about the school and its work is now very good.
- School has many and varied links with the community.
- There are effective links with other schools and colleges.

Commentary

35. The partnership with parents has improved dramatically since the last inspection and now has a positive effect on the children's learning and personal development. Parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire and those attending the meeting were very supportive of the school and its work. They believe that it has many strengths, including the quality of teaching and the way that the school is being led and managed.
36. The school has good procedures for taking parents' views into account, and provides parents with high quality information. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school brochure and the governors' Annual Report to Parents are both clear and detailed. The 'Best News' newsletters contain comprehensive information about the news and activities on a very regular basis. The annual reports to parents on the children's progress now give very good information about what the pupils know, understand and can do, as well as clear updates on the progress that they have made. In addition, they contain targets for improvement, the children's own reflections and background on the areas that have been studied during the year.
37. The school has established good partnership links with parents of children with special educational needs. The school values this parental support and parents are involved in regular reviews concerning the pupils' progress. All parents are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children and the school maintains good links with parents, who are often involved in target-setting.
38. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and a high proportion responds extremely positively. They are a considerable help in the classroom and around the school, as well as on school visits. The 'Friends of White Woman Lane' are very active. It organises many fundraising and social events in support of the school. The school values highly the support and contributions made by all parents and members of the community that enhance the children's learning and development.
39. The school enjoys very positive partnerships with a wide range of groups in the community. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in community events. They visit a local care home for the elderly and were involved in choosing a name for the facility when it was opened. Representatives of various faiths talk to the pupils to extend their knowledge of other religions

and the school is used by the local Methodist church as a place of worship. Sports coaches and other visitors enhance the children's understanding and skills. Educational visits and residential trips are both used regularly and effectively to further extend the community involvement.

40. The school enjoys positive and constructive links with its feeder schools and the upper school to which most of the pupils transfer. The headteacher of the feeder first school is a member of the governing body, helping to ensure that there is a shared understanding of priorities. Effective curricular links are being built to assist continuity and progression. The close working relationships and the exchange of relevant information between the members of staff of the various schools contribute to the smooth transition for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very good leadership, with effective management having a good impact on the school's work. The headteacher is supported well by other key staff and by a hardworking governing body which ensures that governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school and has managed change very effectively so that there has been rapid school improvement.
- The headteacher is good at utilising individual skills and has built an effective team.
- Governors take an active role in leading and managing the school and planning for school development.
- The role of co-ordinators has developed significantly and they are now good role models in the teaching of their subjects.
- Very thorough monitoring by the headteacher has helped to establish a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet as well developed.

Commentary

41. At the time of the last inspection, the headteacher had only been in post for one week. Since then, there has been good school improvement due to the inspirational and purposeful leadership provided by the headteacher. She has built an effective team and is very well respected by members of staff, pupils, parents and governors, who recognise the many improvements that have taken place over the last two years.
42. Change has been managed very effectively. There is a very clear, shared educational vision, with the headteacher strongly committed to achieving high standards in all areas of the school's work. This is reflected in the very thorough school development plan which clearly identifies where the school needs to improve further. Improvements that have been made over the last two years have been based on thorough and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher mainly, but also to a lesser extent by subject co-ordinators.
43. The headteacher has worked hard over the last two years to improve teaching and to develop the role of the subject co-ordinators, teachers and teaching assistants and to improve teaching. Performance management strategies and professional development have been used very effectively to acknowledge strengths and improve weaknesses. Individual skills are used well and members of staff are given the opportunity to try out new ideas. This is seen to good effect in the way that two teaching assistants work as 'play organisers', taking on responsibility for organising 'play activities' at lunchtime.
44. Subject leaders are good role models in the quality of their own teaching, and this has a good impact on learning, especially when their subject specialisms are used to teach all classes in a year group. They have been empowered to take responsibility for their curriculum area.

These developments have had a good impact on learning, and overall, the quality of leadership and management by subject leaders is good. Although restrictions in the budget mean that there has been only a limited amount of release time to enable co-ordinators to observe teaching and learning, monitoring has been developed extensively in other ways. For example, over the last two years, co-ordinators have all monitored teachers' planning, sampled pupils' work and interviewed pupils about provision in their subject. Information gained from this monitoring has been used successfully to draw up subject 'action plans' which identify what needs improving next. In subject such as English, where there has been a particular focus on school improvement, good use has been made of test data to identify strengths and weaknesses. This is not as well developed in mathematics or science, and the remaining key areas for development are to give all subject leaders further opportunities to monitor provision by observing lessons and to divest some of the responsibilities for performance management to other members of staff. Both of these are areas have already been identified by the school as future priorities for improvement.

45. The headteacher, staff and governors have a strong commitment to providing a school which meets the needs of all pupils whatever their background or need. They have been successful in this aim and members of staff have embraced a range of special educational needs, including admitting some pupils who have been excluded from other schools.
46. The quality of governance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. Statutory requirements are now met in full. Governors have spent a lot of time clarifying their roles and responsibilities and they now provide good quality support for the school. They are kept well informed by very detailed written reports from the headteacher. At the governing body's request, headteacher's reports follow the same structure as the school's annual self-review, which is undertaken in conjunction with the local authority. This is helpful to governors in that they can quickly see how well the school is performing in different areas of its work.
47. The chair of governors has a very good working relationship with the headteacher, and other governors are regularly involved in monitoring the work of the school. Governors take responsibility for different curriculum areas. They talk to subject leaders and visit classes, which helps them to develop a clear understanding of how the school is working and means that they are able to make an effective contribution to school development planning. They have identified that it would be helpful if their monitoring strategies included more opportunities to observe lessons.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	722,191
Total expenditure	702,985
Expenditure per pupil	2,210

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,700
Balance carried forward to the next	37,906

48. Financial planning is thorough. It is based on a good understanding of the school's priorities, with budgetary decisions made consistently on the basis of 'How will this help the school to improve'. The finance committee of the governing body meets regularly and fulfils its role effectively. The school makes good use of available funds, supplementing where possible by getting additional funding. For example, additional funding helped the school to organise the 'Revise-wise' project last year. This had a good impact on end of year test scores. The school is beginning to consider principles of best value; the governing body has recently adopted useful procedures to help them with this process.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading standards are well above average by Year 7.
- Standards in writing have improved and are above average throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Some older pupils do not speak or listen carefully enough.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

49. Results in the Year 6 national tests have been generally above the national average in recent years. Since the previous inspection, the school has taken decisive action to lift standards higher, and the 2003 results were well above the national average. This is because assessment information has been closely analysed to identify pupils' weaknesses, to set challenging targets and guide improvements in provision. Few pupils failed to reach the expected level (Level 4) and pupils with special needs in language made good progress. There was a good improvement in the number who achieved Level 5. Inspection evidence indicates that this year group is making sound progress in Year 7. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in Years 4 to 6. However, the lowest attaining set in Year 7 contains a high proportion of boys, and the weak concentration of some slowed the pace of one lesson seen. Current standards in Years 6 and 7 are well above average in reading and above average in writing.
50. Standards in speaking are average. Pupils are generally confident in explaining their ideas informally, but few speak clearly or at length in formal discussions. Even in Year 6, some have not learned to wait their turn, calling out inappropriately without listening carefully to others. The school provides formal opportunities, including drama, to extend the range of challenge, but speaking skills are not as well developed as other aspects of English.
51. Pupils in all years are interested in reading, and this reflects the ongoing purchase of good quality fiction. Through the school, pupils develop substantial experience through homework, daily reading sessions and guided reading in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are given well-focused extra help. By Year 6, all pupils read silently with good concentration. They read fiction aloud with understanding and expression, and have good understanding of literary techniques. These continue to be developed effectively in Year 7.
52. The curriculum is well planned to develop skills in writing for a wide range of purposes. It is a good feature that pupils are given time to focus on each kind of writing over a series of lessons, gaining confidence through planning, revising and correcting their work. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 5 organise longer pieces using paragraphs. By Year 6, standards of spelling and punctuation are generally good. Pupils in Year 7 use complex sentences confidently and have a good vocabulary range. There has been a good improvement in standards of handwriting since the previous inspection. By Year 6, almost all pupils write confidently and neatly in ink in a joined style. Insufficient use is made of displays and class anthologies to stimulate their interest. There are some good examples of ICT being used to support learning, with displays showing pupils' writing presented in a variety of formats using word-processing and other skills.
53. Teaching is good overall. Two very good lessons were seen and the remainder were satisfactory or better. Long-term planning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Lesson targets are now sharply focused, explained to pupils at the outset and

used to guide marking. This gives learning a strong sense of purpose, and this was a marked feature of the very good lessons seen in Year 6. Instruction was energetic and at a very brisk pace, with high expectations for active response from all pupils. In one of these lessons, for the lowest-attaining set, the review of previous work on news reporting was particularly effective in clarifying pupils' understanding, so that they then wrote their own reports confidently at a good pace. In most lessons, instruction is well focused on language features, using interesting texts. Teachers and assistants have good relationships with their classes and so pupils want to do well. Most concentrate hard when working on their own, writing at a good pace. Not all teachers focus their help by working intensively with a particular group, and so their expertise is not always used effectively. Teaching assistants work well with individuals and groups, though one instance was noted where the assistant's role was not planned carefully enough to make best use of her help. In most lessons, not enough time is left at the end to review learning fully and develop speaking skills.

54. The subject is very well led and managed. Weaknesses in provision noted in the previous inspection have been tackled energetically, with a significant impact on standards. Successful actions taken include:
- Raising expectations for completion of homework and involving parents in helping their children.
 - Using assessment rigorously to identify each pupil's needs and setting written targets to guide progress.
 - Devising checklists to guide pupils in evaluating their own written work.
 - Setting up programmes of intensive instruction for selected groups of lower attaining or under-performing pupils.
 - Increasing staff expertise through substantial professional development.
55. Members of staff share a strong sense of purpose and further improvements are planned. These include developing a system for assessing speaking and listening, and closer monitoring of the range, pace and challenge of pupils' voluntary reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Reading and writing opportunities in other subjects are satisfactory overall. However, much written work is very brief because pupils do not have enough time to develop their ideas, notably in geography, history and religious education. Older pupils have limited experience of reading non-fiction, and some are not sure how to search for information. This reflects the weakness in library provision in the past, but the book stock is being improved and is now satisfactory.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FRENCH)

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 6, there is very good teaching and pupils make rapid gains in knowledge.
- Pupils in Year 6 are very enthusiastic about learning a new language, but in Year 7, the negative attitudes of a small number of boys slows the pace of learning.

Commentary

57. Progress since the last inspection has been good and there has been a rise in pupils' attainment in Year 7, due to better quality teaching. Pupils' attainment is now above average in both Years 6 and 7.
58. In Year 6, pupils show a very positive attitude towards learning a second language. They achieve well, quickly developing new skills. This is because of the very good quality of teaching. A very experienced subject specialist takes all of the French lessons in Year 6. He has very good subject knowledge and very high expectations. There is a good pace to learning and activities are purposeful and motivating. The teacher plans a wide range of activities in each lesson and these hold the pupils' interest. The teacher's rapid repetition of questions and phrases extended learning effectively. Learning is made fun and includes good use of ICT. There is a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in a practical way, with the use of games being very successful in helping them to use spoken French confidently in a range of situations. As a result, pupils have a good vocabulary and they respond accurately to different questions, for example talking about their family, birthday and the weather.
59. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Year 7. Lessons are again taken by the subject specialist and by class teachers. The quality of teaching in these lessons is satisfactory overall, but the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils with behavioural problems is not always managed effectively. When this happens, the attitude of pupils deteriorates and the pace of learning is slower than it should be.
60. Improvements in provision have been well led and managed by the co-ordinator. There is now a carefully planned curriculum, with good use being made of a commercial scheme. There is an appropriate emphasis given to developing oral skills in Year 6 and to extending written skills in Year 7. The co-ordinator has high aspirations for further development of the subject and gives good support to other teachers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 6 and 7, with good achievement in Years 4 to 6.
- The organisation of classes according to pupils' prior attainment is effective.
- Teachers are especially effective when working with the whole class.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well.
- Teachers are less effective when pupils are working individually or in small groups.

Commentary

61. Pupils' attainment in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 were above average compared with all schools, though below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was average compared with all schools and well below average compared with similar schools. However, tests carried out since pupils have joined the school in Year 4 show that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress through the school and whole-school targets were missed by a very narrow margin.
62. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are on target to be above average at the end of the year, with more pupils on target to achieve the higher level than last year. Attainment in Year 7 remains above average. Throughout the school, pupils are now achieving well, although achievement in Year 7 has been only satisfactory, due to previous weaknesses

in provision. Pupils are taught mathematics in three classes per year group, organised according to pupils' prior attainment. This arrangement is successful in ensuring that all pupils learn quickly and that work and homework is generally matched well to their needs. Attainment has improved since the time of the last inspection, when it was average, with weaknesses in some aspects of the subject.

63. Teaching and learning are good overall in all year groups, with the best teaching being in Year 6, where examples of very good and excellent teaching were observed.

Example of outstanding practice

In an excellent lesson in the top set in Year 6, the very good use of diagrams and challenging questions helped pupils build on previously learned knowledge to help calculate angles in triangles.

Higher-attaining pupils investigated patterns of internal angles in various two-dimensional shapes and lower-attaining pupils made paper cut-outs to prove that the angles of a triangle equal 180 degrees. By setting some open-ended tasks and teaching each group in turn, the teacher ensured that the interest, enthusiasm and hard work of pupils of differing abilities were maintained. At the end of the lesson, learning was moved forward further when pupils applied their new knowledge to investigating the size of external angles.

64. Throughout the school, teachers work most effectively when speaking to the whole class, when they engage pupils' interest well and make effective use of resources such as diagrams on the whiteboard and the overhead projector. They provide clear explanations for the concepts being taught, demonstrate good knowledge of the subject by sharing the correct mathematical language and use probing questions to help pupils explain how they have worked out answers. Teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection, when it was only satisfactory overall.
65. Teaching assistants provide focused and sensitive support for pupils with special educational needs and motivate them well by praising their efforts and boosting their self-esteem. These pupils are encouraged to take part in the lessons, and have good opportunities to demonstrate what they have learnt, in the safe knowledge that other pupils and members of staff will be genuinely pleased with their successes.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the school has identified appropriate areas for development such as greater opportunities for pupils to carry out mathematical investigations. The subject is an area of focus this year and the subject co-ordinator has carried out an analysis of pupils' work and correctly identified the need for teachers to provide work that matches pupils' individual needs more closely during individual or group work. This mostly affects the most able pupils in each set, who often complete the same work as other pupils before moving on to a more challenging extension activity. Some teachers do not use their skills to maximum effect when pupils are working and spread their support thinly rather than concentrating on a group of pupils. The co-ordinator provides a good role model but has not monitored teaching and learning or analysed test data in sufficient detail to ensure that teaching and learning are of a consistently good standard. Whilst all teachers mark pupils' work according to the school policy, not all use this information to provide appropriate work for all pupils within their class. In addition, there is an inconsistency in teachers' expectations and not all pupils present their work to the usual good standard or behave sensibly in lessons. This is especially noticeable amongst a few older boys and has a negative impact on their learning. Nevertheless, most pupils enjoy mathematics and provision in the subject has improved since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to use their mathematical skills to support learning in other subjects such as taking measurements in design and technology. Pupils make some graphs in ICT lessons, but there is limited evidence of pupils using a range of graphs to present findings during science investigations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are above average by the end of Years 6 and 7.
- Pupils achieve well in Years 4, 5 and 6 but achievement is only satisfactory in Year 7.
- Teaching is good overall in Year 4, 5 and 6.
- The subject is well led and resources are good.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT and mathematics.

Commentary

68. Pupils' attainment has risen since the last inspection and is now above average by the end of Year 6 and Year 7. This is confirmed by national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, where the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level and the higher level were above average. Test results have been above average for the last three years and they show that there is no significant difference between the attainment and achievement of boys and girls.
69. Standards of work seen in pupils' books and in lessons show that pupils achieve well in Years 4 to 6. In Year 7, pupils' scientific knowledge is above average in the work observed, however, achievement is satisfactory because investigative science is less well developed in this year group. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive as they progress through the school.
70. In Year 6, pupils' ability to plan and write their own investigation is well developed. They have a clear understanding of scientific procedures and consistently consider these when investigating. Most pupils can explain clearly the significance of a fair test and apply this to their own investigation. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils investigated to find out if the number of bulbs and batteries affects the brightness of the light. Progress is good in Year 4 and 5. Pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of the effect of exercise on the body. In Year 4, pupils are encouraged to investigate whether surface area or wind affect how quickly water evaporates. In this initial year, pupils develop a good awareness of scientific procedures because they are encouraged to use them systematically in their investigations.
71. A scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 7 indicates that presentation of work is not as neat in this year group and investigative work is less well developed. The quality of marking lacks consistency in Year 7 and a lot of worksheets are used. Scrutiny indicates that pupils use good scientific vocabulary. They have good scientific knowledge of systems of the body and their writing shows a good understanding of cell division. They can identify different types of cells.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in Years 4, 5 and 6. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in Year 7 as no lessons were timetabled during the inspection. There was an example of excellent teaching in Year 5, where key scientific skills were developed very methodically. In this lesson, there was a very high level of challenge for all pupils, and a very good pace to learning.
73. In the lessons seen in Years 4 to 6, , teachers had very good subject knowledge and teach the subject confidently. Learning was made interesting and high expectations of behaviour meant that pupils were fully engaged. Homework was used effectively to support work completed in class.
74. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' attainment but they are not consistently used across the school to adapt tasks to individual needs. ICT and mathematics are not used very much to help pupils learn. Literacy is used very well to enhance teaching and learning in

science and subject-specific vocabulary is identified clearly. This encourages pupils to develop and use a good range of scientific vocabulary.

75. The good quality of leadership and management has been a key factor in the good progress made since the last inspection. The experienced co-ordinator has high aspirations for the subject and there is a strong commitment to improve attainment further. She has a clear view of the strengths and areas to develop, although there has been limited opportunity to observe teachers at work in their classrooms. The school has rightly identified this as the next area of development for improving the monitoring of work.
76. Resources are good but the storage allocated to the resources is poor and not easily accessible for staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching means that pupils achieve well.
- Provision is well led and managed by a hardworking and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- There are missed opportunities to apply skills in lessons outside the ICT suite.

Commentary

77. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Good leadership has brought about a good rise in standards of pupils' attainment, which is now above national expectations by the end of Year 6 and Year 7. Pupils have good levels of confidence and apply basic skills well to a range of activities. In Year 6, pupils show good word-processing skills in lessons, making good use of a range of techniques to record their work. They have a good understanding of the many applications of ICT, with teachers acting as good role models by making good use of ICT as a teaching aid. By Year 7, pupils use a good range of techniques when producing multi-media presentations, although some are still quite slow at finding their way around the keyboard.
78. Good quality teaching means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well throughout the school. Teaching is effective because skills are broken down into small parts to help pupils understand what they need to do. Learning is made purposeful and clear links are made between ICT and other subjects when pupils are working in the ICT suite. For example, in a good lesson in Year 6, pupils improved their word-processing skills as they produced a newspaper report about the 'spread of a new disease'. Pupils co-operated well in this lesson when working in pairs and they showed good levels of concentration.
79. There is a good curriculum and the school is fortunate to benefit from good quality resources, which means that all aspects of the subject can be taught. The well-equipped ICT suite is used well to teach specific skills and lessons are well organised.
80. Leadership and management are good overall. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, has very high aspirations and is very open to new ideas, for example developing the use of interactive whiteboards. This means that the school is well placed to develop the subject further. Teachers have benefited from extensive support and training and this has helped to make them more confident about teaching the subject. The subject co-ordinator is a very good role model in his own teaching of the subject and has a clear vision for future development based on a good understanding of where there are strengths and weaknesses. For example, he is currently trialling a new system for assessing and recording learning to improve the effectiveness of existing arrangements, which rely on teachers' individual assessments from lesson to lesson.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Good links are made between different subjects when pupils are working in the ICT suite. For example, pupils in Year 7 used their ICT skills as they produced multi-media presentations about life in the Middle Ages. However, although every classroom has at least one computer, these were rarely used during the inspection. As a result, there are missed opportunities to practise and consolidate ICT skills by using them across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are not high enough.
- Topics are not covered in sufficient detail, leading to learning being superficial.
- Teachers do not always plan work that meets the needs of all pupils.

Commentary

82. Pupils' attainment is below average by the end of Year 6 and Year 7 and pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Although teaching is satisfactory, weaknesses in the quality of the curriculum are limiting pupils' overall achievement, which is unsatisfactory. Pupils produce too little recorded work and topics are not covered in sufficient detail, leading to learning being superficial. As a result, pupils have only a limited recall of previous work and their understanding of basic skills is weak. For example, younger pupils get confused when asked to identify the countries in the United Kingdom, and in Year 7, pupils struggle to locate six countries on an atlas.
83. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. In Year 7, a topic on volcanoes was introduced in an imaginative way, with good use being made of resources. However, learning was slower than it should have been because the pupils' insecure knowledge meant that the planned task was too difficult for them. In a Year 4 lesson on homes in India, good use was made of group discussions to involve the pupils. However, the teacher was not clear about what she wanted pupils to learn and a lack of resources made it difficult for pupils to understand the difference between homes in England and India. Both of these factors limited the quality of pupils' learning, although they behaved well and showed a keen interest in the subject.
84. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers do not always plan work that meets the needs of all pupils. There is little difference in the work given to pupils of different prior attainment and there is little evidence of more able pupils working at higher levels than others in their class, with too much work consisting of copying out, completing worksheets or answering closed questions. This restricts opportunities to extend learning. In Year 7, pupils have made good use of ICT to produce brochures on different parts of the United Kingdom, carrying out their own research using the Internet.
85. The curriculum for geography meets statutory requirements, but expectations of what skills are to be developed from year group to year group are not clear. There are no consistent assessment procedures. Teachers assess learning in lessons and record pupils' attainment at the end of each topic but there is not yet a consistent approach to recording attainment so that teachers are clear about what pupils have already learnt.

86. The subject has not been a recent priority for development and standards have fallen since the last inspection. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Although there has been some limited monitoring of teaching and learning, this has not been sufficient to identify key weaknesses in the subject.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school, there are occasions when not all needs are met.
- In Year 7, a specialist teacher takes all lessons and makes learning fun and interesting.

Commentary

87. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 and Year 7. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. They develop a sound factual knowledge and are beginning to carry out their own research into topics that they are studying. However, there are missed opportunities to extend the learning of more able pupils. Work is often pitched at the same level, with pupils usually completing the same piece of written work whatever their age or prior attainment. This means that the needs of differing pupils are not always met. There is sometimes insufficient challenge for more able pupils and this limits their progress.
88. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. In the one lesson seen, in Year 7, teaching was good. The teacher is a subject specialist and he takes all the history lessons in Year 7. In the lesson seen, he very effectively brought the subject alive by dressing up as 'Brother Mark' to talk about what a pilgrim to Canterbury Cathedral would have seen on a visit shortly after the murder of Saint Thomas a Becket. The teacher acted out the role superbly, with the pupils enraptured as they listened to the 'monk' explaining about the different parts of the cathedral and life at that time. As a result, the quality of learning was good, although the recorded task that followed the role-play lacked challenge.
89. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory, with the school making appropriate use of a nationally recommended scheme of work to support teachers in their planning. Good use is made of visits, and these activities have a good impact on pupils' learning. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Teachers assess learning in lessons, and record pupils' attainment at the end of each topic.
90. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject has not been a recent priority for development and opportunities for monitoring have been relatively limited, although the co-ordinator has identified the need to ensure that there is challenge for all pupils in lessons.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

91. Standards in Years 6 and 7 meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they did at the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the major features of other world faiths. They identify significant similarities and differences between the customs and beliefs of these faiths. Their factual records are accurate and often show insight into the spiritual significance of religious practices. Work is generally well presented, and drawing tasks give pupils who find writing difficult the opportunity to record their learning. However, most written work is very brief, indicating that pupils are not given enough time to develop their ideas in depth or detail. Generally, pupils across the range of ability are set the same task, and sometimes use exactly the same words in their accounts. This means that pupils with the potential for higher attainment in particular are not sufficiently challenged.
92. Teaching is good overall. It was good in half the lessons seen and satisfactory in the remainder. Lesson plans set out clear targets, supported by interesting resources to illustrate main points. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and so instruction is well informed and at a good pace. Technical terms, such as “reincarnation” and “ethos” are explained clearly and used consistently. In one lesson, such thorough instruction gave lower-attaining and shy pupils the confidence to answer difficult questions. Pupils are given good encouragement to relate new learning to their own experiences and to develop their own values, based on sound understanding. They generally show positive attitudes and respect.
93. The subject is well led and managed. It is planned so as to make a good contribution to pupils’ personal development. Resources have been improved since the previous inspection, and a good programme of visitors from different faiths has been developed. Teachers are given good support in planning lessons, and there is consistent coverage of the agreed syllabus from year to year. However, lessons are too short, resulting in shallow coverage. There is no established assessment procedure or means of monitoring pupils’ progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils produce high quality three-dimensional artwork.
- The subject is promoted successfully by the very effective co-ordinator.

Commentary

94. Standards of attainment and pupils’ achievement are satisfactory overall by the end of Years 6 and 7, with pupils achieving very well in three-dimensional art in Years 5 and 6. For example, in Year 6, pupils made striking plaques depicting ‘The Green Man’ by modelling clay carefully and incorporating various natural materials into their intricate designs. Attainment has improved since the time of the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory by the end of Year 7. Samples of work across the school, collected by the co-ordinator, show clear progress in pupils’ skills when they made observational drawings of shoes, with older pupils including greater detail, shading and use of perspective. Pupils’ good attitudes to learning are evident in the care they take in finishing their work.
95. The very enthusiastic subject co-ordinator has developed a number of successful innovations that have raised the profile of the subject significantly, making a good contribution towards pupils’ cultural and social development and the quality of the curriculum. These initiatives have helped to raise standards, especially in three-dimensional work and in observational drawing.

For example, 'art week' provided an exciting opportunity for pupils to learn about various aspects of circus life by working with performers, before designing and making elaborate and brightly coloured clown pictures and heads out of modelling material. The co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of how the subject can be developed further and has started to monitor achievement across the school. Works of art have been annotated by the co-ordinator to help other members of staff when teaching pupils about famous artists, and prizes are awarded each term to encourage pupils to try hard.

96. There is insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement on teaching. In the good lesson observed, the co-ordinator was an effective role model for pupils, demonstrating various techniques for applying paint in the style of Jackson Pollock. An after-school pottery club is popular with the pupils and enables them to extend skills well, such as being able to produce carefully crafted clay containers and figures. At the time of the last inspection, displays of artwork were limited. The co-ordinator has developed an attractive art gallery within the school and on the school's website. Provision in the subject has improved since the last inspection.

Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils' making skills.
- There are clear plans to develop the subject.

Commentary

97. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory overall by the end of Years 6 and 7. Attainment has improved since the time of the last inspection, when there were weaknesses in the design and evaluation aspects of the subject. Teachers provide pupils with greater freedom to generate and use their own ideas and pupils evaluate their own and commercially made products, considering the suitability of materials used and the effectiveness of overall design. Older pupils now provide stepped plans showing how they intend making their models, though they do not always remember to include dimensions on their designs. There are examples of good quality work in Year 5, where pupils in the co-ordinator's class designed and made cheese pretzels and colourful packaging to appeal to a prospective buyer.
98. Lessons in Years 6 and 7 were observed during the inspection and teaching was satisfactory. Members of staff are especially effective at supporting pupils with special educational needs, and the sharing of their good subject knowledge enables all pupils to be engaged in their work and to develop a good range of making skills. However, the level of challenge for more able pupils is not always high enough and pupils are not encouraged to note adaptations to their designs as they work. Nevertheless, the calm working atmosphere makes design and technology lessons enjoyable and contributes well to pupils' social development, as they learn how to work together safely in pairs or small groups.
99. The good subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for developing the subject and it is a current focus for school development. There are plans to develop further the designated area for design and technology to improve the accessibility of resources and raise the profile of the subject. The design and technology area and its resources are currently used well for constructing models and for food technology. Good links with the community enable pupils in Year 5 to design, build and market vehicles using ICT, during a visit to a study centre. The subject has developed well since the time of the last inspection.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching engages pupils' interest well in Years 5 and 6.
- There is a wide range of additional learning opportunities.

Commentary

100. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of Years 6 and 7 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Attainment and achievement are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection.
101. Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good overall, with an example of very good teaching in Year 5. In the very good lesson, the co-ordinator used the interactive whiteboard very well to capture pupils' interest when introducing an exercise listening to Holst's 'The Planets'. The purpose of the lesson was very clearly explained and pictures of the planets were used to set the scene well. Good subject knowledge was shared successfully as the whiteboard was used to show musical notation for the repeating rhythm identified in the music. Effective use is made of teachers with specific skills to teach pupils throughout the school. In Years 5 and 6, teachers engage pupils' interest well and have high expectations for behaviour. Pupils are attentive and keen to learn. However, pupils' interest in the subject lessens considerably in Year 7, with many pupils giving up extra-curricular activities. Teaching seen in Year 7 was only satisfactory, despite the teacher being a skilful musician and sharing good subject knowledge. Pupils' interest was not sufficiently harnessed and some boys behaved immaturely, slowing the pace of learning.
102. As at the time of the last inspection, the school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and these are of great benefit to the pupils who take part. For example, pupils were given a wonderful opportunity to work with opera singers, writing and performing their own musical productions.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in developing skills in the games aspect of the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Participation in extra-curricular sporting activities is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The hall is too small.

Commentary

103. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the quality of provision, which is good overall, with very good provision for games and athletics and satisfactory provision for swimming and gymnastics throughout the school. The provision reflects the standards pupils achieve, which are well above average in games and average in gymnastics. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of attack and defence strategies when playing team games. Achievement is good overall, with all pupils, including those with special educational needs, making good gains in their skills.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall with very good teaching in Year 4 and 7. It is better in games than gymnastics, where it is satisfactory. Pupils have developed a positive attitude because the subject is taught well. Two teachers have specialist knowledge and this is reflected in the very good quality planning. In the very good lessons the teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge of games. Consequently, enthusiasm for a wide range of games, including korfbal, is very strong. In the very good lessons, teachers observe very well and teach from observation. In a Year 4 short tennis lesson, very good teaching points guided the pupils to develop their ability to control the ball well. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrated very good knowledge of games during an indoor wet games session. They played a game that they had created. The rules were appropriate and the game challenging and fun. It enabled 90 pupils to enjoy their games lesson within the constraints of the small hall because the teacher fully utilised all her skill and knowledge to make it a positive and enjoyable experience. The limitations of the size of the hall, however, curtail the activity time, as only half the pupils could safely be moving at one time.
105. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good in games and athletics and a significant number of pupils are regularly involved. Pupils are committed and reflect their teacher's enthusiasm for these activities. Pupils regularly play team games against other schools and are very successful. They are currently the korfbal league winners. There are very good opportunities for pupils in Year 5 and 6 to experience a wide range of outdoor adventure activities as part of the residential visits. Photographic evidence shows pupils engaged in abseiling, rock climbing, orienteering and archery and problem-solving activities. The school makes good use of the school grounds to develop pupils' orienteering skills. Lunchtimes are used very well for pupils to engage in physical activity for example Year 4 netball, skipping and football.
106. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The specialist knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator is reflected in the pupils' very positive attitude to physical education. She is a very good role model and is respected by staff and pupils throughout the school. She provides very good support for all staff and monitors teaching and learning well. Resources are good but the small hall is inadequate, especially for the older pupils.
107. Physical education is valued by staff and pupils alike and consequently makes a valuable contribution to the ethos of the school and pupils' personal and social development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- PSHE has a high profile in the curriculum and through the life of the school.
- Pupils grow in confidence and willingly take on responsibilities.

Commentary

108. The school has worked hard and to good effect since the previous inspection to develop a full programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Coverage in specific lessons includes drugs awareness, sex and relationships education and citizenship. Provision in each year is guided by a very detailed scheme of work and teachers have access to substantial guidance materials to help them with planning.
109. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to develop personal and social skills through a range of activities, including lessons, visits and visitors, that together make up a good curriculum. There is good coverage of sex and relationships education and issues relating to substance abuse in science lessons. Teachers constantly reinforce personal and social skills

in the way that they deal with problems and give pupils opportunities to talk about issues that concern them.

110. Teaching was good in the two lessons seen. Topics were well chosen to be interesting and relevant. Teachers lead discussions sensitively, prompting pupils to draw on their own experiences and consider the consequences of different courses of action. Pupils respond well to such encouragement, including those with special educational needs or lower attainment. They show good awareness of the responsibilities of citizenship and strong moral values in condemning anti-social behaviour.
111. There are good links with related topics in religious education, science and philosophy. Pupils in each class take an active part in the democratic process by suggesting and discussing issues to be debated by the school council. Some act as “ambassadors” in representing the school at outside events, and many act as “buddies” to younger and newly-arrived pupils. Thought-provoking sayings displayed on posters throughout the school encourage high aspirations for personal conduct and values.
112. The school won a ‘Healthy School’ award in 2002, reflecting the emphasis the school has placed on ensuring that pupils develop good values and leave school well prepared for their later experiences in life.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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