

ERRATUM SLIP

Scissett Middle School

Unique Reference Number: 107765
Contract Number: 258751
Date of inspection: 15/03/2004
Reporting inspector: Ross Maden

INSPECTION REPORT - the following paragraph should read as follows:-

117. Baseline assessments made by teachers show that pupils enter the school with standards just below the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with the national average. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 continue to achieve well and improve their skills and knowledge and, by the end of Year 8, standards are above average. Pupils' achievement in Year 7 dance is excellent. The girls have made outstanding progress in a very short time, especially in compositional and evaluative skills. In some activities, such as basketball and badminton, pupils have good knowledge of techniques and subject specific vocabulary, but their intentions are often better than their performance. However, in these activities, it is difficult for pupils to achieve very well because of the size of the hall.
118. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. An example of excellent teaching was seen in a Year 7 dance lesson. In the most effective lessons, it is the quality of teachers' knowledge and the planning of progressive tasks that enables pupils to gain new skills and knowledge. They are challenged to lead activities, to evaluate their own performance, and that of others, and to suggest ways to improve. However, these opportunities are not provided consistently. Teachers provide suitable challenges for higher attaining pupils and, often, use a variety of methods to ensure that all pupils are very well motivated and on task. Relationships are very good in all lessons and, consequently, pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour.

INSPECTION REPORT

SCISSETT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Scissett, Huddersfield

LEA area: Kirklees

Unique reference number: 107765

Headteacher: Mr. Michael Moriarty

Lead inspector: Mr Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 15 – 17 March 2004

Inspection number: 258751

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	10 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	578

School address:	Wakefield Road Scissett Huddersfield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	HD8 9JX

Telephone number:	01484 222930
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tony Barlow

Date of previous inspection:	22 September 1997
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Scissett Middle School is a larger than average sized middle school with 578 pupils on roll. There are 76 pupils with special educational needs, which is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is very low and only one pupil is at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of households with children in high social class households is above the national average. The school is popular and attracts pupils with a wide range of abilities from Scissett and surrounding villages, some of whom live outside the catchment area for the school. Overall the attainment on entry to the school is in line with national averages. There is a low mobility of pupils with only five pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of admission. The school gained the Investor in People award in 2002; the Artsmark Gold and Sportsmark award and the ECO silver award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Lead inspector	
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector	
32330	Ann Behan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
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18447	Ron Cohen	Team inspector	History Religious education
20055	Sheila Entwistle	Team inspector	Special educational needs
3755	Trevor Hulbert	Team inspector	English
17868	Eileen Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship
20825	Brian Ogden	Team inspector	Geography
24894	Clive Petts	Team inspector	Design and technology
19867	Maxwell Pettitt	Team inspector	Music
3793	John Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is very good. Pupils make good progress across the range of subjects in relation to their prior attainment. Standards are above national averages and have improved since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are very good though stronger in Year 6 than in Years 7 and 8. The leadership of the school is very good. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. Parents are very supportive of the school. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. The school is welcoming and the staff are unified and are ambitious for the school. The provision of support, advice, and guidance for pupils is good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' listening and speaking skills are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in school are very good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and there are very high participation rates for sporting and artistic activities.
- The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and other staff with posts of responsibility is very good.
- The identification of what pupils need to do to reach their targets is a weakness.
- Technician and administrative support is insufficient for the library, design and technology and information and communications technology (ICT). Access to ICT resources for subjects is limited.
- The school development plan lacks measurable targets for improvement.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. Standards in the National Curriculum tests for English, mathematics and science have improved. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. In tackling the key issues identified in the previous report the school has made very good progress. Much progress has been made to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. The quality of teaching in science, geography and history is much improved. During the last two years significant progress has been made in improving the school's assessment procedures and in identifying targets for pupils.

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	B	D
Mathematics	C	C	B	C
Science	C	C	A	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.

Pupils' standards on entry to the school are in line with national averages and above national averages when they leave. **Pupils achieve well** during their time in school, including those with special educational needs. Results in national tests for all subjects at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above national averages. They are in line with schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2 tests before starting at the school. Standards are high in art and design, music, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; pupils demonstrate a strong desire to learn. Attendance and punctuality are consistently good. **Pupils' personal progress including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are very good and good in Years 7 and 8. Assessment is much improved and is satisfactory. Curricular provision is good. It is very good in Year 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. The opportunities for enriching the curriculum are very good. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory. The school cares very well for its pupils. It gives them good support, advice and guidance. There are good measures to involve pupils in the school's work, through seeking and acting on their views. The school offers very good links between school and home, and other schools. They play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school and home. Links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership is very good, whilst its management is good. Governance is satisfactory. Leaders inspire, motivate and influence staff in a very positive way. All key aspects of management, including performance and financial, show improvement since the last inspection, based on effective planning and review. Performance management has had a positive impact on the staff's capacity to contribute to school improvement. There is a weakness in whole school planning in that not all of the priorities for improvement have targets which can be measured.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There was very good support for the school from a very high return rate to the questionnaires, which was confirmed at a very positive and well-attended parents' meeting. The vast majority of parents believe that staff expect children to work hard; that teaching is good; transition arrangements are good; their children are making good progress; their children like school. They believe the school is well led and are comfortable about approaching the school. Parents feel that the school encourages children to become mature and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors support the positive views of parents. However, a small minority of parents have concerns about being kept informed about their child's progress, homework and children being bullied or harassed. Inspectors judged that homework was satisfactory and that the school dealt effectively with the very rare occasions when bullying took place. Parents have two opportunities in the year to discuss with teachers about the progress their children are making and this is above the legal minimum. The quality of reports is satisfactory. The strong views that parents have in support of the school are mirrored by the comments that pupils made in discussions with inspectors. Younger pupils tend to be more positive than the older ones.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that all teachers clearly identify measurable strategies to enable pupils to meet their targets for improvement.
- Increase the level of technician and administrative support for the library, design and technology and information and communications technology (ICT).
- Improve the access for pupils to use ICT in all subjects to improve their quality of learning.
- Identify from the school development plan measurable targets for improvement for each academic year.

The school fully meets all statutory requirements.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' standards on entry to the school are in line with national averages and above national averages when they leave. Pupils achieve well during their time in school including those with special educational needs. Results in national tests for all subjects at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above national averages. They are in line with schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2 tests before starting at the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well during their time in school.
- Standards are high in art and design, music, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship.
- Pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped on entry to the school.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.9 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.2 (29.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 208 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at the end of Year 6. In 2003 science and mathematics showed an improvement on the 2002 results, but there was a dip in English results. Science results were well above the national average, mathematics and English results were above. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Girls outperform boys in English and science. However, boys outperform girls in mathematics. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects between 2000 and 2003 was broadly in line with the national trend.
2. Standards judged from the work seen during the inspection indicate that by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in PSHE and citizenship, and above national averages in all other subjects except for in ICT and PE, where they are in line. By the end of Year 8 standards are well above average for art and design, music, French, PSHE and citizenship. Standards are above average in all other subjects.
3. In relation to their prior attainment pupils by the end of Year 6 are achieving very well in art and design. They are achieving well in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, music, physical education, history, geography, French, religious education PSHE and citizenship. They are achieving at a satisfactory level in ICT. By the end of Year 8 pupils are achieving very well in art and design, music, French, and PSHE and citizenship. They are achieving well in all other subjects.

4. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs in mainstream lessons is in line with other pupils; very good achievement in Year 6 is followed by good progress in Years 7 and 8. Pupils following the corrective reading programme make very good progress over time. There is one pupil who is in the early stages of learning English who is making very good progress.
5. There is no evidence of underachievement within the school. This is as a result of teachers' planning of lessons, which ensures that the activities set match the needs of pupils. Gifted and talented pupils achieve at a satisfactory level. Identifying extension activities to stretch higher attaining pupils is not yet fully developed and this is recognised by the school as it is one of the school's current priorities for improvement. Their achievements, and the progress they make, are monitored in line with other pupils.
6. Standards are good in English. Teacher assessments in Year 8 indicate that pupil performance is above the national average. These pupils were performing at average levels when they entered the school and so have made good progress. Results in the national Year 6 tests in 2003 were in line with the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils reached the higher levels. Work seen indicates that standards are improving. Pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped on entry to the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. Reading and writing skills are good. The systems for promoting and monitoring literacy across the curriculum in the school are good. The literacy co-ordinator and the individual heads of department have a clear understanding of the importance of speaking, reading and writing. Lesson plans in all subjects aim to provide good opportunities to develop and use specialist vocabulary in a variety of situations.
7. In mathematics test results were above average when compared with all schools, and in line with results of similar schools. These results represent good achievement with boys and girls performing similarly. They have improved steadily over time a little above the national trend, and over the last three years are, on average, a little below the results gained in English and science. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in all areas of mathematics are above the national average. Most pupils can perform accurate calculations without using calculators and there is a strong focus on accurate mental calculations. Pupils' skills in calculations, use of graphs and the basic use of algebra and formulae through mental, oral, written and practical approaches are fine. There are also a few good examples of pupils using mathematics seen in lessons of other subjects: younger pupils in ICT use shape and measurement well when animating road signs. They estimate the size of polygons they use and experiment with their rotation. Older pupils use bar charts to good effect in French, and, in science, all pupils develop a range of numeracy skills well supported by support packs to promote calculations, measurement and the use of graphs.
8. In science, Year 6 test results are well above average in comparison to all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. There is an improving trend over recent years with an increase in the numbers attaining at the higher levels. By the end of Year 8 pupils' standards of attainment are above average. In all years there is no significant difference between results of boys and girls. Pupils' achievement is good in all years. Encouraged by supportive teaching pupils make good progress in lessons and demonstrate that they can both develop their learning and enjoy science. Pupils benefit from an emphasis on investigational science in which they are expected to plan, carry out and evaluate experimental work.
9. The improvement in standards since the last inspection is due to the emphasis placed by senior and middle management staff on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; pupils demonstrate a strong desire to learn. Attendance and punctuality are consistently good. Pupils' personal progress including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn.
- The school's provision for personal development is good.
- The very good behaviour makes a key contribution to pupils' good achievement.
- Systems to manage behaviour are very good and have led to a significant reduction in exclusions.
- Training for non-teachers in behaviour management has developed their confidence and extended their skills.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good.

Commentary

10. During lessons, lunch breaks and around school, the great majority of pupils behave well. In lessons pupils of all abilities are keen to learn, work hard and concentrate well. Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, become occupied with their work, and behave well. They apply themselves well when tackling tasks they find difficult. The school has good arrangements for supervising corridors and play areas during lunchtimes and at breaks. Corridors are well supervised by staff at lesson changes. Organised training for lunchtime supervisors is improving confidence and skill dealing with immature and occasionally impatient behaviour of pupils. Systems and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are good with only one fixed-term exclusion in the current academic year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Black or Black British – Caribbean

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
537	12	0
1	1	0

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

11. Relationships in school between staff and pupils are very good. There are very few incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour. Staff respond promptly and effectively when incidents do occur and any pupil complaints are taken seriously. The vast majority of pupils make a positive contribution to the school and show a willingness to take responsibility. Responsible informal use is made of classroom facilities outside of lessons by pupils and provides a sound basis for allowing more access to facilities before the school day. Attendance at extra-curricular clubs and team events is good.
12. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' spiritual development is good. Acts of collective worship are a feature of assemblies and class registrations. In addition, weekly themes incorporate periods of reflection during registration and weekly year group assemblies. Pupils learn about other faiths in assemblies and timetabled personal, social, moral and health education programmes. These well-organised programmes make a significant contribution to personal development.

13. Pupils' moral development is well thought-out. Whole school expectations for behaviour are well established and pupils demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong. There is good emphasis on relationships and caring for others. Pupils extend their decision-making skills by discussing moral issues such as fair trade, human rights and crime. They are challenged to think for themselves and justify their point of view.
14. Pupils' social understanding is also well developed; they are friendly, polite and show respect for others. Pupils willingly support charity fund raising events. Many aspects of the citizenship programme play a part in their extensive personal development.
15. Pupils' cultural awareness is improved by very good provision in art and music and through local trips and visits. A wide range of school events contributes to their personal progress. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to understand and respect other peoples' values and beliefs. Good efforts are made to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural communities in lessons and assemblies.

Attendance

For a number of years, attendance has been consistently above the national average. Unauthorised absence is minimal and therefore below the national average. The table below provides attendance and absence data for the latest complete reporting year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.3%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.0
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 (2002/3).

The school's measures to promote attendance are very good. Nearly all pupils arrive on time and get to their lessons promptly during the day. Most parents deliver on their key responsibility to ensure pupils attend school regularly and on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is much improved and is satisfactory. Curricular provision is good. The opportunities for enriching the curriculum are very good. Resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory. The school cares very well for its pupils. It gives them good support, advice and guidance. There are good measures to involve pupils in the school's work, through seeking and acting on their views. The school offers very good links between school and home, and other schools. They play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school and home. Links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching and learning in Year 6 are very good and good in Years 7 and 8. Assessment is much improved and is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in Year 6.
- There has been a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection.
- Teachers plan and prepare lessons very effectively.

- Good use is made of education teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Good questioning techniques by teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their oral skills.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
- The identification of strategies for pupils to meet their targets is a weakness.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 77 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3%)	34 (44%)	33 (43%)	8 (10%)	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.

- Overall teaching and learning are very good. Teaching and learning are stronger in Year 6 than in Years 7 and 8. Teaching and learning are very good in all year groups for art and design, ICT, music, physical education and citizenship. Teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics and science and in all other subjects.
- Since the last inspection, much work has been undertaken to improve the quality of teaching and learning and there have been significant improvements. At the time of the last inspection only just over 4 out of every 5 lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better for teaching and on this inspection nine out of ten lessons were judged to be good or better. At the last inspection one lesson in five was judged to be unsatisfactory. During this inspection no lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The emphasis has been on improving classroom management, using the three-part lesson encouraged in the national Key Stage 3 Strategy and lesson planning. A greater variety of teaching and learning styles has been implemented. There has been an increase in the observation of teachers and more openness in sharing good practice in teaching. One of the contributory factors to account for this significant improvement is the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher, senior staff and curriculum leaders.
- Teachers plan and prepare lessons well. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils in lessons. A strength of teaching is the way in which tasks are varied to match the differing abilities within the class. However, in some English, geography and science lessons the identification of extension tasks for higher attaining pupils is less well developed. As a result all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language learn well and make appropriate gains in their learning. Teaching and learning in mainstream lessons for pupils with special educational needs are very good in Year 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. Education teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning when supporting individual pupils or small groups. Education teaching assistants are experienced, well qualified and understand the needs of individual pupils. They are involved in joint planning with teaching staff so that curriculum content is appropriately adapted for the benefit of the pupils. When they are available, good use is made of the education teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs in most subjects. There is only one pupil who is at the early stage of learning English and who is well-supported and making very good progress.
- Most teachers capture pupils' interest and consequently the quality of learning is good. Most pupils are willing to co-operate and keen to learn. Their learning skills are strong in part because their levels of literacy are high. Most pupils learn very well in pairs and small groups. They do so well because there are very good opportunities for active learning, so they do not

become bored. As a result, pupils develop the capacity for sustained concentration. A further strength of the school is the skilful management of pupils' behaviour. Little time is wasted on dealing with behaviour problems and this leads to a brisk pace of learning in most lessons. Teachers have high expectations both in terms of pupils' behaviour and standards of work.

20. The questioning techniques used by teachers are very good to test pupils' understanding and to encourage pupils' participation in lessons. As a result of the many opportunities pupils have in lessons to speak, they speak fluently and at length, and are able to discuss ideas with high levels of skill.
21. In many subjects, including science, geography, history, religious education and music insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to have access to ICT to support learning.
22. Appropriate homework is set. Most homework is challenging and extends what is learnt in lessons. The use of homework in geography and history in Year 6 is unsatisfactory as homework is suspended from February to May in order to concentrate on preparation for the National Curriculum tests. Although some pupils thought they had too much homework the majority of parents did not.
23. At the time of the last inspection the assessment of pupils was a key issue for improvement. Much improvement has been made in this aspect of the school's work and assessment is now satisfactory. There is a rigorous monitoring of assessment data, which enables teachers to accurately set individual targets for pupils to improve in the subjects they are studying. Less well developed, as the school acknowledge, is the identification of strategies to enable pupils to reach their targets in individual subjects. Many targets, as identified in reports to parents, are vague and not measurable. Most teachers are effective in assessing pupils' understanding during lessons but it is not consistent across the school. It is very good in art and design and ICT but less well developed in physical education, history and religious education. All work is thoroughly marked and most teachers, but not all, indicate clearly to pupils how they can improve their work. Marking is diagnostic and helps pupils to improve their work, and gives teachers a clear understanding of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
24. Arrangements for assessment, reporting and recording for pupils with statements of special educational need are thorough. Individual education plans are well constructed with very clear targets. Assessment is used for future planning and pupils are made aware of their achievements and understand how they can improve.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is good. It is very good in Year 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. The opportunities for enriching the curriculum are very good. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a rich array of extra-curricular enrichment activities.
- Participation in the arts and sport are significant strengths of the school.
- Links with feeder schools and the local high school are very good.
- A very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education is in place.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Teachers and support staff are very well matched to curriculum needs.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation restricts provision in aspects of design technology and physical education.
- There are insufficient computers in many curriculum areas.

Commentary

25. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, with the addition of French in Year 6 and PSHE and citizenship in all years. No pupils are excluded from any parts of the curriculum enabling all to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for, through effective classroom support, relevant materials and well-planned programmes.
26. The school maintains very good links between feeder schools and the local high school, which ensures curriculum continuity in the delivery of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Curriculum links are strong across all subjects, which impacts well on the standards pupils achieve.
27. A very good PSHE and citizenship programme is in place and very effectively co-ordinated throughout the school. The scheme of work is meticulously planned and covers an extensive range of issues including sex education, and alcohol and drug abuse. There is active involvement in the Healthy Schools programme. There is good reinforcement of citizenship from a range of subjects, including history, geography and physical education.
28. Statutory requirements are well met, including provision for a daily act of collective worship.
29. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the extensive range of extra-curricular activities that are very well attended and appreciated by pupils and in which teachers give generously of their time. Pupils' success in the arts is reflected in the quality and range of music ensembles, which rehearse weekly, including choir, concert band, brass, recorders, junk band and strings. Pupils participate regularly in concert work in both school and the locality. Many talented musicians receive instrumental tuition from members of the Kirklees Music School. Drama and dance clubs are well established and pupils regularly write and perform plays. Once a year the whole school is involved in a substantial arts event that imaginatively combines art, music, drama and dance activities. Provision for sport is equally well provided with an extensive programme of activities for boys and girls, including, both team sports and non-competitive groups including hockey, football, basketball, running, net-ball and karate. Pupils also have access to a range of other popular clubs including science, animal club, chess, technology and computers. Homework clubs are provided in all years.
30. Pupils' personal development is enriched by annual residential visits. Year 7 experience a week in an outward-bound centre in Shropshire and Year 8 spend a week in Northern France.
31. Some features of the school's accommodation are unsatisfactory. The inadequate provision for workshops for resistant materials work in design technology makes it very difficult for teachers to meet National Curriculum requirements. The accommodation for both design technology and art is in a poor state of repair, but the school has plans for imminent refurbishment. History and geography are based in mobile classrooms without links to the school's computer network. The school hall is an unsatisfactory space for the delivery of indoor physical education activities. Problems with drainage in some of the school's fields restrict their use for games at some times of the year. The upper floors of the school are inaccessible for pupils with limited mobility and the different levels of school corridors do not have ramps for wheel chair access. These problems will be eliminated by the building work due to start in the summer of 2004.
32. The quality and quantity of resources are satisfactory overall. Provision is very good in physical education and good in English, religious education, music, art and design, modern foreign languages and for pupils with special educational needs. Access to ICT resources to support pupils' learning is a weakness in many subjects. The ratio of pupils to computers is below that found nationally. The library stock whilst satisfactory is currently subject to a programme of improvement.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for its pupils. It gives them good support, advice and guidance. There are good measures to involve pupils in school's work and development, through seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- Support, advice and guidance are good.
- The school regards the views of pupils as important to its work.

Commentary

33. Pupil induction and transfer arrangements are well established and very effective. This is very important in supporting pupils personally and to ensure continuity in their learning. Most class teachers and other staff know pupils very well and recognise their needs. They act quickly if a pupil is unhappy or under pressure and are careful to make sure new arrivals are helped to settle. A group of trained Year 8 'Befrienders' provide additional peer support for new pupils. Levels of minor accidents are very low in the playground, helped by separate zones for different activities. First aid and health and safety arrangements are clear and effective. There are good arrangements for child protection and looked after children are in place.
34. The support of all pupils' achievement, through monitoring, is frequent and effectively shared with pupils and parents. Where there are concerns, the heads of year and class teachers act quickly to ensure pupils are aware that improvement is needed.
35. Pupils are aware of their targets, which are written into the well-used homework planners. Closer inspection of the set targets reveal they primarily relate to pupils' attitudes, supporting their personal development very effectively.
36. Pupils were effectively involved in making the school's aims into an attractive pupil-friendly form. Their views form a key part of the reviews of personal targets. The school council's suggestions formed an important part in the decisions on updating decor and toilets. The school recently carried out a pupil questionnaire, similar to that used by inspectors. The evaluation of this work had not been completed by the time of the inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents have very positive views of the school and the education that it provides. The school offers very good links between school and home, and other schools. They play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school and home. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum links with other pyramid schools are very good.
- The school provides very good links for parents, which make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The quality and informative content of newsletters and general information provided to parents are good.
- There is a weakness and a lack of consistency in the setting of targets for pupils to improve their work in the written reports to parents.

Commentary

37. There was a very high response rate by parents to filling in the questionnaire with 345 replies. The overwhelming majority were very positive about the school. Over 90 per cent of parents believe that staff expect children to work hard; that teaching is good; transition arrangements are good; their children are making good progress; their children like school. They believe the school is well led and are comfortable about approaching the school. Parents feel that the school encourages children to become mature and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors support the positive views of parents. However, a small minority of parents have concerns about being kept informed about their child's progress; homework; and children being bullied or harassed. Inspectors judged that homework was satisfactory and that the school dealt effectively with the very rare occasions when bullying took place. Parents have two opportunities in the year to discuss with teachers the progress their children are making and this is above the legal minimum. The quality of reports is satisfactory. The reports on pupils' progress demonstrate the good knowledge that teachers have of pupils and inform parents about the work that pupils have completed. They are consistent in their style and content and provide parents with indication of their children's standards and effort. However, there is a weakness and a lack of consistency in the setting of targets for pupils to improve their work.
38. The newsletters and general information provided to parents are good. The regular newsletters contain a section for parental opinions. Many parents value the pupil planners as a means of communication and there is a very high attendance by parents to meet with teachers to discuss the progress their children are making. The school uses questionnaires with parents to seek their views and the home-school agreement was arrived at after consultation with the Friends of SMS. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend the annual review of their children's progress and most do. The Friends of SMS are an active and enthusiastic group who provide welcome additional funding and organise social events. Parents also help with extra-curricular activities and provide transport for pupils to matches at other schools.
39. Links with the community are good. The school makes good use of the community constable and local ministers take assemblies. The school makes good use of appropriate visiting speakers. These include a puppet show to inform pupils on bullying issues, environmental workers and the police. Pupils from all Year 8 classes visit the magistrates' court. Pupils' personal and social experiences are not significantly extended by links with the business community. The school is increasing its role with the local communities and the confidence the community has with the school is increasing.
40. Links with other schools in the pyramid are very good. The school hosted and was involved in planning a pyramid evening for parents about raising boys' achievement. First schools use the middle school's facilities in preparation for the annual music concert. There are very good and developing curriculum links between the schools in the pyramid. For example, all first schools start an algebra bridging task, which pupils bring with them when they start at the middle school. The head of Year 6 visits all the schools from which most pupils will come, and the headteacher and head of Year 6 have attended the annual governors' meetings in some of the first schools so that contact with future parents is established before their children start at the school. Curriculum continuity is also well established with the high school. There are termly meetings for all subject co-ordinators and teachers from the high school help staff a lunchtime problem-solving club. The middle school shares the results from the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 with all its feeder schools and similarly the high school shares their National Curriculum tests results at the end of Year 9 with its feeder middle schools.
41. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in extending the confidence that parents and the wider community have with the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership is very good, whilst its management is good. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leaders inspire, motivate and influence staff in a very positive way.
- All key aspects of management, including performance and financial, show improvement since the last inspection, based on effective planning and review.
- Performance management has had a positive impact on the staff's capacity to contribute to school improvement.
- There is a weakness in whole school planning that not all the priorities for improvement have measurable targets.

Commentary

42. Governance is satisfactory. Governors provide good support for the school. Governors' links with individual departments provide them with a good insight into aspects of the life of the school. The governors have ensured that a good curriculum, which meets the needs of all pupils, is in place. All statutory requirements are met. Governors' capacity to question issues at meetings is developing, positively encouraged by the new headteacher. This will make a valuable contribution in developing the role of governors as critical friends. For example, more insistence by governors on clearer priorities and measurable outcomes within the school development plan would provide clearer objectives for school improvement.
43. In his four terms in post, the headteacher has provided very good leadership. He very effectively led the development of a shared vision for the school. As a result, the school motto: 'Achieving success through shared values' accurately expresses the school's approach and practice. The introduction of a three-year school development plan has accurately identified the key school improvement priorities. However, it would benefit from clearer success criteria and a clear identification of the priorities for each academic year.
44. The headteacher has created a cohesive, capable, enthusiastic and influential leadership group. As a result, teamwork is encouraged, key messages are consistent and communications are very good throughout the school. There is a high level of motivation among staff, based on good opportunities for professional development and having staff's ideas positively taken on board by the school leadership team. The headteacher provides a very good role model for staff. For example, he retains a teaching timetable and provides some extra-curricular activities. He has also created planned opportunities, in addition to those arising from performance management arrangements, for all subject leaders and teachers to observe and be observed teaching.
45. Other members of the leadership team discharge their key responsibilities very effectively. The Key Stage 3 strategy is very well embedded by the deputy headteacher and the leadership of special needs is very good. Heads of year provide very good pastoral leadership and are beginning to provide an effective overview on pupils' academic progress. Most heads of department provide very good leadership.
46. Four important factors, related to school management, contribute directly to pupils' good achievement. The first is that all the key issues identified in the previous inspection report have been effectively tackled. In addition there is effective review and evaluation of the work of departments as a key part of the work of the leadership team. There is good or better management in all subjects, centred around good use of data and effective self-evaluation. Finally performance management makes a positive contribution to school improvement and staff motivation.

47. Performance management objectives are well linked to key whole school improvements and individuals' professional development. As a result, school improvement is well focused and individuals have a clear understanding of their expected contribution. For example, teachers' ICT skills have improved significantly, as this was the whole school priority in a previous performance management cycle. Staff value the well-planned professional dialogue, arising from regular lesson observations and reviews. The headteacher is aware that there is still some room for improvement in the use of data to set pupil progress objectives that are realistic but challenging.
48. The headteacher places a strong emphasis on planning. All the school's improvement priorities and processes are the subject of well-scheduled reviews. As a result, all the main priorities for improvement in the three-year school development plan are progressing well. These are the improvement in teachers' ICT skills and ICT resources; teachers' skills have improved significantly but further resources are needed to ensure that all pupils have the opportunities to support their learning. Improvements in assessment have taken place but further refinements are needed in relation to assessment in lessons and in identifying strategies for pupils to meet the academic targets they have been set. Subject leadership development is now very good. Links with parents and first schools are both very good. Good progress has been made in identifying gifted and talented pupils but not all subjects have yet identified strategies to meet the needs of these pupils.
49. The quality of subject and pastoral leadership and management is very good. Most subject areas are very well led and in no subject area is the leadership and management less than good. Leadership and management for special educational needs are very good. The newly appointed co-ordinator is committed to the highest standards of provision for pupils with special educational needs with a clear sense of purpose as to how this may be achieved. She has created an effective team who display the same level of dedication and there are positive relationships between subject staff and education teaching assistants. The co-ordinator ensures that pupils receive the levels of support, which they need, and that pupils with a statement of special educational need receive their entitlement. All aspects of the Special Needs Code of Practice are fully implemented. Statutory requirements for the assessment and review of statements of special educational need are fully met.
50. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The format of individual education plans has been changed to make them more relevant to teaching staff. Arrangements to allow time to subject teachers and support staff for co-ordinated planning have recently been introduced. This is to further the concept that lesson objectives relate to targets in individual education plans in order to promote more effective learning. Resources have improved not only in number but also in range; for example the provision of a special laptop computer for an autistic pupil with speech and communication difficulties.
51. The school's expenditure per pupil is below the national average, for middle schools. The table below summarises the financial data for the previous school year.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,504,360
Total expenditure	1,451,150
Expenditure per pupil	2,439

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	28,289
Balance carried forward to the next	53,747

52. Financial management is now effective. All the recommendations in the recent auditor's report have been adopted and the administrative officer runs the annual budget effectively. The headteacher exercises good strategic oversight. For example, in order to improve learning, he has allocated a greater proportion of the budget to the professional development of staff. Also to help ensure staffing stability and hence continuity in learning, he has made effective medium term plans to cope with a two-year dip followed by a rise in pupil numbers. The application of the principles for achieving best value is satisfactory.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All teaching was good or better because careful planning results in lessons in which well-motivated pupils respond to a variety of challenging tasks.
- Standards of work seen by Year 8 are above the national average and these pupils have made good progress.
- Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good but approaches for extending standards achieved by gifted and talented pupils are less well developed.
- Very good leadership has resulted in significant improvements in the scheme of work and the introduction of a wide variety of writing and speaking activities, including drama.

Commentary

53. Standards are good. Teacher assessments in Year 8 indicate that pupil performance is above the national average. These pupils were performing at average levels when they entered the school and so have made good progress. Results in the new style national Year 6 tests in 2003 were in line with the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils obtained the upper level. Work seen indicates that standards are improving.
54. Teaching and learning are good. All the teaching seen was good or better. Teachers plan very carefully so that lessons contain a variety of linked activities. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and the respect they show for each other and their teachers is a strength. In the most effective lessons, pupils are involved in agreeing the objectives, as in a Year 6 lesson where they identified the requirements of a booklet providing advice for scoring good marks in the national tests. Teachers use a variety of approaches to monitor learning with pupils' progress and understanding regularly checked as lessons develop. Independent working is actively encouraged and shows in pupils' project and homework. Very good teacher/pupil rapport encourages all pupils, including the less accomplished, to contribute confidently in lessons. Tasks are often great fun. Those seen ranged from enthusiastic performance readings of the poem 'Highwayman', accompanied by atmospheric sound effects, to the questioning, in role, of an explorer. In the latter lesson, Year 8 pupils rapidly discovered the need to rethink the format of questions when their first efforts resulted in unhelpful 'Yes/No' answers from the irascible 'explorer'. There is good support for pupils with statements of special educational needs and those that the school has identified as also needing some extra support. Teachers and support staff work as close teams and targeted pupils make good progress. In one lesson, two autistic pupils were successfully encouraged to make particularly good quality contributions to a discussion about metaphors.
55. Whilst the national tests at the end of Year 6 are important and pupils are very well prepared, the planning of lessons provides a much wider curriculum. This continues through Years 7 and 8 and is a strength of the department. Pupils study in detail the craft of the writer and respond enthusiastically to projects that include environmental issues and real-life heroes. Opportunities for thoughtful discussion occur in most lessons and the school has a developing tradition of drama. This includes script writing and links with feeder schools. Drama students from the high school and visiting players extend pupils' experiences. Pupils perform for themselves, parents and the local community. The range of writing and speaking activities in

class is very good. Pupils get the opportunity to produce longer pieces of writing and the use of computers is well established. This helps slower writers to produce neat work and encourages them to re-draft their work in order to improve its quality. Marking is regularly completed and teachers provide pupils with descriptions of the strengths of their work and most set progress targets. In conversations about their work, pupils confidently point out its merit and areas for improvement. Classrooms are not equipped with computerised projectors and this limits the range of teaching styles possible.

56. Leadership is very good. Since her appointment, the head of department has built an effective team. She ensured that good information is now kept on pupil performance and their progress targets. Her vision for English has promoted a curriculum, which, in terms of range of activity and high level of challenge, is reflected in the attainment of pupils in their high schools. Improvements since the previous inspection have been very good, especially in the overall quality of teaching. Management is good. The subject is well resourced, schemes of work are detailed but there is insufficient sharing of responsibility for the further development of the subject. There is no deputy English curriculum leader and a recent absence resulted in a loss of impetus in this otherwise dynamic department. Pupil progress is tracked and this is especially effective for those pupils receiving extra support. Systems for monitoring rates of progress and for setting targets that are more challenging for higher attaining pupils are not fully developed. Reading patterns are not monitored in detail because the Library does not yet have a computer to record book-borrowing patterns.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. The systems for promoting and monitoring literacy across the curriculum in the school are good. The literacy co-ordinator and the individual heads of department have a clear understanding of the importance of speaking, reading and writing. Lesson plans in all subjects aim to provide good opportunities to develop and use specialist vocabulary in a variety of situations.
58. The school has clear policies that result in consistent approaches to the correction of errors and the promotion of good quality writing. Classroom and corridor displays are clear and encourage high quality presentation and content. All pupils are encouraged to take part in drama and other forms of public speaking.
59. The library is rather small for a school of this size and, although there are good links with the local authority, the range and number of copies of non-fiction texts needs extending. Although pupils can access the Internet from various locations in the school, there are too few computers in the library to support independent study for the many pupils who use it at lunchtime.

French

Provision in French is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good and have led to very good improvement.
- Teaching is good and has established a good climate for learning.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy immersion in French culture.
- Classroom assistants are not always deployed to best advantage.

Commentary

60. Standards seen were above average both at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8. However moderation files from the Year 8 of 2002-3 show that those pupils were well above

average by the end of their time in school. In fact the results correspond to those of an average Year 9. Standards therefore are well above average.

61. Pupils achieve well throughout their three years in the school. They are immersed in French. Year 6 pupils can speak and write well about their likes and dislikes as regards leisure activities. Pupils download from the Internet information in French about applicants for possible pen friends. They listen in French to their teacher talking about herself and her family. Recorded young voices add to the experience, so that they are learning in the way that French children would learn at a younger age. Year 8 pupils can use all four skills to a good standard. Each takes a turn to do a personal spoken presentation, which the class then has to evaluate. In the course of half yearly assessments, pupils write extended pieces of some 100 words about themselves. Reading passages are of a similar length.
62. Teaching and learning are good overall across the three years, which are planned and delivered across the year groups. Teaching by the French-speaking head of department is consistently very good. Choice of course materials had been made jointly with the two other schools of the local Pyramid, amongst other things to ease the Year 8 to Year 9 transition. All pupils have their personalised workbook, which enhances the quality of individual work. This includes work at home, where pupils have the opportunity to access related websites for themselves. Lesson planning based on these materials is exemplary, covering all appropriate Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study. It is however not always fully effective because details are sometimes omitted in lessons. What is very effective is the degree of challenge. Expectations are very high, and most pupils are fully engaged in a learning relationship with their teacher. Use of assessment supports learning very well by pinpointing the learning needs of each individual pupil.
63. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department, appointed at the time of the previous inspection, has raised standards from average to well above average and improved pupils' achievement from unsatisfactory to good. She has a clear vision for maintaining this forward momentum through the use of interactive white board technology. Carrying a range of responsibilities within the school she is an exceptional role model for colleagues. She contributes substantially to involving pupils directly in French culture by means of an annual trip to France, which is always oversubscribed. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Greatly improved leadership has significantly raised the quality of teaching and learning.
- Effective teamwork, collaborative planning and sharing good practice are raising standards that pupils attain.
- Improvement since the last inspection is very good and there is a focused drive to continue to improve.
- Effective arrangements to manage transition at entry, and at transfer to secondary school, are raising pupil attainment.
- The quality of a little teaching is not sufficiently challenging or engaging.
- Evaluation of some aspects of the department's work is not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

64. In 2003, results of National Tests taken by Year 6 pupils were above average when compared with all schools, and in line with results of similar schools. These results represent good achievement with boys and girls performing similarly. They have improved steadily over time a little above the national trend, and over the last three years are, on average, a little below results in English and science.

65. By the end of Year 6, pupils' work seen in all areas of mathematics is above the national average. Most pupils can perform accurate calculations without using calculators and there is a strong focus on accurate mental calculations. Achievement by pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. By the end of Year 8, the overall standard of work seen is also above average and using and applying mathematics is also well developed. Given current pupils' prior attainment in Year 6, this also represents good achievement. Overall, throughout the school boys and girls achieve similarly. Standards of English are above average and aspects of literacy are included in all lesson planning.
66. Overall, teaching is good in Year 6 and Years 7 and 8, with three-quarters of lessons seen being good or better, and one third being very good or better. There is also no unsatisfactory teaching. Taken together, this represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Good teaching contributes well to pupils' achievement. Its main features include very good planning incorporating a refined National Numeracy Strategy; the thoroughness of assessment, tracking pupils' progress and setting appropriate half-termly targets for improvement; the good use of available ICT resources by teachers provides a brisk pace and clear interactive presentations; the effective use of mental and practical work, paired and grouped activities, and work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities to motivate and engage pupils well; high expectations, positive attitudes and good relationships within lessons; the effective use of support staff also assists higher-attaining pupils at times.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent Year 6 lesson where pupils rapidly learn about multiples and tests for divisibility. The enthusiasm of the teacher is contagious.

Every available second is used effectively to fully engage pupils in challenging and enjoyable mathematics, which is very skilfully matched to the various abilities of pupils. The lowest attaining pupil, for example, is inspired to correctly find common multiples of two numbers and later uses correct strategies to check for divisibility. All pupils achieve very well and some highly achieve as a result of the teacher's energetic, stimulating and fully inclusive approach: a game, for example, is used to check that multiples of different numbers are being generated mentally and silently; decreasing fractions by halving, is used to count down to the end of an activity; strategies for very quickly checking divisibility are very well articulated by pupils. For example, whether 101 is divisible by three is related to the fact that 99 is. Important earlier work on even, odd, prime, square numbers, square roots and cubes is reinforced. Pupils are reluctant to leave the lesson, even though it is at the end of the day.

67. Teaching in a few lessons has some weaknesses: planning is insufficiently rigorous in one lesson leading to lack of clarity in rotational symmetry; behaviour management is not fully effective during one lesson; and the brisk pace to the starter or beginning of lessons is not always maintained.
68. The effective separation of responsibility for the co-ordination of Year 6 and of Years 7 and 8 provides very good leadership and good management of the department, which is well supported by senior management. It contributes to very good teamwork, collaborative planning and regular sharing of good practice. There is clear vision, focus and drive on improving the attainment of pupils achievement through regular systematic monitoring of teaching, pupils' work and progress, use of detailed and effective planning and checking for consistency. There are good assessment procedures in place and the very good use of performance data leads to target setting that helps pupils further improve. Very good liaison with teachers from the first and secondary schools ensures good continuity and progression when pupils transfer. It leads to the teaching and observation of lessons in respective link schools, detailed feedback of performance of pupils in national tests and curriculum developments in several areas. There are also a few weaknesses to management which are considerably outweighed by the department's strengths: the department development plan does not contain specific success criteria to help guide and measure improvement; the use of ICT by pupils is insufficiently monitored; and reports to parents do not provide appropriate targets for improvement.

69. There has also been very good improvement since the previous inspection in standards attained by pupils, numeracy skills and mental calculations, monitoring and evaluation of the department's work, assessment of pupils' work and its use, increased use of ICT, providing higher attaining pupils with challenging work, and curriculum planning which now accounts for continuity and progression through the school and beyond. There are also other good features of the department: the extra-curricular opportunities it provides are challenging and extensive; investigations promote multicultural awareness in mathematics; and classroom environments are very stimulating.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Overall, standards are above average. In mathematics, pupils' skills in calculations, use of graphs and the basic use of algebra and formulae through mental, oral, written and practical approaches are above average. There is also detailed whole-school guidance on calculations and measuring, and most departments have included this in their current planning. There are also a few good examples of pupils using mathematics seen in lessons of other subjects. Younger pupils in ICT use shape and measurement well when animating road signs. They estimate the size of polygons they use and experiment with their rotation. Older pupils use bar charts to good effect in French, and in science, all pupils develop a range of numeracy skills well supported by support packs to promote calculations, measurement, quantitative work and the drawing and use of graphs. However, there is insufficient recent co-ordination and guidance on all-important aspects of numeracy, which leads to missed opportunities to promote and strengthen the use of mathematics in several subjects. For example, there is no regular reinforcement of estimating skills in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is imaginative and interesting teaching in all years to which pupils respond with good behaviour and a positive approach to the subject.
- Pupils are encouraged to work hard and learning is productive.
- Highly effective leadership and management and shared commitment of staff are identifying and implementing action for improvement.
- Resources relating to ICT are unsatisfactory thus limiting the range of experiments and investigations carried out by pupils.

Commentary

71. The 2003 Year 6 test results are well above average in comparison to all schools and above average when compared with similar schools. There is an improving trend over recent years with an increase in numbers achieving higher levels. By the end of Year 8 pupils' standards of attainment are above average. This is confirmed by the test results, which pupils go on to achieve in high schools. In all years there is no significant difference between results of boys and girls.
72. Pupils' achievement is good in all years. Pupils enter Year 6 with average standards. They settle quickly and soon display good scientific thinking. Encouraged by supportive teaching pupils make good progress in lessons and demonstrate that they can both develop their learning and enjoy science. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 7 and 8. They are taught to think for themselves in lessons and benefit from an emphasis on investigational science in which they are expected to plan, carry out and evaluate experimental work. In all lessons pupils behave well and are keen to succeed. They answer questions confidently and accurately using appropriate scientific language. In practical work they work safely, make accurate observations and record findings clearly. They show respect for each other and co-

operate well in group work. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support with staff well aware of their particular requirements. They participate fully in lessons and progress as well as others. There are no differences in achievement amongst any groups of pupils in class.

73. Overall teaching and learning are good. Teachers' good subject expertise and their skills in presenting information to pupils lead to effective learning. Good planning and the setting of clear lesson outcomes means pupils know what is expected of them. Pupil-centred reviews of lessons help teacher assessment and are very effective ways for pupils to measure their own progress. Good use of an electronic whiteboard is one of a variety of alternative learning approaches used to maintain pupils' interest. The extent of sustained concentration with pupils involved in productive work was a feature of lessons. Marking is regularly undertaken and is of a good standard. It contains constructive comments to help pupils know what they should do to improve. Teachers cater for all pupils in the mixed-ability groupings but in some lessons there is a need to challenge the higher attaining pupils and expect them to take on more responsibility for their learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which both increase pupils' interest in science and extend their understanding. A well-attended science quiz showed clearly that pupils have a good knowledge and appreciation of science matters beyond the limits of the syllabus.
74. Leadership and management are very good. There is a shared commitment by staff towards subject improvement. They work together well as a team enthusiastically led by a subject leader with a clear vision. The non-specialists teaching science have a very good support framework. Regular and systematic monitoring of teaching followed by evaluation and development action has been important in taking the department forward. Pupils show a high standard of literacy skills particularly in oral work. There is good support for numeracy with guidance packs and software programmes available to explain graph drawing. A member of staff has been given responsibility for development of ICT in science and although application is increasing, lack of resources means that major impact on the curriculum is limited. Accommodation in science is satisfactory and resources and equipment levels, apart from ICT, adequately support the teaching. Good organisation allows the technician, although part-time, to play an important role in maintaining the commendable practical approach to the subject.
75. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Subject leadership is now a strength of the department and strategies introduced to improve unsatisfactory teaching standards have been successful. Assessment systems are thorough with improved target setting and satisfactory records of pupils' progress. Documentation is now good with comprehensive schemes of work, a clear subject development plan and effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the department.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in ICT lessons are very good.
- The leadership and management of the department are good.
- There is a strong commitment to improving teaching and raising standards.
- The level of resources is not sufficient for all teachers to have enough access to computers to support teaching and learning in their subjects.
- The level of technician support for ICT is insufficient to meet the needs of the school.

Commentary

76. In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards in line with national expectations. In Year 8 standards are above national expectations. Pupils enter the school with varied skills and experiences of ICT but overall their attainment on entry is average. Since the standards of attainment in Year 8 are above average this represents good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from in-class support and their achievement is in line with other pupils in their year group. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is good. The achievement of pupils in ICT is affected by the way ICT is timetabled as part of a carousel with other technology subjects. Pupils have an intensive thirteen-week course of two one-hour lessons per week, and then do not experience ICT for some time. This breaks the continuity of their learning of the subject.
77. By the end of Year 6 pupils have experience of using the Internet for research, and of using word processing and desk-top publishing packages to present course work. They use graphics packages skilfully for animation. Pupils in Year 8 use word processing and desktop publishing packages creatively to display work, research topics on the Internet, and design and produce web pages. They have developed basic skills in the use of spreadsheets to perform numerical calculations and to present graphs. Lower attaining Year 8 pupils display good technical skills but do not always complete their work thoroughly. Higher attaining pupils in Year 7 have a clear understanding of presenting material to meet the needs of different groups of people.
78. Teaching and learning are overall very good. Lessons are well structured and use a wide range of activities that capture pupils' interest. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive, the pace of learning is brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. Relationships are very good and pupils collaborate well with one another. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were using a graphics package to produce animated road signs. The teacher made good use of an electronic whiteboard and a logic game to capture the pupils' interest. Pupils then experimented and worked independently on individual projects. Two learning assistants gave special educational needs pupils good support. Pupils worked with purpose, and all were able to contribute to a group discussion about what they had learnt, and evaluate their own and others' work, at the end of the lesson.
79. Very good oral feedback is given to pupils on how to improve their work during lessons. Pupils are given grids in their folders which identify the National Curriculum levels at which they are working. However, these grids are linked closely to technology assessments and are not specific to ICT. They do not give a clear indication of what pupils need to do to reach the next level in ICT.
80. The contribution that ICT makes to the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Key words are emphasised in lessons. Pupils practise speaking and listening skills in collaborative work. They extend their numeracy skills using formulae in spreadsheets, and experiment with shapes and measurements when using graphics packages.
81. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has revised schemes of work in line with the national strategy. He has given good support and guidance to non-specialist staff in other curriculum areas. Additional in-service training has been provided for staff to improve their use of ICT to support their teaching. Developments are planned to improve assessment and target setting for pupils. There are strong links with local first schools, middle schools and the local high school in sharing in-service training. There are good opportunities for pupils to use the ICT facilities for extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school.
82. There is insufficient technical support for all staff to feel confident in using ICT facilities to support teaching and learning. At present a technician is employed for one day per week. This means that the head of department spends valuable teaching time in maintaining the system

and trouble-shooting technical problems. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory for teaching lessons in ICT. However, there are insufficient resources for all subjects to access ICT to support learning.

83. There has been good progress since the last inspection. Data is used to set targets for pupils, and pupils are aware of the NC levels at which they are working. An additional computer room is available for different curricular areas to use, and electronic whiteboards are used to good effect in mathematics, science and ICT. However, limited access to computers by different subject areas to support teaching and learning is still an issue, particularly in history and geography.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

84. The planned programme for using ICT across the subjects of the curriculum is inconsistently applied. Effective use is made of computers in art and design, PSHE and citizenship, and design and technology; and to support literacy and numeracy for pupils with special educational needs. Several subject areas encourage pupils to use word processing and desktop publishing packages to present coursework, and the Internet to research topics. Electronic whiteboards are used effectively in mathematics and science. However, geography and history do not make enough use of ICT to support learning in their areas. Restricted access to computers is limiting the use of ICT in a number of subject areas.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic in their lessons and their oral contributions are very good.
- There are limited extension activities to fully stretch higher attaining pupils.
- There is a need to increase the access to ICT facilities to extend teaching and learning.

Commentary

85. Standards have risen since the last inspection and are now above the national average in the National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Year 6. Standards are also above average by the end of Year 8. Written work shows clear evidence of pupils' progress in the subject. Pupils' oral contributions are very good and many pupils have well developed skills to contribute to discussion and argue a case. Achievement is good and in many cases very good. The evidence shows a clear difference between the start of the year and the present: in style, standards of presentation, extended writing and note taking as well as understanding. There is no difference in the rates of progress between different groups of pupils. Children with special educational needs make progress as well as their peers and are well supported, although further work is needed to fully extend higher attaining pupils.
86. Overall teaching and learning are good. Lessons are thoughtfully planned with a variety of tasks and methods of learning. It is responsive, demanding, considerate and appropriate to the needs of the pupils and has high expectations. Pace and challenge are now good - pushing learning on. Learning is equally good particularly in discussion and when working in pairs. There are high expectations and pupils are made to work hard.

87. Leadership and management are good and both are much improved since the last inspection. The subject is being well led with a restored sense of purpose. Schemes of work have been revised and the assessment system fully revised to produce case histories of attainment which are used to set targets for pupils. In turn this is contributing to the much improved levels of attainment. Results are also shared with the High School. The time available to humanities overall in Year 6 at one lesson per week is short with no homework between February and May. The number of staff teaching the subject [seven], often only to a single class, creates challenges in management, raising attainment still further and in co-ordinating a subject already under a humanities umbrella. ICT facilities to the subject area are unsatisfactory with neither Internet nor network connection and one machine only available in its base area. However, this is a department that has improved and is making good progress.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and there is good achievement.
- The teaching of history is good which leads to good learning.
- History is well led and managed.
- Very positive relationships encourage and support learning.
- Accommodation problems mean that pupils do not have sufficient access to ICT to enhance their learning.
- The department has not yet sufficiently refined its assessment procedures to include assessment of pupils' work in lessons.

Commentary

88. At the end of Year 6, standards in work seen and in tests are above national levels. Pupils develop a wide range of subject skills, including interpretation of evidence, prioritising of historical issues and the understanding of chronology. Higher attaining pupils use their knowledge and understanding to identify, evaluate and use sources of information critically to analyse relationships between features of a particular period. For example, in their studies of the Aztecs, Year 6 pupils demonstrate their understanding of how the Aztecs believed their gods influenced the weather and thus agriculture, and so the sacrifice of humans to appease the gods was a justifiable act.
89. At the end of Year 8, pupils' standards of work are above national averages. Pupils develop their analytical skills effectively and the higher attaining pupils demonstrate a high degree of sophistication in their interpretation of historical polemics. For example, in their studies of Mary, Queen of Scots, pupils recognise that her death was as much a political decision as a decision based on the evidence of her complicity in treason.
90. Pupils across all ability levels make good progress and achieve well in Years 6 to 8, although pupils are better at oral work than written work. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in line with other pupils, because their teachers know them well, and often use good materials to meet their particular needs, and provide effective guidance in lessons. The overall attainment both across time and in class is generally hampered by the lack of retention skills and the lack of wider and deeper reading, and, specifically in Year 6, by the suspension of homework for long periods.
91. Teaching and learning are good overall, and were very good in one lesson. A similarly strong profile of teaching applies to all years. Teachers know their subject very well. They have an obvious love for it and this commitment is strongly communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a wide range of methods that support learning well. There is appropriate emphasis on literacy and high profiles are set for

reading and for the use of correct technical language. Writing, however, is still a relative weakness for most pupils. Marking is focused, supporting progress, learning and achievement. The lack of access to ICT hampers additional teaching methods and strategies to enhance independent learning skills. Learning is good. Pupils learn successfully. Very good relationships underpin learning because pupils listen intently to each other and work well together in all years. Pupils behave well, with high concentration and focus.

92. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has produced documents, which underpin much of the good work of the department, particularly, but not exclusively, in the area of formal assessment. In this, he is supported particularly effectively by the senior management of the school and by his colleagues, whom he, in turn, supports. He and his colleagues are good role models in their commitment to improve standards. However, the assessment procedures to monitor and evaluate pupils' learning and achievement within individual lessons are still underdeveloped across the department.
93. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous report, particularly in assessment and in the monitoring of pupils' learning and achievement which is reflected in their improving levels of attainment.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is very good and the management of religious education is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils' achievement is good in all years.
- There is good inclusion throughout all levels of ability.
- There is insufficient access to ICT to help enhance pupils' work.
- Assessment is not yet fully developed.
- Schemes of work are not yet fully completed.

Commentary

94. At the end of Year 6, standards of work seen in class and in pupils' notebooks, are above those found nationally. Lower attaining pupils describe the key beliefs of the religions studied, and can interpret religious symbols but cannot yet explain how selected features of religious life and practice make a difference to the lives of individuals. Higher attaining pupils show understanding of what belonging to a religion and a community involves, and they form their own view of how religious issues can impact on individuals. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss effectively the impact of Bar Mitzvah on the feelings of a young Jewish boy. Boys are often quicker to respond in oral work than girls, though the written work of girls is more neatly presented.
95. By the end of Year 8, pupils attain above average standards. They understand how religious teachings can be used as source of comfort and guidance when applied to contemporary problems, and they give poignant examples of where the teachings of Buddhism and Islam can be applied in the modern world. However, even these pupils are not able to maximise their potential because of weaknesses, which stem from a lack of access to ICT facilities, including full access to the interactive white board.
96. Generally, their levels of writing and spelling which lag behind their oral skills restrict pupils' achievement. Nevertheless, pupils in Years 6 to 8 make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs progress in line with other pupils because teachers know them well and

- offer additional support in class. There is, however, insufficient attention paid to the identification of extension activities for higher attaining pupils.
97. Teaching is good. Teachers display a strong commitment, which is effectively communicated to pupils, providing a firm basis for learning. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a range of methods that support learning well. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy skills, such as the use of correct technical language. However, pupils' own independent learning and writing are still not developed sufficiently. Marking is good. Marking follows the school policy for class based work and adheres to levels for assessed work. Levels are posted, in appropriate language, in pupils' notebooks. Marking is both formative and summative. Learning generally reflects teaching, and most pupils learn successfully and achieve well. Pupils show application to their work. They settle to, and remain, on task, and they show pride in their work, although some pupils' presentation could be improved.
98. Religious education contributes effectively to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, by providing pupils with knowledge and insight into concepts of right and wrong and asking them to apply those concepts to the range of fundamental issues that confront them in real life. There is also some study of other faiths, which teaches pupils to appreciate the diversity of those faiths.
99. There is a comprehensive assessment policy for the department that is based on sound principles and achievable outcomes. However, there is a lack of progressive assessments, particularly those, which deal with assessments of pupils' work during lessons. The department is staffed predominantly with non-specialist teachers, but their knowledge and expertise allows the department effectively to meet the requirements of the syllabuses and the needs of the pupils.
100. There are few artefacts but some good videos that augment the paper-based resources of the department. These effectively aid learning. However, the department does not make sufficient use of visits to places of worship of the major religions in the local region.
101. Leadership is very good. Management is good. The recently appointed head of department has a clear vision concerning the future of the department. She is committed to raising both the image of the subject and standards at all stages. In this she is supported by the senior management team and by her colleagues in the department. As important steps towards that goal, she has initiated a review of schemes of work for the subject and is implementing them together with more uniform and comprehensive assessment procedures. These are not yet fully developed. Under her leadership, the department has produced a range of strategic planning documents, which support all aspects of the department's provision. She has not been long enough in post to see them all translated sufficiently into operational procedures for the daily activities of the department. However, the good steps, which she has already taken, bode well for the future of the subject.
102. The department has made good improvement overall since the previous inspection and particularly good improvement in key areas such as the review of schemes of work and in laying the foundations for a good system for assessment.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' engagement and application in lessons is a strength.
- Teaching is at least good and often very good from a team of specialist staff.
- Pupils reach above average standards and are achieving well.

- There is unsatisfactory accommodation for food technology and resistant materials.
- There is a weakness in freehand sketching in all stages of design.
- There are limited computer aided design (CAD) experiences and no computer aided manufacture (CAM) experiences in Years 7 and 8.

Commentary

103. By the end of year 6 standards are just above national expectations; pupils demonstrate a good grasp of the design process. They show much interest in the subject, apply themselves completely and achieve well. They can apply design principles and generate a range of ideas, although weak freehand sketching hinders the quality of analytical thinking. Technical knowledge and understanding of all pupils is good. Full oral responses include accurate use of terminology. Pupils use tools and equipment confidently and safely; accuracy of final product is good and finishing standards reflect developing attention to detail.
104. In Years 7 and 8 pupil application is underpinned by a strong desire to learn. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 8. Good making skills are demonstrated by pupils, despite a narrow range of material and manufacturing experiences as a result of unsatisfactory accommodation and resources in cooking and workshop areas. Provision for CAD is developing but provision for CAM is inadequate and is a barrier to extended learning for pupils of all abilities. Pupils use ICT key skills confidently but there is a limited use of ICT to improve the quality of research, testing, evaluation and presentation.
105. The quality of teaching in all areas is at least good; in food technology it is very good. Management and care of pupils is very good and learning support is effectively deployed. A committed team of specialist teachers display secure subject command. Lessons are well thought out and well organised with a good match of task to pupil capability. Pupil interest is well directed; their knowledge and understanding is consistently challenged. There is a limited use of ICT, variety of teaching methods and modern materials to support pupils' achievement.
106. Leadership and management from the head of department are good. A vision and sense of direction have been firmly established. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and monitoring of teaching and achievement are established. However, more rigorous self-evaluation against National Curriculum requirements is needed to ensure that strategic planning for essential accommodation and resource upgrading is effective. Risk assessments are complete but require adaptation for cooking and workshop areas. Decisive action is needed to install dust extraction on existing wood machinery to ensure that workshop areas are safe. Technical support is inadequate in all areas and diverts teacher time away from valuable teaching preparation.
107. Improvements since the last inspection have been good with standards and rates of achievement for all pupils rising across all years. Weaknesses in assessment have been addressed and increasingly pupils are given clear guidance as to how they can improve the quality of their design and making.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 8.
- Teaching is very good and inspires pupils to very good achievement.
- Pupils experience a very wide range of work in two and three dimensions.

- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

108. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and well above average by the end of Year 8. Pupils draw well from direct observation and gain an awareness of the strength of line. They learn from the work of major artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe. They can create and decorate ceramic tiles and apply pattern using a variety of tools. They can express mood in drawing features of the face. They can use paint in different ways to create surface texture. By the end of Year 8 standards are well above average across a wide range of work. These include ceramics, plaster casting, light sculpture, and mask making. Pupils' skills and techniques in printing are excellent in the quality and range of work finished. They show good knowledge and understanding of the theory of colour and what constitutes good composition. Achievement is very good. Pupils build systematically on their skills and approach their work with confidence and care. They have very good attitudes to art and respond with interest and enthusiasm to the work introduced. This contributes to their success.
109. Teaching is very good. The teacher has very good specialist knowledge and expertise. The correct procedures and techniques are taught formally and to a high level and this leads to successful work in all years. Pupils are inspired by the very good demonstrations and illustrations given by the teacher. This enables them to have a clear vision of what is expected. Pupils are encouraged and guided to experiment and to be creative and imaginative. All pupils get very good individual support in lessons that ensures that they make equally good progress. There is very good support for literacy especially in using the correct vocabulary when discussing ideas. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by looking at all these aspects in studies of art particularly the art of other cultures such as Native American and African art.
110. There is very good leadership and management. There is a clear vision for extending provision further. Planning is very good with regard to depth and detail. The teacher has used opportunities to work with other artists and to explore ideas that benefit pupils, especially the gifted and talented. There is good provision for extra-curricular work and after school clubs are well attended. Art makes a good contribution to the other arts subjects, especially with support for presentations. There are extensive displays of high quality pupils' work throughout the school. These inspire pupils and enhance the whole school. Although there is very good use of ICT in some projects there is inadequate provision for ICT within the art room. This limits independent learning within lessons.
111. There is very good improvement since the previous inspection. There is a significant improvement in standards and achievement and in teaching and learning. All the issues identified as unsatisfactory have been rectified.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in very good learning in Years 6 to 8.
- Music is very well led and managed.
- Excellent provision is made for extra-curricular work both in school and the wider community.
- Many pupils benefit from the very good provision for instrumental teaching.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to use ICT to create compositions.

Commentary

112. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average, representing good achievement since pupils enter the school with average standards in music. Standards by the end of Year 8 are well above average, representing very good achievement. Throughout the school, boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with other pupils. Those identified as talented in music achieve very well.
113. As they proceed through the school pupils develop very good performing skills on instruments enabling them to perform their compositions effectively. The standard of singing is very good, especially in several parts. They devise imaginative compositions that demonstrate an increasing understanding of structure, texture and dynamic variety as in work seen in the animal project. They set their ideas down effectively using graphic notation. Pupils listen well to music and identify changes. They use musical terminology confidently and write in staff notation with accuracy. Pupils have very good attitudes to music and many participate in extra-curricular activities. They work very well individually and co-operate well in small groups.
114. Pupils progress very well because standards of teaching and learning are very good. The teacher provides a well-integrated, progressive and imaginative curriculum, which stimulates pupils' enthusiasm to learn. Expectations of pupils are very high and work is challenging. All pupils are enabled to succeed to the best of their abilities because of the careful attention paid to ensuring that the work set meets the needs of all pupils. Teaching is always enthusiastic and engaging and pupils are well supported and encouraged in a well-disciplined classroom environment. Pupils are highly productive because the pace of working is brisk. The teacher uses a range of very good strategies to keep learning highly focused, such as quietly delivered rhythmic clapping activities at the start of lessons that immediately engage pupils' attention. Resources are very well used and organised. Pupils understand how well they do and how to improve because assessment is carefully focused. Support staff work very well in lessons because they are well briefed by the teacher. Instrumental tuition is of very good quality and pupils do well because lessons are well organised and progressive.
115. Leadership and management in music are very good. There is a clear vision for the department founded on high expectations and achievement for all pupils. The head of department provides an excellent model to pupils and visiting staff in her professionalism, dedication and conduct. The annual subject review is well prepared and identifies appropriate areas for future development; in particular the currently limited opportunities pupils have to use computers in music. Oversight of the wide range of instrumental tuition is well managed.
116. Pupils significantly benefit from the excellent array of extra-curricular opportunities provided in music both in and out of school. Work is of a high standard. The high profile of the school's music ensembles in the wider community is a source of pride to the whole school. Music makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, especially in the multi-cultural dimension. The school has gained Artsmark Gold award. Music has made good improvement since the previous inspection.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very good knowledge and progressive tasks enable pupils to achieve very well.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 8.
- Provision for extra – curricular activities is outstanding.
- The department is very well led with a clear vision for improvement.

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others are not consistently provided.

Commentary

117. Baseline assessments made by teachers show that pupils enter the school with standards just below the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with the national average. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 continue to achieve well and improve their skills and knowledge and, by the end of Year 8, standards are above average. Pupils' achievement in Year 6 dance is excellent. The girls have made outstanding progress in a very short time, especially in compositional and evaluative skills. In some activities, such as basketball and badminton, pupils have good knowledge of techniques and subject specific vocabulary, but their intentions are often better than their performance. However, in these activities, it is difficult for pupils to achieve very well because of the size of the hall.
118. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. An example of excellent teaching was seen in a Year 6 dance lesson. In the most effective lessons, it is the quality of teachers' knowledge and the planning of progressive tasks that enables pupils to gain new skills and knowledge. They are challenged to lead activities, to evaluate their own performance, and that of others, and to suggest ways to improve. However, these opportunities are not provided consistently. Teachers provide suitable challenges for higher attaining pupils and, often, use a variety of methods to ensure that all pupils are very well motivated and on task. Relationships are very good in all lessons and, consequently, pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour.
119. Leadership is very good and the department is well managed. There is a very clear vision for future development but planning to bring about change needs further development. Pupils take part in an outstanding range of clubs and fixtures that are provided by very committed staff. As a result, the school is being used as a case study for supporting talented pupils in physical education. Although there are good procedures to monitor the progress of pupils at the end of units of work, the use of assessment is not consistent enough.
120. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. High standards of teaching and learning and pupils' attitudes have been maintained. The improved quality of provision has been recognised by the Sportsmark Silver award and the school is very optimistic that it will soon be awarded the Gold. The school sports' co-ordinator programme is well developed and the department has very good, and effective, links with feeder schools and the local community.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weakness

- Teaching is very good and promotes high achievement.
- There is good promotion of research and independent learning.
- Assessment is very good and pupils understand how they can progress.
- There has been a very good audit to establish where aspects of citizenship are taught within other subjects.

Commentary

121. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and well above average by the end of Year 8. In all years, pupils' oral and practical work are of a higher standard than their written work. The majority of pupils speak impressively about the issues being studied. By the end of Year 6 they are aware of the rights and feelings of others and of the causes and effects of bullying. They show a good awareness of the dangers to the environment and show a concern to remedy these. By Year 8 they are confident and work constructively in groups, researching and giving presentations on their findings. Citizenship is taught as an integral part of the personal, social, health and citizenship programme of work. Topics such as fair trade, money, drugs, sex and relationships education, human and animal rights, and the media are designed to enable pupils to see the links with justice and fairness. All these elements have a clear focus on helping pupils to become informed and secure citizens. Pupils acquire the key skills of observing and listening that will contribute to all their future learning. They display very good social skills and are friendly and courteous towards others. They show a concern for others that forms the basis of good citizenship. Pupils are given opportunities to be involved in active citizenship through the School Council, opportunities to help younger pupils and being classroom monitors.
122. Teaching and learning are very good. The teachers have a firm commitment to promoting pupils' personal and social well-being and good citizenship. There is a clear focus on promoting research and communications skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss opinions and form judgements in most lessons. Drugs education and sex education are covered adequately. The school makes good use of appropriate visiting speakers. These include a puppet show to inform pupils on bullying issues, environmental workers and the police. Pupils from all Year 8 classes visit the magistrates' court and present their experiences to the remainder of the class. Lessons are made interesting and relevant. Pupils show interest and enjoyment and contribute readily to discussions. There is a clear focus on rights and responsibilities. Assessment is very good, impressive in its detail and structure. It enables pupils to engage in self-assessment and so learn how to make progress. It also ensures that all elements are covered in adequate detail.
123. Leadership and management are very good. There is good vision for developing the subject and very good, supportive team work. Planning is in very good depth and detail and covers all the requirements for citizenship and for personal, social and health education. There has been a very good audit to establish where aspects of citizenship are taught within other subjects. This subject was not reported in the previous inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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