

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST CHURCH CE (A) MIDDLE SCHOOL

Stone, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124457

Headteacher: Mr C T Waghorn

Lead inspector: Mrs G Salter-Smith

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 May 2004

Inspection number: 264393

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	420

School address:	Old Road Stone Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST15 8JD

Telephone number:	01785 354 049
Fax number:	01785 354 055

Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Philpott

Date of previous inspection:	16 November 1998
------------------------------	------------------

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Christ Church C of E Middle School is about the same size as other middle schools. Almost all pupils are of white United Kingdom background and there no pupils learning English as an additional language. There are currently two pupils in public care. There are roughly equal numbers of girls and boys overall but in Year 5 there are more girls than boys and in Year 6 there are more boys than girls.

The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is higher than average and has increased since the previous year and the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. Most of these pupils have needs relating to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), and moderate learning difficulties. A smaller number of pupils has profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical difficulties, speech or communication difficulties, autism or hearing difficulties.

Pupils' social and economic circumstances are average overall though a full range of circumstances are present. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around average. Though there is some movement into and out of Year 6 when some pupils leave to join a nearby high schools and independent schools but overall the number of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than usual is average. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is broadly average, though their writing skills are below average.

Special features

The school received a School's Achievement Award in 2001 and 2002.
The school has received Sportsmark Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8329	G Salter Smith	Lead inspector	
13762	N Shelley	Lay inspector	
18676	R Meakin	Team inspector	Mathematics
30941	K Brammer	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
21866	D Tracey	Team inspector	Science
27803	J Clark	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs
32672	S Hammond-Evans	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology
11975	T McIntosh	Team inspector	Music Citizenship
32340	P McKay	Team inspector	Geography History
3793	J Ratcliffe	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
19295	P Wall	Team inspector	Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
 Anglia House
 Carrs Road
 Cheadle
 Stockport
 SK8 2LA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Christ Church C of E (A) Middle School is a good school. A strong Christian ethos encourages and nurtures all pupils so that they achieve well and reach above average standards in Year 8. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well and develop very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development, including in citizenship, helps pupils to develop into responsible young people who behave very well and take on responsibility for how their school is run through the excellent school council.
- Pupils' writing skills, though they improve well, are still not as good as their very good speaking skills and their good reading skills.
- Results in national tests are not as high in English and mathematics as they are in science.
- Good leadership at all levels and very good governance has maintained a strong focus on raising standards and promoting a strong Christian ethos.
- Pupils receive very good care and good guidance and support.
- The use of targets to help pupils improve their work is inconsistent across subjects so that pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not frequent or focused enough to ensure that inconsistent practice is recognised and improved quickly enough.

Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards of work, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have improved. Issues arising from the last inspection have been tackled and improved, notably whole school systems of assessment. Provision for ICT (information and communication technology), and accommodation in science and design and technology have improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good and, overall, standards are above average. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. They achieve well in almost all other subjects except physical education where achievement is very good, and French where achievement in Year 8 is satisfactory, though pupils in Years 6 and 7 are doing well.

Current standards of work are average in Year 6 and above average in Year 8. Standards in mathematics and science are above average throughout the school and in English standards are average in Year 6 and above average in Year 8. Standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 are better than the most recent test results because improved leadership of these subjects has helped to raise standards. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. Though pupils make good progress in improving their writing skills they remain weaker than their other basic skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. **Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development are very good.** The

school council gives pupils an excellent opportunity to have a say in the way their school is run. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good throughout the school. Collaborative planning results in well structured lessons that include a good variety of learning activities. Pupils are well motivated to learn independently. Pupils enjoy lessons and respond well to the teachers' high expectations. In some lessons not enough demands are made of higher attaining pupils. Assessment is satisfactory. Good assessment systems identify underachieving pupils. Not all subjects set clear targets for improvement so pupils are not always clear of what they need to do to improve. The curriculum provides a good range of activities that meets individual pupils' needs well. Many pupils benefit from a good range of enrichment activities. Sufficient well qualified staff teach the curriculum effectively but there is a shortage of technical support in ICT, design and technology and art and design. The school provides very good levels of care for pupils. Partnerships with other schools and the community are good. Parents receive very good information about their children's progress and the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. At all levels leadership is well focused on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Good self-evaluation and planning identifies areas for improvement. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning and opportunities to give support and share best practice are not systematic and focused enough. Very good governance supported the school effectively through an unsettled period in the leadership of the school. Finances are well managed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with their children's progress and the quality of the teaching. Inspectors do not support the view of a minority of parents who consider behaviour and communications with parents to be unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the help they get from their teachers. They feel that the school council is effective in listening to their views and giving them a say in the way the school is run.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve national test results in English and mathematics;
- Continue to raise standards of pupils' writing;
- Ensure that pupils have clear targets across all subjects that help them to know exactly what they need to do to improve;
- Improve systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that inconsistent practice is identified and improved quickly and that more opportunities for the sharing of best practice are provided;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the information provided for parents in the prospectus and the annual report to parents fully complies with requirements.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Standards are average in Years 5 and 6 and in above average in Years 7 and 8 and overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science and current standards of pupils' work are above average in mathematics and science.
- Results in national tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2003 were above average in science and these were better than the average results in mathematics and below average results in English.
- Standards of speaking are well above average.
- Though they improve during their time in school, pupils' writing skills are just average.
- Pupils achieve very well in physical education.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- In some subjects not enough demands are made of higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

Standards and results in national tests

- 1 Overall, standards when pupils join the school in Year 5 are average, but there are weaknesses in pupils' writing skills that affect their performance. There are variations in pupils' standards when they join the school across the range of subjects.
- 2 In Year 6, pupils reach average standards overall including in English, though current standards in mathematics, science, French and music are above average. In Year 8, pupils reach above average standards overall and in most subjects including English, mathematics and science, art and design, citizenship, design and technology, ICT, music and physical education. The exceptions are history, geography and French where current standards are average.
- 3 The school pays good attention to improving pupils' literacy skills. Across the school, pupils' standards of speaking are high and pupils' reading skills are good. Though improving during their time in school, pupils' competence in writing does not get better than average and remains weaker than their other basic skills especially in their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar. Overall competence in literacy across subjects is average. Competence in mathematics and ICT across subjects is good and enhances work in science and design and technology especially.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (27.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.6 (27.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (29.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 108 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 4 Current standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 are better than the most recent test results (2003) because improved leadership of these subjects has helped to raise standards

and improved the quality of teaching and learning. The trend of improvement in national test results is below the national trend and in all three core subjects, English, mathematics and science, there has been a dip in results. This reflects a change in the nature of the different groups of pupils each year where there are increasing number of pupils with special educational needs, many with moderate learning difficulties. In the most recent national tests, girls outperformed boys in English, but in mathematics and science boys outperformed girls. There is no significant pattern of difference between girls' and boys' results over time and no significant differences were found between girls' and boys' standards during the inspection.

- 5 In 2003, the school met its targets for the higher levels in mathematics but did not meet its targets for results in English and the expected level in mathematics. These targets reflect a period on unsettled leadership overall and unstable staffing in mathematics. The higher attaining groups of pupils in mathematics were less affected than other groups. Since this period, new leadership in English and mathematics has resulted in improved provision and rising standards.

Achievement (whether pupils are reaching high enough standards)

- 6 Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well in almost all subjects in response to good quality teaching characterised by high expectations and positive relationships with pupils. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning help them to do well and develop into independent learners. These positive attitudes are nurtured by the school's positive, caring and Christian ethos that gives pupils very good academic and personal support.
- 7 Achievement is very good overall in physical education because pupils respond well to knowledgeable and well planned teaching and the programme of extra-curricular activities helps them to make further gains in skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 8 Pupils' achievement in French is satisfactory because Year 8 pupils have not had the benefit in their prior learning of the current expertise and well planned teaching. Consequently they have not yet caught up the lost ground; pupils achieve well in Years 6 and 7.
- 9 Pupils of differing levels of prior attainment achieve well overall because teachers usually take account of pupils' different needs. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and are offered a good programme of additional activities. In most subjects they receive challenging extension work that makes suitable demands of them.
- 10 Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged, but there are exceptions in history and geography and in some music and Year 7 mathematics lessons where teachers' planning does not include more demanding work for these pupils.
- 11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Pupils with weak reading and writing skills who receive additional support through the reading recovery programme, specialist teachers and teaching assistants, make very good progress.
- 12 The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is too small to make sensible comparisons with other groups in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school sets and demands high standards of behaviour and conduct from all pupils and they respond very well. Most have very positive attitudes towards each other, towards adults in the school and to learning. Standards of behaviour both in lessons and around the school are very good. Attendance is good. Pupils arrive at school on time and lessons start punctually.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A strong Christian ethos pervades the work of the school and supports very good provision for pupils personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive in all year groups.
- Standards of behaviour in lessons and around the school are very good.
- There are very good relationships throughout the school.
- The school's council provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to make a valuable, valid and mature contribution to the effectiveness of the school.

Commentary

- 13 The school has improved its capability in checking, recording and monitoring attendance. The newly introduced electronic system and a sharper approach to checking non-attendance very early on ensures that attendance rates have improved. The school rightly puts great emphasis on regular attendance and good attendance is rewarded weekly in assemblies. The school works effectively with the educational welfare officer who provides good support for the school's pro-active approach to sustaining good levels of attendance. The great majority of non-attendance is health-related and short term. Where there have been problems the school has been quick to make use of "pastoral support plans" to help pupils and parents in re-establishing a pattern of regular attendance. Almost all pupils arrive in time for a prompt start to the school day and close supervision of movement around the school ensures that no time is lost at the beginning of each lesson.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.7
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.

- 14 Most pupils have a very good attitude to school. Relationships are very good both amongst the pupils and between pupils and adults in school. Large numbers take an active part in the life of the school and by so doing enrich the activities for others, for example, by providing reading partners for pupils or carrying out useful roles such as library monitors. The extra-curricular programme is very popular and provides for many wide and varied interests in sport and the arts. Pupils of all ages talk positively about their work, their lessons and the facilities. In lessons pupils are readily and willingly well engaged in their learning and work effectively as individuals, in pairs or in groups. They take responsibility maturely and sensibly and a fine example of this comes from their involvement in the school council. In the questionnaire and in discussions with inspectors pupils stated quite clearly that they valued their school and felt that the school valued them. They feel safe and all who spoke could quickly identify an adult in school to whom they could turn for help if there were problems.
- 15 Pupils with special educational needs have very good relationships with their teachers who encourage them to work hard and do their best. Consequently pupils' attitudes are very good, particularly in withdrawal sessions with specialist teachers and teaching assistants. Outside of the classroom, pupils with special educational needs mix well with other pupils and are fully integrated into the day-to-day life of the school.
- 16 Standards of behaviour both in lessons and around the school are very good. Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectation of them in their conduct throughout the school day. Most are polite, respectful of others and much more mature in conversation than might be expected at all age levels. On the rare occasions where standards come below this level, there are very swift and effective strategies for promoting improvement. The pupils have a

very clear understanding of the standards expected of them and express the view that the measures taken by the school to promote good behaviour are fair and effective. There have been rare cases of bullying but the school has responded, quickly and effectively in eradicating oppressive behaviour. Exclusion is used by the school but only as a last resort. This is a clear and consistently applied policy that aims to ensure that all pupils can feel valued and safe in school and that their academic progress is uninterrupted by unacceptable behaviour. Undoubtedly the high standards of behaviour set and maintained in school are achieved through a combination of good teaching, a very positive response from pupils and the time and energy devoted by staff to their personal development and well being. Form tutors use their time with pupils well to promote the positive ethos of the school, for example, pupils are regularly encouraged to set and review individual personal targets and the 'Thought for the Day' is often conducted well.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	412	20	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 17 A strong Christian ethos is central to the work of the school. This is evident in the positive relationships staff have with pupils and the high priority given by staff to pupils' personal development and well-being.
- 18 Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured well through a carefully planned programme of assemblies and class-based 'thoughts for the day', led by the subject co-ordinator for religious education. Assemblies are reverent occasions which promote the positive ethos of the school well and ensure that pupils reflect on their lives and sometimes, those of others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils take part in leading some of the assemblies. There are no checks carried out on the quality of the class-based 'Thought for the Day', though those observed were carried out well.
- 19 Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness in lessons are good and are particularly positive where activities have been planned specifically such as in English where pupils are encouraged to reflect on issues and make judgements.
- 20 The school supports many local and national charities; as well as generously supporting fund-raising activities, pupils are encouraged to investigate the impact of volunteer agencies, and to record their findings. The range and quality of this work, displayed in the school's reception area, is impressive. The high quality display of pupils' work around the school celebrates the diversity of pupils' individual and collective achievements, encouraging them to value their own abilities, and to continue to strive.

- 21 The school's excellent school council alongside very good provision for citizenship and personal, social and health education helps pupils to develop into mature and responsible young people. In addition to the school council, further opportunities for pupils to take responsibility include working with younger pupils to help them to settle into the school; taking a lead in teaching and helping others in lessons such as design and technology; helping in the school library; and carrying out fundraising activities for charities.
- 22 The school promotes a strong sense of what is right and wrong among the pupils. Classes take on responsibility for developing codes of conduct within their classrooms and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions.
- 23 Pupils are introduced to many different cultures through their work across subjects. Work from a wide range of cultures is studied in art and design and music. In English, high quality work reflects a depth of thought from Year 5 pupils on what it might be like to be a black person in South Africa in former times of Apartheid. Their writing shows a sensitivity to how it must feel to thought of as 'different' in society. There are few opportunities for direct links and contact with minority ethnic groups.

An excellent school council meeting highlighted the importance the school places on taking account of pupils' views and giving pupils a real opportunity to have a say in the way their school is run.

Every form was represented and over 4 years every pupil has the opportunity to become a representative. The level of involvement generated was quite remarkable. These youngsters have quickly become acquainted with all the procedures of a formal meeting.

The agenda arose from form representatives and a suggestion box. Following a check on attendance, the minutes were read out and there was a calm quiet as they all listened intently and were reminded of the items discussed and decisions taken at the last meeting. Decisions were made by pupils in a most mature and almost adult fashion about meal-times, merit marks, a pupils' charter on bullying, classroom seating arrangements, playground equipment, indeed, a whole host of matters that are important to them. In discussion, pupils' strengths were considerable. They listened well, respected others' views and were confident in the knowledge that all views would be heard. The style in which many were able to express an opinion was quite amazing. The conduct of all in the meeting was excellent and reflects very clearly how much mutual respect exists between pupils and adults in the school.

The chair's contribution, a Year 7 pupil, was humbling in the outstanding level of confidence and expertise demonstrated in managing a formal meeting. There was excellent unobtrusive support and guidance from the lead teacher. An occasional 'nudge' on time spent, a rare 'tweak' to ensure that younger members continued to learn from this worthwhile experience, were all that were needed to ensure that procedures were adhered to and that the meeting ran smoothly. All pupils were listened to and were informed by clear summaries of discussions given by the chair. Consequently, pupils understood the process of decision making.

All matters were considered carefully and there were no hasty decisions. For example, a decision was taken on whether to examine how other schools had attempted to move towards a more "eco-friendly" environment. This, it was agreed, would inform the school about how to proceed and what might be possible instead of chasing ideal solutions. There is clearly a growing understanding relating to the process of change.

All matters that are raised and discussed by the council are given a full and considered response from the head teacher. Council members value this level of response and, across the school, pupils appreciate the role the council has played in making improvements to their school. This eagerness to seek out and listen to the views of others, for example the local authority catering manager, is superb. It is truly a measure of a most successful provision for the personal and social development of tomorrow's citizens.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. A well planned curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils is well taught. Pupils are very well cared for and partnerships with other schools and the local community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Assessment is satisfactory overall with strengths in whole school systems that have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Collaborative planning of schemes of work and lessons is very good.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and effectively encourage and involve pupils in their own learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of conduct and learning to which pupils respond very positively.
- Pupils are well motivated learners who have the ability to carry out much of their learning without the direct help of teachers.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Though pupils work is regularly marked, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged in some subjects.
- Teachers do not always follow the plan for setting homework.
- There is not enough opportunity for subject co-ordinators to observe and check on the quality of teaching and learning and share best practice.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 67 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (17.9%)	42 (62.7%)	11 (16.4%)	2 (3.0%)	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.

- 24 Consistently good teaching across subjects results in good rates of learning in lessons and overall good achievement. The very few instances of unsatisfactory teaching were related to temporary arrangements for teaching.
- 25 The very good relationships teachers establish with pupils and the high expectations of conduct and learning that they set reflect the school's overall positive ethos for learning. The atmosphere established in lessons enables pupils to develop confidence in their own abilities so that they are not afraid to try things out and work things out for themselves. Pupils apply themselves well to tasks and enjoy the challenge offered in lessons.
- 26 Teachers pay very good attention to pupils' personal development and give them a great deal of responsibility. For example, in design and technology lessons, pupils take on a teaching role and help each other to learn. In music, pupils listen to one another maturely and help each other to improve their work.
- 27 The good attention the school has paid to developing the national strategies to improve literacy, numeracy and teaching and learning, has helped to maintain overall good quality of teaching. In many lessons the strong emphasis on talking about work is helping pupils to become not only more articulate but also more confident in understanding their work. The demands teachers make of pupils to explain their ideas to each other and to the teacher help to confirm their understanding of concepts. The good variety of teaching and learning approaches used across subjects maintains pupils' interest in learning and develops good independent learning skills.

- 28 Computers are used well in many subjects, for example in design and technology and science but lack of access to them in some subjects, such as mathematics and art and design, limits their use. The school is aware of this and is about to open a new computer suite that will improve access.
- 29 The careful collaborative planning in year and subject groups brings a good level of consistency in the quality of teaching. The school's systems for assessment have been improved since the previous inspection and all teachers are aware of the prior attainment of their pupils and the targets set for them in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This knowledge helps teachers to plan to meet the needs of individual pupils so that in most lessons higher attaining pupils are stretched and lower attaining pupils supported well. However, in history, geography and in some lessons in music and Year 7 mathematics this is not the case and higher attaining pupils, though achieving satisfactorily are not fully challenged.
- 30 Homework is planned for and used to extend learning satisfactorily in most subjects. However, it is not always set on a regular basis, especially in Years 7 and 8, so that there are times when pupils have too much homework and others when there is very little. In some subjects, such as design and technology, homework is not always demanding enough. A homework club is run on two nights after school in the library. Pupils attending appreciate this opportunity for support.
- 31 Pupils' work is marked regularly but not all marking helps pupils to know what they need to improve. Pupils do not always carry out the corrections suggested by their teachers.
- 32 Regular checks by subject co-ordinators on teachers' planning and pupils' work help to maintain consistency in the quality of what is taught. However, there is less opportunity to check on the quality of teaching and so relatively weak areas are not identified quickly enough. Opportunity to share the best practice is limited to whole staff meetings and are not fully developed at subject level.
- 33 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Expectations of both behaviour and attitudes are high, the work set is well matched to pupils' needs and consequently pupils make good progress. Insufficient use is made of ICT to help pupils learn. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide valuable support in helping pupils learn.

Assessment

- 34 The use of assessment is well co-ordinated across the school and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Data about pupils' performance provided by first schools as well as data obtained from tests within the school are made available to all staff. This information is used both in the pastoral system and in subjects to set targets for individual pupils and to place pupils in appropriate groups according to their ability for English and mathematics. Crucially, it enables teachers to focus on any underachievement.
- 35 Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and accurately in English, mathematics and science and in most other subjects, and notably in design and technology, physical education and French. However, in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics and science, the targets set by teachers for individual pupils are not clear or specific enough, so that pupils do not always understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils talking to inspectors confirmed this to be the case.

The curriculum

The school provides a good, well-balanced curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. The programme of enrichment activities is good. The provision for accommodation and resources is satisfactory. The provision of teaching staffing is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities, clubs and visits.
- The programme for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Citizenship has been effectively introduced since the previous inspection and is very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Access to computers is limited in some subjects.
- The school library is well organised and supports pupils' independent learning.
- There is inadequate technical support for art and design, design and technology and ICT.

Commentary

- 36 The curriculum is well planned, closely monitored and regularly reviewed. It meets the needs of pupils of all abilities. The curriculum is enriched in Year 6 by the inclusion of French and the provision of specialist teaching in many subjects across the school. Lessons provide many opportunities for pupils to engage in active learning through discussion, role-play, research and investigation, all of which promote high standards in pupils' speaking skills.
- 37 The range of extra-curricular activities the school provides is good and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. There are good opportunities for involvement in the arts through school productions, theatre visits, visiting writers and a good range of sporting and musical opportunities. Through the efforts of the gardening club, a water garden has been created to a very high standard.
- 38 Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum and all statutory requirements are met. Pupils with the greatest learning difficulties receive good support in small withdrawal groups where they learn to improve their reading and writing skills.
- 39 The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and gives them the knowledge and skills with which to make decisions about their lives. It has been enhanced by the introduction of a very good curriculum for citizenship for all pupils. This is being refined and developed and gives pupils good opportunities to learn how communities function and what their individual roles in a community might be.

Staffing accommodation and resources

- 40 There are sufficient well qualified staff to teach the curriculum. They are sensibly deployed and have an appropriate range of skills and experience to teach what is assigned to them. Support staff are sufficient and make a good contribution to the life of the school. However there is not enough technical support in ICT, art and design and design and technology and this adversely affects standards. For example, in ICT, teachers have to spend valuable teaching time maintaining the network rather than helping pupils improve their standards of work. Resources are generally adequate for all pupils despite the low level of funding the school receives. In science the availability of interactive electronic boards is making a real contribution to improving teaching and learning. Some subjects do not have enough access to computers but a new computer suite is due to be in place in the very near future. Accommodation is good. Outside areas are well maintained. The interior is pleasant and welcoming. Many excellent displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment. The school library is bright and attractive and makes a good contribution to pupils' independent learning.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for. Support and guidance are good. The school seeks, values and acts upon pupils' views very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of care is very good throughout the school.
- Opportunities for personal development and guidance are very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Pupils' awareness of how to improve their work is insufficiently developed.

Commentary

- 41 Relationships between pupils and their teachers and helpers are warm and constructive. Pupils feel safe, supported and valued because of the sensitive and respectful way in which they are treated. Members of staff go out of their way to try to meet the personal needs of each pupil. The process of transition between schools is carried out very carefully and new pupils are paired up with older pupils for support. Pupils play an important and respected part in the school community through the school council. Its work and influence are a driving force for improvement. This is a very real experience and opportunity for pupils to take responsibility for their own environment.
- 42 The procedures for child protection and care for children are fully understood and implemented. Health, safety and first aid matters are well attended to. Specialist education and health agencies provide relevant services to the school and a nurse conducts a drop in surgery for pupils. Supervision is good throughout the day.
- 43 Pupils benefit very much from the guidance and practical experiences they receive in school. The programme for citizenship, participation in residential visits and after school activities, competitive sport and the incidental advice, correction, counselling and role-modelling they receive from teachers contribute very much to their personal development and maturity. Pupils' effort, homework and general participation are taken account of and reported to parents. The process of using academic assessment to provide improvement targets for pupils is not used effectively in all subjects. Whilst many pupils understand where they stand with regard to their levels of attainment, few are clear about the next steps they need to take to raise their standards, on an ongoing basis. Good support for pupils' learning includes the provision of help with homework on two evenings per week in the school library, mentoring assistance for pupils identified as underachieving and revision and booster classes for all pupils prior to their National Curriculum tests.
- 44 Pupils with special education needs are well supported. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and how to bring any concerns to the attention of the special needs coordinator are good. Individual education plans to support pupils' learning are of good quality. Teaching assistants give effective support. The Nurture room provides very good support especially for pupils with physical disabilities and particularly at lunchtimes. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supported by their pastoral support plans but there is no respite centre for pupils in danger of exclusion because inadequate funding prevents the room that is set-aside for this purpose to be appropriately staffed. Apart from paired reading for some Year 5 pupils, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills outside of lessons, for example, through paired reading or the use of computers.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Links with other schools and the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good information is provided for parents about pupils' progress.
- Effective links with other schools help the transition from one school to the next to be a positive experience for pupils.
- Involvement with the local and wider community contributes well to pupils' academic and personal development.
- Parents' involvement in the life of the school and pupils' learning is limited.

Commentary

- 45 Parents are right to be pleased with the standard of teaching and their children's progress. Those parents who consider that standards of behaviour are unsatisfactory are unjustified in that view because standards are very good and compare well with other schools. Some parents would like to be better informed about their children's progress. Inspectors judge that annual and interim school reports provide very good information. Three consultation evenings each year are more than arranged in many schools. However, approximately one out of every four parents does not attend these opportunities to discuss their children's progress. The school does not encourage all parents to attend every consultation evening so that some parents only attend if they perceive there is a problem with their children's work.
- 46 Parents are well informed about events in the school through newsletters that are published approximately monthly and they periodically include details of what is to be taught. The prospectus and governors' report omit some essential details.
- 47 Parents give good levels of support to activities and events that involve their own children and provide good support for the school through the efforts of the parents and teachers association who organise regular discos for pupils and raise funds for the school. The school does not receive the assistance of parent volunteers in school, for example to help with reading, despite requesting it from time to time. There are no specific arrangements in place to periodically gauge the level of satisfaction and views of parents. The school is very approachable and teachers are usually accessible daily. Parents' concerns about communications mostly relate to the temporary difficulties caused by the recent prolonged absence of the head teacher owing to illness. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress and are fully consulted and involved in annual reviews.
- 48 The school works closely with its partner infant schools to make sure that new pupils are well prepared for transition. Curricular activities, particularly in science and music, promote continuity in learning. Pupils of all the schools in the cluster come together, for example in sporting activities and a recorder festival. Arrangements with the high school enable pupils to transfer in a well-informed and positive manner. Links between subjects are not highly developed although some good work is done together to raise standards, for example in ICT.
- 49 Local facilities and places of interest, such as castles, are used well for educational visits. Employers, professionals, the local council, public services and the church contribute to the enhancement of learning experiences for the pupils. Visits abroad and support for charities widen pupils' awareness of the world.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is very good. Leadership and management are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors carry out their duties very well.
- The headteacher and all key staff are effective leaders and managers.
- Good improvement has been achieved since the previous inspection.
- The arrangements to check teaching are not sufficiently rigorous.
- There are a few omissions in the school's prospectus and governors' annual report for parents.

Commentary

Leadership

- 50 The headteacher is a good and effective leader who is well respected by staff and pupils. He has a clear sense of purpose and sets the tone for the very caring and learning ethos of the school. Under his leadership, improvement has been good since the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement and teaching have improved. The issues arising for the previous inspection have been tackled and improvements have been made, especially in the use of assessment information. The provision of ICT across the school and accommodation in science and design and technology have improved significantly. Leadership at all levels is good. The senior managers work well as a team and are enthusiastic, committed and competent. All leaders are well focussed on raising standards and are good role models to their colleagues and pupils.

Management

- 51 Long term strategic planning is effective and implementation is good. The headteacher has achieved his aim to build a good team of managers. His overall goals to raise educational standards and to assist pupils to become mature and responsible are fully supported by all managers and teachers and are being achieved. Whole school and departmental planning clearly reflects these aims. Self-evaluation is good and supports the planning process well.
- 52 Management in almost all subject departments is good and pastoral management is very good. The checking of teachers' planning and pupils' work by subject co-ordinators and senior managers is good and contributes well to learning and standards. The school has recognised that there are not enough opportunities for subject co-ordinators to observe teaching within their subjects and to share best practice, so that relatively weaker areas are not always recognised and improved quickly enough. Plans are in hand to rectify this. Whilst assessment is used well to identify pupils' progress and to plan teaching, it is not used well enough to help pupils to understand the next steps they should take to improve their work. Staff performance management and training have contributed well to improved quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Professional development opportunities have helped teachers to develop a wide range of effective approaches to learning and teaching. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by mentors and they benefit from the school's programme of in-service training.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,189,760
Total expenditure	1,145,471
Expenditure per pupil	2,615

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	66,000
Balance carried forward to the next	43,340

- 53 The school's financial affairs are well managed and reflect the priorities outlined in planning. The principles of best value are applied, though more could be done to seek the views of parents. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the accountability of fund holders at every level. Taking into account the good quality of education, the good achievement of pupils and the less than average funding, then the school gives very good value for money.
- 54 The leadership and management of special educational needs provision in the school is good and is very well supported by the governing body. Regular testing of reading and spelling ensures effective intervention takes place where necessary. Statutory requirements are fully met and the organisation and administration of pupils' records is well managed. Links with outside agencies are well managed to ensure a good level of support for all pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed and weekly meetings of teachers and assistants ensure effective liaison and good teaching. Individual education plan targets are not sufficiently monitored on a lesson by lesson basis so that, at times, some pupils are not making enough progress towards meeting their targets.

Governance

- 55 Governors support the school very well by providing encouragement and acting as critical friends. They worked hard to ensure that standards were maintained during the recent extended absence of the headteacher. Through their committee structures and involvement in school they maintain a thorough awareness of the school's circumstances. Many are closely involved in the day-to-day work of the school, frequently working alongside subject co-ordinators and other staff, providing well-informed support with suitable challenge when appropriate. They understand very well the school's strengths and weaknesses and do their best to contribute to the success of the school.
- 56 Governors comply with the statutory requirements of their roles with the exception of the school's prospectus and governors' annual report for parents where there are a few omissions. They play an important part in the planning and performance review processes in many areas of the school's work. They ensure that all relevant policies are in place.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 and 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of speaking and listening are well above average.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes contribute well to their good achievement.
- Writing standards are below average in Years 5 and 6.
- Very good leadership and good teaching are raising overall standards.
- There is some inconsistency in the usefulness of teachers' marking for pupils.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Average	Above average	Average
National Curriculum tests in Year 6	Below average	-	-
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Very good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 57 Current standards are average at the end of Year 6 and an improvement on the 2003 results in Year 6 national tests which dipped to just below average, having been average the two previous years. Current standards in Year 8 are above average and match the school's most recent optional test results.
- 58 Speaking and listening skills are impressive: they are well above average in all years because pupils are encouraged to use talk to share and develop their ideas in every lesson. Reading is average at the end of Year 6 and above average in Year 8. Teachers work hard to help pupils to develop their comprehension skills and encourage them to read for pleasure. Writing standards on entry are below average. Spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, understanding of sentence structure and grammar are all weak initially, but improve to average at the end of Year 6: they are average in Year 8. In Years 7 and 8, pupils regularly use, and experiment with, a wide range of vocabulary and are not deterred from using language creatively by a fear of making technical mistakes. High attaining pupils write confidently and show good narrative skills. In all years and groups, creative writing is better than writing to inform or explain whilst critical responses tend to be descriptive, rather than analytical. Although middle and higher attaining pupils can identify a range of techniques used by writers, few are able to comment effectively on their impact on readers. Boys' writing shows good gains because their needs are well targeted by teachers.

- 59 Achievement from when pupils join the school in Year 5 to the end of Year 8 is good because of consistently good teaching, pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment of the subject and the many enrichment opportunities provided by a high quality extra curricular and support programme. New teaching schemes now include a wide and exciting range of literature, as well as units on drama and media to challenge all abilities. Pupils with identified special educational needs also achieve well because of the close teamwork between teachers and learning assistants and the very good relationship between adults and learners. The department makes very good use of the library and computers to support and extend pupils' learning and to develop their independence.
- 60 Teaching and learning are good overall. There is very good teaching in all years, including some lessons by non-specialists, which engages pupils and makes learning rewarding and enjoyable; therefore, they behave well and are eager to learn. In these lessons, teachers clearly identify the skills and understanding to be developed and fully involve pupils in evaluating their own learning. The careful grouping of pupils also helps teachers to ensure that all have work which is suited to their needs. Teachers have successfully researched how boys learn and how to motivate them; consequently, they have high expectations of them and use a good range of successful methods. Pupils' test and examination data are beginning to be used effectively to set targets for them and to identify where there is underachievement but, whilst marking is positive, not all teachers regularly use it to show pupils exactly what they have to do to improve.
- 61 Leadership provides a fine model promoting a strong corporate dedication and a total commitment to raising standards. Checks on the quality of pupils' work are in place but monitoring of teaching within the subject is not fully developed. Consequently, teaching and learning problems which may arise cannot always be quickly identified and support provided. The new head of department and recently-appointed literacy co-ordinator work well together to ensure that the subject's priorities are clearly identified, best practice and lesson planning are shared and new staff well inducted. New management and robust lesson plans are driving up standards and the quality of teaching; drama is now in the curriculum, and information on pupils' performance is being used to set individual, group and whole class targets.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 62 Standards of literacy are below average on entry because of weaknesses in pupils' writing. Pupils achieve well and are above average in reading and speaking by the end of Year 8, but only high attaining students write with consistent accuracy.
- 63 Most pupils speak confidently and fluently because these skills are particularly well targeted in all lessons. Reading improves well owing to a good range of planned activities designed to give more practice in reading for information and to develop comprehension skills. All classes have a weekly library lesson; and some Year 5 pupils receive very effective reading support through the *Buddy Readers*' initiative whereby Year 7 pupils listen to them read. There is also provision for reluctant readers in Year 8 and planned opportunities for all in form time. Reading is also promoted through regular hymn singing, and reading events and competitions. Writing is the weakest area of literacy. Many pupils, especially in Year 5, have a limited vocabulary and are unable to construct and use a variety of sentence forms successfully when they enter the school. The spelling, punctuation and grammar of all but the highest attaining pupils in this year are often unsatisfactory. Narrative writing develops well, but many pupils have difficulty presenting convincing argument and analysis. Writing standards overall are not yet good enough.
- 64 Literacy is well co-ordinated and teaching is good. Teachers know and effectively use the National Literacy Strategy in their planning. They provide regular opportunities for discussion, debate and evaluation, and ensure that pupils understand and use their subject's special vocabulary. Pupils can develop their writing skills in most lessons; and, in history and geography; for example, they often receive good quality prompts and structured question

sheets to help them. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of teachers' correcting of writing. Although drafting and planning are encouraged, in some subjects pupils are not shown models of good writing. Additionally, there is insufficient evidence of work, or parts of it, being rewritten by pupils to incorporate teachers' advice or corrections.

French

Provision in **French** is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective new leadership has led to good planning and rising standards in Years 6 and 7.
- Good teaching by specialist linguists is raising standards.
- An annual study visit to Normandy contributes well to the personal development of the 40 or so Year 8 pupils who take part.
- The majority of pupils do not have any contact with a French person.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Standards of work seen	Above average	Average	Average
Pupils' attitudes	Good	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Good		
Management	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Satisfactory		

Commentary

- 65 Standards of pupils' work are above average in Year 6 and in Year 7. Standards are average in Year 8. Taking into account pupils' starting point their achievement is satisfactory overall, though in Years 6 and 7 pupils are doing well.
- 66 The lunchtime French club provided last year has boosted the achievement of the present Year 6 pupils. Eighteen pupils were seen enthusiastically dealing with challenging computerised word games. In lessons, Year 6 pupils respond well to lively teaching and acquire a range of useful vocabulary and simple structures. They are improving their speaking skills and can, for example, react to animal pictures by saying which animal it is and which it is not.
- 67 Year 7 pupils are aware of how language works, for example, learning how to say and write what they have been doing. They readily use the perfect tense which is more advanced than is usually found in Year 7. Most pupils with special educational needs take part in this activity well but in some classes such pupils do not get enough individual attention. However, progression is not completely sustained into Year 8. Current Year 8 pupils had a less successful Year 6, and the national strategy for improving teaching and learning for their age group has not yet fully taken effect. Year 8 pupils' speaking skills are good, but most do not yet have the confidence to produce their own writing in French in any length and so, despite current good learning and teaching, their achievement is satisfactory.
- 68 French is well taught by specialist linguists. The profile of language learning within the school is rising as the teaching improves, so that pupils perceive learning a language as an enjoyable activity. The teaching makes an exceptionally strong contribution to pupils' overall literacy skills. Overall planning is good. Teachers make good use of national guidance which

influences the scheme of work and day-to-day lesson plans for teaching Year 6 and 7 pupils. So far this has not worked through to Year 8, which in part accounts for the difference between achievement in Year 7 and that in Year 8.

- 69 Leadership of the subject is good and is helping to raise standards, but limited resources are a constraint. Pupils have no workbooks in which to record their own work and so support for independent learning is limited. Management is satisfactory because the time available is limited and restricts, for example, checks on teaching and learning. Every year round 40 Year 8 pupils gain both language experience and awareness of both relatively recent and historical events in Normandy which adds considerably to their personal development. However, there are no further opportunities for pupils to have any contact with a French person in school which places limitations of their ability to develop accuracy and fluency in their use of the language.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership provides the subject with clear direction and a commitment to improving standards.
- Standards are above average and achievement is good, though some higher attaining Year 7 pupils are not working to their full capacity.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and the national strategies for improving teaching and learning are well used.
- There is no whole school policy for developing mathematical skills across subjects.
- Positive relationships result in lessons being conducted in a purposeful atmosphere.
- Though assessment of pupils' work is regular, not all teachers set clear targets for improvement for pupils.
- Too few pupils answer questions when teachers explain ideas and develop new topics.
- ICT is used well to enrich and support learning but some pupils do not have sufficient access to this facility.
- Checks on the quality of the work within the subject are not regular enough.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Above average	Above average	Above average
National Curriculum tests in Year 6	Average	-	
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum leadership	Good		
Management	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 70 Current standards of work are above average and are higher than those achieved in the 2003 National Curriculum tests taken by Year 6 pupils which dipped compared to previous years. This is because staffing provision is more stable and, combined with the clear direction provided by the head of department and the positive impact of national strategies, teaching is more effective and continuous. The number of pupils that achieved the higher National

Curriculum levels in 2003 was slightly higher than those seen nationally and exceeded the school's targets. The difference in performance is mainly because higher attaining pupils were the least affected by some discontinuity in teaching provision. In spite of the legacy of interrupted provision, almost all pupils display positive attitudes to their work in mathematics and standards are rising. Taking into account the standards where pupils start from in Year 6 pupils achieve well in response to good teaching.

- 71 Standards of pupils' work in all year groups are above average and there is an appropriate balance between consolidating prior learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills. Work is matched to individual needs so that all pupils work through similar topics at their own level. For example, all pupils competently plot coordinates to draw straight-line graphs and higher attaining pupils extend this work to include a formal consideration of gradients and intercepts. Good quality ICT work supports pupils' learning in many lessons but its use varies from group to group owing to limited access to computers. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress as their peers and there is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
- 72 Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and manage pupils' behaviour and activities in class well. The mutual respect between teachers and pupils enables learning to take place in a purposeful and harmonious atmosphere. Preparation and planning are thorough and reflect the positive impact of recent national strategies to improve teaching and learning. Teachers use an imaginative range of approaches so that pupils are actively engaged in learning and well motivated. Pupils talk about the subject articulately and with understanding but teachers do not always make the most of this ability and could involve more pupils in the development of ideas and new topics. The pace of most lessons is good but some higher attaining Year 7 pupils are not working to capacity because their work sometimes lacks rigour and challenge. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and accurately. Assessment information is used to set targets for individual pupils and identify instances of underachievement. However, not all teachers make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- 73 Leadership is energetic and by example and characterised by infectious enthusiasm. Strategies for continued improvement are accurately identified with an appropriate focus on developing teaching and learning. Relatively new leadership has yet to ensure regular checks, evaluation and analysis of the work of the subject. Consequently there are some inconsistencies in provision. Since the previous inspection, standards of work are higher and improvements in assessment procedures are significant.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 74 There are no instances of weakness in mathematics impeding pupils' progress across subjects and pupils demonstrate above average levels of mathematical competence. Pupils use graphical skills well to enhance the display of data analysis. They ably interpret information in tabular or graphical form. Pupils measure accurately and have good number skills.
- 75 The use of mathematical skills across subjects is not well promoted and does not have a high profile. There is no whole school policy or agreed procedures relating to methods. In a minority of subjects there is little evidence of the use of mathematics but pupils display good levels of mathematical competence in subjects where it is most likely to be found, for example in science, ICT, design and technology and physical education.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute significantly to their good achievement.
- Teachers' planning is very effective and results in consistently good teaching.
- Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 are consistently above average and better than in similar English and mathematics tests.
- Marking of pupils' day-to-day work does not always show pupils what to do to improve their work.
- Teaching is not checked and evaluated frequently enough.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Above average	Above average	Above average
National Curriculum tests in Year 6	Above average	-	-
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Very good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 76 As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils in Years 5 and 6 reach above average standards for their age and achieve well. For example, Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how to control variables in experiments and make them fair. They proved experimentally which type of Bunsen burner flame was the hottest. Standards continue to improve in Years 7 and 8 and are also above average for their age. Pupils have a good understanding of biology, chemistry and physics. Their scientific enquiry skills are also above average because most lessons involve pupils carrying out practical work. This improves both their investigative skills and their interest and motivation in the subject. Their achievement is good because they continue to make more rapid progress than would be expected from their attainment on joining the school. For example, the oldest pupils in the school write chemical formulae with a good deal of success. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well as a result of work that is well matched to their capabilities coupled with good support from teachers and learning support assistants.
- 77 Though good overall, a significant proportion of very good teaching was seen and led to very good learning in those lessons. Lessons are very well planned with a good focus on what pupils are to learn. Electronic white boards are used very well to improve teaching and learning. Work is challenging for all levels of capabilities with the result that pupils are engaged with and enthusiastic about the subject. Pupils are acquiring the skills, knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and theories at a good rate. The introduction of the 'three part lesson', part of the national strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning, has improved the quality of learning. Lessons have a clear start when aims are shared with pupils and pupils are actively involved, work is developed and then a final part ensures that the teacher carries out a check on what pupils have learnt. As a result, teaching and learning have a sharper and more immediate focus. Although marking of pupils' day-to-day work is thorough, pupils are not always given a clear indication of how they can improve their work to a higher level.

- 78 Very effective leadership ensures clear priorities for improvement. A team of teachers, support assistants and technical staff work very well together so that the department functions efficiently on a day-to-day basis. A well planned science curriculum ensures a focus on raising achievement. Teaching is not checked and evaluated frequently enough so that best practice is not always recognised and shared. Since the previous inspection good standards have been maintained and teaching has improved and the department is in a very good position to move forward.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 8 are above average.
- Pupils in all years achieve well because they are well taught.
- Pupils' good learning is encouraged by their very good attitudes.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- There is no technical support to help maintain the network and sort out hardware problems.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Average	Above average	Above average
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Very good		
Management	Very good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Very good		

Commentary

- 79 In Year 6, pupils have above average standards in the manipulation of data and higher attaining pupils use graphs and spreadsheets to display information clearly and precisely. Word processing skills are average. In Years 8 both boys and girls create good quality presentations for particular audiences using above average skills in the use of word processing and desktop publishing software. They know how to manipulate data through the use of spreadsheets and databases and illustrate the outcomes in charts and graphs. Higher attaining pupils use the formulae in spreadsheets accurately and with good understanding. Pupils in all years have below average standards in working things out for themselves and rely too much on their teachers to show them what to do. Pupils with special educational needs in all years make good progress because their needs are well identified and the support they receive in lessons from teacher assistants is effective in helping them learn.
- 80 Teachers have very supportive relationships with pupils which give pupils confidence to attempt tasks without the fear of failure. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which enables them to explain concepts clearly and accurately and in ways pupils can understand. Management of pupils, who in all years bring very positive attitudes to their work, is good and no time is wasted in establishing and maintaining control.
- 81 This is a highly effective subject because it is very well led and managed. There is a clear focus on pupils achieving their best and a clear policy for measuring their progress as they

move through the school, for example, by assessing their ICT skills on entry so as to measure their achievement at the end of Year 8. Since the previous inspection, standards in Years 7 and 8 have improved and pupils' overall achievement is better. Staffing has improved but there is still no technical support available so that teachers have to give up valuable planning and preparation time to sort out operational problems with the network and hardware.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 82 Though pupils have a good level of competence in using ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Good use is made of computers in English, mathematics, science and geography. In design technology, very good use is made of specialist software in computer aided design. Satisfactory use is made of new technology in modern foreign languages, music and physical education. In art and history there is insufficient use of computers to aid pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management have led to improved teaching and learning.
- The majority of pupils learn well as a result of challenging teaching.
- There is a lack of suitable extension activities for higher attaining pupils.
- Good relationships between pupils and teachers have a positive impact on achievement.
- Assessment information is not used well to track pupils' progress and inform teachers' planning.
- Present arrangements do not allow enough observation of teaching by the subject co-ordinator.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Average	Average	Average
Pupils' attitudes	Good	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 83 Standards are below average when pupils join the school and in Year 5, where the provision of only one term devoted to geography hinders progress. The single unit studied in Year 5 is appropriately targeted at improving basic geographical skills and widening pupils' knowledge of places, as well as addressing weak writing skills, since a significant number of pupils are unable to write fluently in sentences and paragraphs. In Years 6 to 8, however, pupils achieve well as knowledge and understanding of geographical processes improve. Most pupils record and communicate information through more structured writing and through a range of maps and diagrams. ICT is used very effectively to present the results of individual research projects. However, too few of the highest attaining pupils produce the longer and more detailed explanatory writing to reach the higher National Curriculum levels.

- 84 From a low starting point in Year 5 the majority of pupils achieve well by making good progress in improving their investigation, knowledge and explanation of geographical themes. This is a result of challenging teaching which keeps them working to capacity, and their own positive attitudes, hard work and obvious enthusiasm for the subject. Those with special educational needs achieve well because their needs and capabilities are identified and because they are very well supported with suitable tasks and materials and with very good individual attention from both teachers and teaching assistants. The achievement of higher attaining pupils, on the other hand, is no more than satisfactory because they lack opportunities to develop higher reasoning skills through problem-solving and decision-making tasks.
- 85 Lessons are well planned with clear objectives linked to both prior and future learning to ensure good progression. A good range of demanding tasks, mostly well matched to pupils' capabilities, allows them to develop knowledge and understanding in short incremental steps. Learning is enhanced by both off-site visits and good resources and classroom displays. There is a good focus on developing literacy for geographical purposes and frequent opportunities for discussion allow pupils to become confident and articulate in talking about their work. Marking is good, and pupils receive constructive comments on what they have done and useful guidance on how to improve. Overall, however, assessment does not inform pupils sufficiently well about how they are performing in relation to national standards.
- 86 Subject development plans identify clear priorities for action to raise standards. Effective teamwork leads to good working relationships and much informal sharing of ideas and good practice. Weaknesses in teaching identified at the previous inspection have been remedied. However, present procedures do not allow sufficient formal checks on teaching by the subject co-ordinator to ensure a consistency of approach across a very large team. Assessment information is not yet used sufficiently in target-setting or in reviewing the content or style of teaching. The raising of standards and improvements in teaching and curriculum planning represent good progress since the previous inspection.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective leadership and management ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of the high expectations of teachers.
- The highest attaining pupils have too few opportunities for extension activities.
- Present arrangements do not allow enough observation of teaching by the subject co-ordinator.
- Good enrichment of the curriculum has a major impact on learning.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Average	Average	Average
Pupils' attitudes	Good	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 87 Pupils enter the school with below average historical skills and understanding and a significant number find difficulty in writing grammatically and at length. In Year 5, they begin to understand the order of events in relation to the passage of time, they start to interpret different sources and produce structured writing using historical terms. In Years 6 to 8 most pupils display an increasing knowledge and understanding through detailed descriptive writing, with some explanation of important events and changes supported by evidence from sources. Good research and presentational skills are evident in individual pupil projects, in which ICT is often used effectively, though access to facilities is too limited. By the end of Year 8, standards are average, though few pupils display higher thinking and reasoning skills, such as the critical analysis of sources and evaluation of the relative importance of causes.
- 88 Most pupils achieve well because good planning ensures a proper progression of learning across Years 5 to 8 so that they acquire an increasing range and depth of historical knowledge, and because they work productively and at a good pace at a range of challenging tasks. Their positive attitudes, enthusiasm for the subject and good relationships they form with their teachers and each other are major factors in the good progress made. The good achievement of pupils with special educational needs is a result of effective individual support by teachers and teaching assistants, who are very well aware of their needs and capabilities. The highest attaining pupils, however, achieve less well in reaching the higher National Curriculum levels since they do not have enough opportunity for extension activities that are sufficiently demanding and different.
- 89 Teachers plan well-structured lessons with clear objectives and high expectations. They offer tasks that are varied and challenging, matched to the needs of most pupils, though there is a need to cater for those pupils who complete work quickly. Skilful, probing questioning is used to revise and extend knowledge and understanding. Aids such as writing frames and prompts are used effectively to improve literacy. Pupils learn well when they are working independently on tasks which require them to think for themselves. On occasions they become less attentive during overlong and detailed teacher explanations. A programme of relevant off-site visits and visits to the school by, for example, drama groups, help engender enthusiasm for the subject. Stimulating classroom displays provide a useful resource. Marking gives detailed and constructive comments on pupils' performance in relation to short term learning targets. Overall, however, assessment procedures do not give pupils sufficient information about how well they are doing over longer periods of time in relation to national standards.
- 90 Good leadership and management have produced a well planned and resourced curriculum and resulted in consistently good teaching. Present arrangements, however, do not allow the subject co-ordinator enough opportunity to check the work of a large teaching team. Development planning sets out clearly the actions needed to raise standards. Cross-subject links enable some history-based work to be done in ICT lessons to offset problems of access, but overall ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning in history. Links with first and high schools enable coherence in the planning of the statutory history curriculum. Since the previous inspection the maintenance of teaching standards and improvements in the curriculum have been significant factors in the progress pupils make from a below average starting point.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Computer aided designing and manufacture are fully integrated into the learning of all areas of the subject.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Drawing, designing, the development of ideas and the use of metals as a constructional material need to be improved.
- Homework is not set regularly enough.
- There is not enough technical support for practical work.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Average	Above average	Above average
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 91 Standards on entry into the school are below average in this subject. However, pupils make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 and reach average standards. This represents good achievement from the comparatively low starting point. This progress is made possible by very good planning and good teaching which is clearly linked to the objectives of the National Curriculum programmes of study. This progress is also linked to the positive and enthusiastic attitude and very good behaviour of the pupils in all years. Sustained good achievement through Years 7 and 8 is seen as standards rise to above average. Above average standards are characterised by very effective research skills, and evaluations. Year 8 work shows above average standards of literacy, including the ability to discuss the design work of others. No differences were found in the performance of different groups on pupils.
- 92 Pupil's awareness of the work of industry is increased by the use of computer aided designing and manufacturing in the textiles and resistant materials areas alongside traditional tools and equipment. This opportunity is used a great deal and has a positive effect on pupils' attitude and the standards of work produced. Computer aided designing and manufacturing are firmly embedded into the teaching of all areas of the department. Pupils are encouraged to help each other and they do this very well often taking on the role of a teacher to support their fellow pupils. This excellent practice helps raise expectations and standards. Characteristics of the good teaching are the oral work where pupils are encouraged to read and talk out loud and make suggestions in a supportive but challenging atmosphere. Pupils show good writing ability with many examples of extended writing seen. The use of metals as a constructional material and the construction and joining of materials are not emphasised enough in the teaching, nor are drawing and designing and pupils' ability to show and develop their own ideas. Homework is not set regularly and not used as a means to extend the skills

of the high achievers. Assessment is embedded into the teaching and feedback to the pupils is informative, well received and acted upon. Lesson planning and individual target setting are strong features of the work of this department. Technical support is inadequate in the practical areas, particularly in the preparation and cutting of materials and the safe handling of food before and after cooking.

- 93 Strong leadership exists with a clear vision for the future. Good teamwork and clear strategic planning for improvement are in place. Staff development is well focused on the subject's priorities. Exemplary planning and assessment records enable very good target setting for individual pupils. Since the last inspection good standards have been maintained and achievement has improved. The inadequate fume extraction over the brazing hearth, highlighted in the previous inspection has not been resolved but contractor problems have caused problems with its installation; the school is aware of the need to resolve this problem. The subject is very well placed for future development and further success.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and promote above average standards.
- Drawing and painting skills are good and are seen in a wide range of artistic outcomes.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Homework is not set regularly enough.
- ICT is not used sufficiently.
- Technical support for practical work is inadequate.
- Teaching and learning are not checked regularly by the subject co-ordinator.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Average	Above average	Above average
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 94 Pupils join the school with below average standards in art and design but make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 to reach above average standards. This is as a result of well planned, focused teaching and the constant promotion of high standards. Teaching pays good attention to improving pupils' basic knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are above average and represent good achievement. Pupils' work in Years 7 and 8 shows greater scale, scope and more individual responses. Pupils' good achievement throughout the school is made possible because of good teaching. This is characterised by the effective use of a range of activities well matched to the needs of pupils in an atmosphere of pace and challenge. Teachers' carefully chosen activities maximise the

potential of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and make good progress across all years.

- 95 Work in a good range of wet and dry media and with a range of materials has helped to promote individual thinking and raise pupils' expectations. Work in pupils' sketchbooks across the school shows a growing competence in the use of colour and texture, and they gain skills quickly, for example, through intense studies of flowers on a very large scale. High challenge and clear targets are evident in all lessons. Pupils have a very positive co-operative attitude towards the subject and they behave very well in lessons; they work independently and collaboratively on practical tasks and concentrate for sustained periods of time. Work in batik and oil pastel is particularly successful, alongside work developed from the influence of famous artists such as O'Keefe. A great deal of pupils' work is displayed across the school which helps celebrate achievement and raise the profile of the subject. The use of ICT is currently underdeveloped within the classroom owing to limited facilities and so pupils' research, for example of images, is restricted. Homework is not set regularly enough, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
- 96 New subject leadership has made a considerable impact and has a clear vision for the future. Very good support exists from senior management for the subject leader. Assessment and target setting systems, planning and the organisation of materials are in place and well managed so that all of the teachers within the team are well supported. Technical support is inadequate for this intensely practical subject, particularly for the preparation of materials and display.
- 97 Since the previous inspection standards have risen and achievement has improved and the majority of issues highlighted in the previous inspection have been fully addressed. However, teaching and learning across the subject are not checked regularly by the co-ordinator and opportunities to share best practice are restricted. Overall, the subject is well placed for future development and further success.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because they are taught well.
- The curriculum is well planned to ensure systematic learning.
- Large numbers of pupils have instrumental lessons, and music contributes very significantly to pupils' personal development.
- More able musicians need more individual challenges.
- There is not enough support for some pupils with special educational needs.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Good	Good	Good
Standards of work seen	Above average	Above average	Above average
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum Leadership	Good		
Management	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 98 Pupils' attainment in music when they join the school in Year 5 is at the nationally expected level, although a significant proportion attain below this level. In Year 6, pupils' standards are above the expected level. In Year 8, most pupils have already reached levels in line with those expected by the end of Year 9, and some higher attaining pupils are above this level.
- 99 At all stages pupils' achievement is good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given a broad experience of musical activities. By the time they have reached Year 6 they sing well and have developed good musical memories. Their listening skills, both in identifying instrumental sound and in performing in ensembles are good. For example, many pupils identified the characteristic features of music from countries in the British Isles, and one Year 5 pupil recognised the "Blues" style of a piece for solo trumpet. In composing they use sounds to create a particular effect. Pupils in Year 8 build systematically on their earlier learning and achieve well. They understand and identify the structural features of popular song, and they create their own versions; almost all composed very convincing 12-bar blues which they were able to arrange for a selection of instruments. Pupils co-operate well, listen to one another's ideas, and their creative input is high. Opportunities for group work and performances permit more able pupils to lead and support others, developing their initiative and independent learning. Less able pupils usually achieve as well as other pupils, although a few who have difficulty in concentrating struggle because they have no special support. Occasionally some musically very able pupils, keyboard players in particular, are not able to develop their reading and performing skills because the material of individual tasks is not matched closely enough to their levels of ability.
- 100 Pupils achieve well because they are well taught through a scheme of work carefully devised to ensure progression across all year groups. By readily demonstrating, teachers use their good subject expertise to provide examples for pupils to follow. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace with high expectations of co-operation and achievement, and relationships are very good. Planning does not always pay enough attention to the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- 101 Although the head of department was not present during the inspection, evidence of good leadership was observed in the confident manner in which the department continued to function. The department's assessment documents were not available, but pupils' work is regularly marked, targets are set and reports to parents are good. There is good contact with first and high schools through pyramid activities. There are sufficient classroom instruments, although many produce a poor tone quality.
- 102 More than twice the number of pupils than is usually found learn to play instruments, and many pupils become involved in a wide range of activities, including concerts, church services, local festivals and visits to the professional theatre. From time to time there are opportunities to listen to musicians from non-western cultures, and to perform music from other continents. As a result, the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 103 The high standards observed during the previous inspection have been well maintained, and improvement is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are most mature and positive.
- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school.
- The programme of activities, including the extra-curricular sports and games, meets the needs of all pupils and contributes very well to their achievement.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 5 to 6	Years 7 to 8	Overall
Achievement	Very good	Good	Very good
Standards of work seen	Average	Above average	Above average
Pupils' attitudes	Very good	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Very good	Good	Very good
Learning	Very good	Good	Very good
Curriculum Leadership	Very good		
Management	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the previous inspection	Good		

Commentary

- 104 By Year 6 overall standards are average and pupils achieve very well in relation to their starting point when they joined the school. For example, in Year 5, over 75 per cent of the year group are competent swimmers. This is because swimming is a key element of the programme and there is a considerable breadth of experience and expertise in the teaching of swimming. Pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities helps them to achieve well, especially in games activities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well because they concentrate on improving in a small number of activities and they benefit from knowledgeable specialist teaching.
- 105 In Year 8, standards are above average and the majority of pupils leave the school having reached the levels expected of older pupils. Thus over four years pupils' achievement is very good. Standards are especially good in traditional boys' games and in physical fitness for all pupils. In traditional girls' games, particularly in Years 7 and 8 netball, standards are average. This variation is because in previous years there has been no specialist teaching of this activity. In addition to physical skills, pupils across the age range have good knowledge and understanding within the subject. In a Year 6 volleyball class, one pupil gave a most accurate description of the "dig" shot in response to a question in class reflecting the high standards of speaking shown by many pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as others and especially so in gaining greater self-confidence.
- 106 All teachers, including non-specialists, know the activities well and make a valuable contribution to the learning. Almost all pupils respond eagerly and with a thirst for achievement and improvement. Lessons are well planned and activities are well devised to meet the needs of all pupils. The resources used to develop skills are carefully chosen according to pupils' strengths. For example, in volleyball, by practising with a lighter weight ball pupils develop their skills more quickly. All teachers know the pupils very well and relationships are very good. Teachers encourage pupils effectively ensuring there is engagement, interest and enthusiasm for the activities and that all pupils have an opportunity to succeed. In providing feedback and setting new targets teachers ensure that pupils know

what to do in order to improve. In this regard teachers do not always make enough use of partner work to provide opportunities for pupil evaluation.

- 107 The programmes of activities in physical education are very well managed and are clearly devised to maximise the strengths in teaching, the needs of pupils and the facilities available. Leadership has a very clear vision about how to further develop the subject and has, in a relatively short time, developed useful arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting on pupils' achievement. The extra-curricular programme of activities is particularly strong and very popular. Through participation in the many sports available both individual pupils and teams achieve very well and represent the school and the district with considerable success.
- 108 Since the last inspection assessment systems have improved significantly and teachers are able to target more clearly those areas of learning that need improvement. Overall standards have risen. More specialist teachers have been appointed and the current strengths in teaching and leadership ensure that the department is well placed to make further improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The school's programme for personal, social and health education is taught in conjunction with citizenship lessons. Lessons were observed in Years 5, 6 and 8. The well-planned programme includes proper attention to solvent abuse, drugs education and sex and relationships. A particularly innovative element is the focus on mental health, enabling pupils to acknowledge particular concerns and apprehensions. As a result of well-planned teaching and a sensitive approach by teachers, pupils in Year 5 were able to express their feelings when faced with different situations, and pupils in Year 6 discussed in a mature manner their reactions to a video presentation about illegal drug-taking. Very well planned activities involved Year 8 pupils in mature exploration and discussion of values and attitudes relating to risk taking and drugs abuse.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led and managed very well.
- The curriculum is very well planned, with particularly good opportunities for involvement with the local community.
- The school council provides an excellent model of democracy in action.

Summary of inspection judgements

	Years 7 to 9
Achievement	Good
Standards of work seen	Above average
Pupils' attitudes	Very good
Teaching	Good
Learning	Good
Curriculum leadership	Very good
Management	Very good

Commentary

- 109 Pupils' standards are above the nationally expected level. Pupils achieve well because the course is well organised and teaching is good. Pupils learn about the different strands that

provide a structure for a democratic society, and know how this applies to life in this country. They understand that they have both rights and increasing responsibilities, and they are able to form their own opinions and consider the views of others, and they are prepared to be self-critical.

- 110 The subject is taught by a dedicated team of teachers whose energy and enthusiasm engage pupils' interest and commitment. Lessons are well planned with content which frequently appeals to pupils' idealism, but they are taught to consider and analyse a wide range of situations in an objective manner. For instance, Year 8 pupils had discussed the likely dilemmas facing policemen in charge of crowd control at a football match, and in a Year 7 lesson, pupils considered different strategies for dealing with town planning problems. By learning about different forms of government over time and world-wide, pupils realise that citizenship is evolutionary.
- 111 Citizenship is led and managed very well by the subject co-ordinator. The subject is allocated sufficient time within the programme of personal, social and health education, and a careful audit has identified areas in other subjects which make relevant contributions. Medium and long-term planning is very good, and regular checks on the quality of pupils' written work ensures that teaching and marking are consistent. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and reported on within the personal, social and health education section of pupils' reports. The course has been carefully constructed to include the statutory requirements of central and local government, civil and criminal law, and active citizenship. The last has been particularly well developed. Pupils are able to exercise their democratic rights in a electing the school council, which they see as an effective body making a significant contribution to the day-to-day life of the school. In addition, there are numerous opportunities for links with representatives from both local and central government. The Town Mayor has visited the school, contact with local councillors has been established, and older pupils have visited the Houses of Parliament. Pupils support a long list of local and national charities, and frequently take initiative in organising their own events. Good links with the high school ensure that there is continuity in learning as pupils move on to the next stage of their education.
- 112 As a result of the wide range of opportunities provided for pupils outside normal lessons, the subject contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
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	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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