

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FALCON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Sprowston, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120913

Headteacher: Mr Tony Waller

Lead inspector: Selwyn Ward

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 266814

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8 – 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	358
School address:	Falcon Road West Sprowston Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR7 8NT
Telephone number:	01603 441417
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Email address:	head@falcon.norfolk.sch.uk
Website address:	<a href="http://www.falcon.norfolk.sch.uk">http://www.falcon.norfolk.sch.uk</a>
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Trevor Hardingham
Date of previous inspection:	21 June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Falcon is an average size middle school in Sprowston in the City of Norwich. The school caters for boys and girls aged 8 to 12. All but a very small number of pupils are white and of British background. There are no children at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but they are average, overall. This is reflected in the average proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs or statements of special educational need. These cover a range of learning and physical disabilities, although the largest category of identified special educational need relates to moderate learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school at the start of Year 4 is broadly average, although their scores in the English and mathematics tests taken in Year 2 are above average. The school won an *Achievement Award* in 2002 for its national test scores. It has a *Healthy Schools* award for promoting healthy lifestyles and pupils' wellbeing, and has just been awarded a silver *Artsmark* award for its work with creative and performing arts. Falcon has won scores of awards for music. In common with other middle schools in the area, Falcon is subject to local reorganisation plans that are expected to result in it converting to a Year 3 to 6 junior school in September 2007.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9271	Selwyn Ward	Lead inspector	
1311	Barry Wood	Lay inspector	
2328 8	Marianne Harris	Team inspector	Science; religious education; citizenship
3196 3	Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology (ICT); special educational needs
2765 4	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics; French; design and technology; music

Art and design, geography, history and physical education were only sampled.

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Falcon Middle School provides a **good quality of education** for its pupils. The school is effectively led and managed. Standards are above average and the pupils achieve well as a result of the good teaching. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The teaching is good and pupils of all abilities achieve well
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development and, as a result, pupils' behaviour is good, they get on very well with one another and are keen to learn
- In lessons, girls do not always participate as actively as boys
- Provision for music throughout the school and the opportunities for curriculum enrichment are outstanding
- There are very good arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils
- Many of the teaching areas are cramped and this sometimes impedes opportunities for better achievement

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen, as has the quality of teaching. With the exception of the shortcomings in the accommodation, which are scheduled for improvement at the end of this school year, all of the issues identified in the last report have been successfully tackled, and some of the previously identified weaknesses, including those on pupils' welfare and on the use of homework, are now among the many strengths of the school.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	B	B	B
mathematics	B	B	B	B
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.*

Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in school as well as how well they do in lessons. **Achievement is good.** This is true for pupils of all abilities, including the most able and those with special educational needs, although girls have generally not attained as highly as boys. There is some variation from year to year, but pupils join Year 4 with broadly average attainment. They make good progress, so that standards are usually above average by the end of Year 6. Test scores have improved over the years at a better rate than seen nationally, although standards are not as high in the current Year 6: though above average in science, they are currently average in English and mathematics. Nonetheless, this still represents good achievement in relation to these pupils' starting point when they joined Year 4. In other subjects inspected, standards in Year 6 are average in information and communication technology (ICT), above average in both religious education and design and technology, and well above average in music. Pupils continue to achieve well in Year 7, where standards are

currently above average in English, mathematics, science and religious education; they are average in French, ICT, citizenship, and design and technology, and well above average in music.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils behave well, and they work and get on very well with one another. They enjoy and are proud of their school. They are well motivated and keen to learn. Attendance is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good.** National Curriculum requirements are fully met and the curriculum is enriched through an excellent range of extracurricular activities, including exceptional provision for music that involves every child in opportunities for performance. There are very good links with other schools, including the high school to which almost all pupils transfer at the end of Year 7. This liaison helps to ensure that pupils develop appropriate skills in subjects such as science and design and technology so that, despite the lack of specialist facilities, pupils are equipped to tackle the curriculum when they move on to high school. Pupils benefit from good guidance and support. They are very well looked after and their views are strongly valued through a school council which has been given the power to make its own spending decisions. Parents are very supportive of the school and of their children's education, and the school has developed very effective partnerships with them and with the wider community. The school is well resourced, but accommodation has been an impediment to achievement because many of the teaching areas are cramped or corridor-shaped. This has been recognised by the school, and plans are in hand to carry out significant improvements to the building during the course of this year.

**Teaching and learning are good.** Lessons are well planned so that work is closely matched to pupils' different abilities. Teachers give pupils good encouragement, and relationships are very good, and this helps to motivate the pupils so that they work hard and get a lot done. Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly to pupils who need extra help, including those with special educational needs. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations, although in a few lessons pupils were capable of doing more than was being asked of them. Questioning is used well to check on pupils' understanding and to ensure that all are fully involved in the lesson. In many classes, however, it is mostly boys that volunteer answers and girls are used to taking a more passive role. Assessment is good and is used effectively to plan pupils' learning. Marking generally gives pupils good feedback on how well they are doing and what they need to do to do better, but the quality of marking is inconsistent.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management is good.** The headteacher has been effective in building a strong staff team that has together driven forward the very good improvement since the last inspection. School self-evaluation is accurate and has been used to successfully identify areas and action for improvement, for example in extending opportunities for more able pupils to develop their writing skills. Governance is good. Governors are supportive of the school and ensure that all legal requirements are met.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils express very favourable views of almost everything about the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide more opportunities for girls to play a more active role in lessons
- Ensure that plans are implemented for the improvement of the teaching areas



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects

*“We are very pleased with the progress of our child. The balance is met between targets in English, maths and science, and other aspects. Music is exceptional.”*  
- Year 5 parent

Standards are average in Year 6 and above average in Year 7, and pupils of all abilities are achieving well.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science
- Achievement in music is excellent because of the outstanding range of opportunities that all pupils have for high quality performance
- Girls have generally attained lower national test scores than boys

#### Commentary

1. The table below show the average points scores attained in the Year 6 tests in 2004 (with the 2003 scores in brackets). One point represents roughly one term’s progress, so the table shows, for example, that last year pupils were more than a term ahead of pupils nationally in English, mathematics and science.

#### Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (28.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.1 (27.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (30.0)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 96 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The trend in Year 6 test results has been an improving one, with test scores rising at a faster rate than seen nationally. Although it was less marked last year, there has, over time, been a notable difference between the standards attained by boys and girls, with boys frequently doing significantly better than girls. In English in 2003, for example, boys’ test results were 2.7 points ahead of boys nationally (the equivalent of being almost a year ahead of most boys) while girls’ results were merely in line with those of girls nationally. From sampling of data on individual girls’ progress from Year 4 onwards, inspectors had no evidence that girls have underachieved, but the difference in performance has been significant and is contrary to the national picture. It corresponds to a difference seen in lessons, where girls were generally more passive than boys and very much more reluctant to volunteer answers to teachers’ questions.
3. Standards in the current Year 6 are not as high as last year’s. Although still above average in science, they are average in English and mathematics. Nonetheless, this still represents good achievement in relation to the pupils’ starting point, given that the

attainment of this particular year group was lower when the pupils joined Year 4. In other subjects inspected, standards in Year 6 are above average in religious education and design and technology, and average in ICT. In each of these subjects, this represents good achievement. In music, standards are well above average as a result of the outstanding provision throughout the school, with every pupil engaged in one or more roles in performance through singing, instrumental music or participation in the school's internationally acclaimed Marching Band. The high standard of music throughout the school is recognised through scores of coveted local and national awards for performance in orchestra, chimes, percussion, chorale singing and opera.

4. Pupils' good achievement continues into Year 7, where standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and religious education. They are average in French, ICT, citizenship and design and technology. Again, in music, standards are well above average. Although the school lacks many of the specialist teaching facilities available to secondary schools, particularly in design and technology, effective liaison with the neighbouring high school, to which almost all pupils transfer at the end of Year 7, ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged through lack of facilities and that they are given an appropriate grounding on which to build when they move on to Year 8.
5. Throughout the school, achievement is good for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they benefit from good support in class that enables them to fully participate and to make good progress towards meeting the learning targets set for them in their individual education plans. Although, in the past, more able pupils have not always achieved as well as others, the school has been effective in identifying areas of potential underachievement and in putting in place measures to tackle this. For example, more able pupils have been given more opportunities to further develop their writing skills. As a result of this, and the good match of work to pupils' different abilities, more able pupils also achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils are catered for very effectively, particularly in music and the expressive arts, but also in sporting endeavours.
6. Standards and achievement are both significantly higher than those reported in the last inspection. This represents good improvement.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

*"My children love life at Falcon Middle School. It really has built their confidence so much."  
- Year 6 parent*

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their personal development is good and is well supported by strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils' attendance is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently good due to their very good understanding of teachers' expectations
- Girls are more passive in lessons than boys
- Pupils' very good relationships and good behaviour around the school ensure that they work together very well

- Pupils' maturity and self-confidence are positively shaped by the school's good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education

## Commentary

7. Pupils are proud of their school, and eager to arrive and meet their friends. They have a very good understanding of teachers' high expectations, and their attitudes to work and activities are consistently good. They are enthusiastic to learn and are attentive to their teachers. They enjoy their work and try hard. Older pupils increasingly realise that hard work will bring success, and want to do their best as they look forward to high school. In some classes, however, boys are naturally exuberant and dominate the answering of teachers' questions, with girls being more passive and shy.
8. The behaviour of pupils, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Pupils' self-discipline increases with their confidence, and their concentration and interest levels contribute to their good achievement. Around the school, pupils are calm and sensible in their behaviour and staff know that they can trust them to represent the school well on external visits. Pupils with special educational needs are indistinguishable in their attitudes and behaviour from other pupils and they take part fully in lessons.
9. Very good relationships are a distinctive feature of the school. Staff are very good role models. Pupils appreciate their efforts, respect them, and show obvious trust. Around the school, pupils are happy, relaxed and they play safely together without fear of bullying, racism or oppressive behaviour. The school has not needed to use exclusion as a sanction, as pupils have a good understanding of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. All pupils value each other's differences and contributions either in the classroom or in the many clubs and activities. They take good care of resources and the school building and show obvious respect for their environment.
10. Pupils' learning and personal development are well supported by very good moral and social education and good spiritual and cultural education. By the time they reach the end of Year 7, the pupils are mature in their outlook and have a healthy mind in a healthy body through the school's involvement in *Healthy Norfolk Schools* work. Pupils participate well in good personal, health and social education lessons. The school is proactive in developing pupils' curiosity and answering skills when discussing human rights, uncomfortable feelings or the merits of foxhunting. Pupils learn about and have respect for the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths. Pupils gain a very good awareness of right and wrong as they progress through the school and are well motivated by house teams and rewards. The school displays pupils' work effectively to increase their self-esteem. The school's ethos is strong in encouraging pupils and adults to work together in a learning experience. There is obvious bonding between adults and pupils, and lively co-operation between pupils in the school and class councils. The school is a very energetic force in the local community through charity work, visits, sport, and the renowned Marching Band. The school has worked hard to correct the former weakness in multicultural education, identified at the last inspection, and pupils are gaining a sound appreciation of world cultures and the mixed cultures of modern Britain.

### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data:	0.1
National data	6.0	National data:	0.3

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

year.

11. Since the last inspection, the school has improved attendance levels to well above the national average. It identified holidays taken during term time as a problem, but the school's very good attendance procedures have reduced their negative impact significantly. Punctuality is satisfactory at the start of the day and good thereafter.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The teaching is good. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs. There is a very effective partnership with parents, other schools and the local community. Arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are very good.

### Teaching and learning

*"I always learn something new every day."  
- Year 7 pupil*

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan lessons and ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' different abilities
- Relationships are very good, and this helps to motivate the pupils so that they work hard and get a lot done
- Girls often do not play as active a role as boys in lessons
- Homework is used very well to help pupils to build on what they have learnt in lessons
- Teaching assistants provide good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs
- Although marking is generally good, the quality is too inconsistent

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	9 (18%)	25 (51%)	14 (29%)	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.*

12. The profile of teaching is significantly better than was seen in the last inspection. Teaching has improved as a result of effective monitoring and support from the headteacher and staff with leadership responsibilities, and the good teaching, seen throughout the school, enables pupils to learn and achieve well.
13. Teachers know the pupils well and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. In their questionnaires, many pupils wrote about how much they liked their teachers. These very good relationships, and the friendly, positive encouragement

given by staff help to motivate the pupils so that they work hard and often get a lot done in lessons.

14. Lessons are well planned, drawing effectively on assessment information, so that work is closely matched to the different abilities of the pupils. This ensures that work offers appropriate challenge, including to the most able pupils and to those with learning difficulties or other special educational needs, who are well supported by teaching assistants. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils, although on occasion pupils were capable of doing more than was being asked of them.
15. Teachers make good use of questioning to check on pupils' understanding and to ensure that all are fully involved. In many classes, however, it is mostly boys that volunteer answers and girls are used to taking a more passive role. In some cases, even where the teacher makes an extra effort to target questions at girls, they can be quite reluctant to answer – in contrast to the sometimes overenthusiastic boys.
16. Time is used well in most lessons. Teachers frequently set a range of varied activities that help keep pupils interested and involved – often with strict time limits set for individual tasks. Pupils respond well to these, settling to task quickly and without fuss, which contributes to their good achievement.
17. Homework is used very well. It is set regularly and is appreciated both by pupils and their parents. A notable strength of the homework is that it is generally used to help pupils to build on what they have learnt in class rather than merely to finish off work.
18. Assessment was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. It is now good. Manageable recording systems help teachers to keep a careful track of how well each pupil is doing and enable them to target work to help pupils learn and understand, particularly in English and mathematics. In lessons, good use is made of individual whiteboards to show answers to questions so that teachers can instantly assess whether or not pupils understand, and pupils are also involved in assessing for themselves and signalling to the teacher whether they are confident with what they are learning or whether they need more practice. There are examples within the school of some very good marking that gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. This is not consistent in every class, however. Some marking is more cursory, merely providing ticks and isolated words of encouragement.

## **The curriculum**

*“The children have such a busy life at Falcon, especially with all the extracurricular activities such as the band and sports clubs.”*  
- Year 6 parent

Curriculum provision is good. There is an excellent range of clubs and other out-of-school activities. The school is well resourced but the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- An outstanding range of extracurricular activities help to enrich the curriculum, particularly in music

- Many of the teaching areas are cramped or corridor-shaped
- Setting is used effectively to match work closely to pupils' needs
- Themed weeks and links between subjects have helped to make learning fun

## Commentary

19. Although the school does not have facilities that are as elaborate as those of many secondary schools, its curriculum is satisfactory in Year 7 and it is good in Years 4 to 6 and overall. All National Curriculum requirements are met and the curriculum is enriched through effective links with other schools, including the high school to which almost all pupils transfer at the end of Year 7. These partnership arrangements have enabled the school to make best use of its limited facilities in subjects such as design and technology to lay the foundation for work that the pupils will go on to do when they move on to the high school where the facilities are much more extensive.
20. The school has arranged its timetabling so that, within each year group, pupils are able to benefit from some specialist teaching. Because, in these cases, teachers teach the same subject to all three classes in the year group, pupils in the different classes share similar experiences and opportunities.
21. Setting, where pupils are grouped by ability, has been used effectively in mathematics and English, as well, to a lesser extent, in science, to help ensure that lessons are organised to best meet the needs of the pupils. A notable feature of these arrangements is that a careful track is kept of pupils' progress and that there is movement between the sets, with several examples of lower attaining pupils who make particularly good progress advancing to higher sets so that they can tackle more challenging work.
22. The school has been innovative in introducing themed curriculum weeks, such as an *Arts Week*, where pupils undertake more extensive work. These have included opportunities to work with a visiting artist. It has also taken steps to link subjects together so that work, for example, in Year 5 in mathematics on co-ordinates is linked to work in geography on the use of grid references in map reading. These cross-curricular links, which during the inspection, included a *Harry Potter* week in Year 6 where lessons in every subject were linked to a common theme, have helped to make lessons fun and to keep pupils interested and involved.
23. The school offers pupils an excellent range of enrichment opportunities, including extensive sports and other clubs and an exceptional range of musical opportunities. Every child takes part in one of the school choirs and a very high proportion of the pupils join enthusiastically in one of more of the many high quality musical ensembles for orchestra, opera, bell-ringing, and the school's celebrated Marching Band which is made up of recorders and untuned percussion instruments. These various musical ensembles regularly win local and national awards, so the pupils' participation contributes strongly to their personal development and, in particular, the development of their confidence and self-esteem.
24. The school is well resourced and its staffing is well matched to the needs of the curriculum, but the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Each year group is organised around a large open-plan teaching area with mostly small, long, thin rooms coming off it. These are cramped and less than ideal for teaching because it can be difficult for

pupils and the teacher to move around the class. Staff manage admirably with these difficulties but the school has long recognised that its accommodation is a barrier to achievement because it is an extra hurdle for teachers to have to cope with. It has for some time been negotiating plans for extensive modifications to the buildings and these are finally due to be carried out later this year.

### **Care, guidance and support**

*“Our daughter has made great steps forward in educational progress thanks to the targeted individual support she has received. Falcon Middle School has built her self-confidence to a great degree. The school provides a caring and supportive environment with a wide range of learning and creative opportunities.”*

*- Year 5 parent*

Arrangements for pupils’ care, welfare and health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with good support and guidance and promotes a high level of involvement of pupils in its work and development.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good care arrangements help to boost pupils' confidence and self-esteem
- Teachers keep careful track of pupils' progress and this enables them to set their pupils helpful targets for improvement
- Pupils feel they have a real voice in the running of the school

## Commentary

25. The headteacher gives a very clear lead to the care of pupils and is very well supported by staff and governors. Since the last inspection, he has considerably strengthened welfare provision and eliminated the weaknesses previously identified in child protection procedures. Pupils' care is well defined through a range of readable policies and rigorous welfare procedures that are understood and consistently followed by staff. As a result, pupils feel very well cared for and secure. Pupils with problems, whether physical, emotional or learning difficulties, engage in the school's abundance of activities and can focus on building their confidence and self-esteem. The school participates in the *Healthy Norfolk Schools* initiative.
26. The headteacher and staff give high priority to the pastoral care of all pupils, and their empathetic listening skills help pupils to develop self-reliance and a mature approach to resolving their anxieties. There is a very strong mutual trust between adults and pupils, and pupils know that they can trust their teachers and treat them as friends.
27. Child protection procedures conform to Norfolk statutory guidelines and staff awareness is continuously updated through regular training. Health and safety procedures have been reviewed and there is a very good focus on identifying potential issues. A governor joins staff to undertake regular audits of the school premises, and risk assessments are being completed for all areas. Accident procedures and the dispensing of medicines are thoroughly implemented by well-trained staff.
28. Behaviour procedures are very well understood and have the involvement and agreement of pupils. Rewards and sanctions have a very positive impact on pupils and assist their good achievements. The team system engages pupils' imagination and complements behaviour procedures well. Support, and guidance, based on monitoring the individual pupil, is strong and allows staff to tailor their input to the pupils' needs. The good arrangements for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress enables teachers to set their pupils appropriately challenging targets that give them a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The tracking of pupils' personal development is succinctly documented and allows teachers to give accurate verbal and written feedback to parents and when transferring pupils between classes at the end of the year. Teachers systematically identify pupils with special educational needs and they develop good individual educational plans with the involvement of pupils and their parents.
29. The school has a very good relationship with the first schools from which pupils transfer at the start of Year 4. Pupils are helped to quickly make friendships through the caring and sensitive actions of staff. Close liaison with the adjacent high school helps ensure that pupils are able to look forward to their future school lives with confidence.
30. Pupils realise that the headteacher and staff want to hear their ideas for running the school and put them into practice. Teachers routinely call for their views through teaching and personal, social and health education lessons, where pupils maturely participate. The school and class councils are run by the pupils with the minimum of intervention by adults. Pupils enthusiastically debate the spending of significant budgets and consider the profit on sales of stationery through the school shop. Pupils are encouraged to set up clubs. At the pupils'

suggestion, power walking has been added as an option in physical education as an alternative to cross-country, and pupils have designed the lunch pass system.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

*“All the teachers are friendly and easy to talk to.”  
- Year 6 parent*

Parents have a very high level of satisfaction with the school and the education it provides. The partnership between the school and home is very good. The school's links with the community and other schools are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very happy with the school and appreciate the vision for their children's education of the headteacher and staff
- Parents benefit from good information about their children's progress and the work of the school
- Pupils have the opportunity to perform and take part in many community events
- Very good links with other schools help in staff development, smooth transition between schools and access to more facilities

### **Commentary**

31. Through their questionnaire responses, parents express considerable satisfaction with the school. They find the headteacher and staff approachable and welcoming. Parents provide very effective support to the school and their children's education. They sign a home-school agreement, and the school respects and values their role. Most parents fulfil their pledge through their children's very good attendance and punctuality, and by assisting their children with homework. Parents feel involved in the school's development through formal and informal consultations. A small core of parents helps in the school, and the Friends of Falcon School Association is energetic in involving parents and pupils in social events and fundraising.
32. Good annual reports to parents give comprehensive statements of what children can do in all National Curriculum subjects, and are supported by informative progress evenings with the teachers. Reports indicate targets for improvement but give little follow-up on whether previous targets have been met. They invite parents' views and pupils write an appreciation of their own school year. Parents enjoy regular and informative newsletters and are increasingly able to gain information from the school website.
33. The school has very good relationships with the local community. There is close involvement with local people, organisations and charities, which give the school a strong sense of local identity and assistance with many aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school is well known throughout the area for its very strong musical traditions, including its famous Marching Band, orchestra and opera, and Morris Dancers. It has been able to demonstrate the excellence of its links to Sport England and the local district council, which has led to significant grants for a multi-games area. Pupils benefit greatly from the close ties, which give them many opportunities to contribute enthusiastically at local events and a strong awareness of their local culture and traditions.
34. The school has very good relationships with other schools, which greatly assist the transfer of pupils. The school has a very strong partnership with the various first schools from which pupils transfer at the start of Year 4 and with other local middle schools. This leads to very good staff development opportunities across the schools. The school has, for example, a

regular exchange of teachers with the neighbouring first school. The links to the local high school enable pupils to enjoy access to swimming and science facilities. They also enable Falcon, through close liaison over the curriculum, to ensure that what is taught in Year 7 lays a good foundation for what the pupils will go on to do when they move on to the high school, even where the school's facilities, for example for Year 7 design and technology, are more limited than those of other schools. Parents receive knowledgeable and informative advice as the time for transfer to high school approaches. The school's positive efforts to care for all pupils, including special educational needs, and the pupils' knowledge of their next school, ensure a smooth transition for all.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

*"I think the children and staff are very proud of the school – and rightly so!"*  
- Year 6 parent

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been successful in creating a teaching team that works together effectively. Governance is good. All legal requirements are fully met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has built an effective staff team that has resulted in very good school improvement
- Governors are very supportive, but do not always do enough to challenge the school
- The particular expertise of teachers is used well so that pupils have equal access to learning

### **Commentary**

35. There has been good improvement in leadership and management since the last inspection. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. He has built effective teaching and leadership teams that are committed to maintaining the very good improvement since the time of the last inspection. Subject managers lead their particular curriculum areas well and are fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects. Test results are analysed carefully and strategies have been put in place to tackle weaknesses. One good example of this is the work that has been carried out to enable those pupils who are more able to work on challenging activities in writing and science. Year team leaders have different responsibilities, and manage issues and concerns within their particular year groups. This is an effective strategy for ensuring that subjects are managed throughout the whole school, whilst issues that may only be relevant to certain year groups can be tackled within that staff team. One particularly good initiative is to have one teacher being responsible for teaching certain subjects within a year group. So, for example, one teacher will teach religious education to all of the classes within the year. This ensures that all pupils have access to the same learning and make similarly good progress whatever class they are in. Particular strengths of teachers are recognised so that pupils can benefit from expertise. The most notable example of this is in music, where the outstanding provision is available to all pupils, not just those who are talented musicians.
36. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The procedures to identify, assess and monitor special educational needs are particularly effective. Individual education plans are well written and the targets agreed for pupils are appropriate.

37. School self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. All staff have a role in drawing up development plans and securing improvements where needed. The performance of staff is managed well and the school has plans to implement the new working practices for staff with the introduction next year of new Government regulations for teachers to be given some time during the school day for planning and preparation. All staff have been consulted on these plans, including teaching assistants, so that the changes can be made in a sensitive manner. Finances are managed well. Money is spent on issues identified in the school development plan, and some has been set aside to implement the necessary changes in planning and preparation time for teachers.

**Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	936,824	Balance from previous year	31,033
Total expenditure	919,188	Balance carried forward to the next	48,669
Expenditure per pupil	2,568		

38. Governors do a good job. They are very supportive of the school and know what needs to be improved. However, the governors are not confident enough to challenge the senior staff over issues that are raised. For example, they accept what the headteacher tells them without questioning issues such as why boys perform better than girls in national tests. Governors are welcome in school and some help on a regular basis. They are committed to providing the pupils with a good all-round education and preparing them for the next stage of their education. Much of the governors' time has been spent trying to remedy the shortcomings in the accommodation. There are now firm plans to minimise the effect of the open-plan nature of the school by putting in walls to limit the noise and create larger, better-planned teaching areas.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 & 3**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well as a result of the consistently good teaching
- Effective strategies have been put in place for improving standards in writing as a result of careful analysis of test results
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support

##### **Commentary**

39. Pupils' Year 6 test scores have been above average in recent years, and although standards are not as high in the current Year 6, the pupils are still achieving well. In Year 6, their speaking and listening skills are average. Teachers are aware of the need to draw out pupils' oral responses and are most sympathetic in the way they pose questions and deal with the answers. They use praise well to encourage reluctant contributors to class discussion. They vary their approaches and successfully use role-play to stimulate questioning. Standards in reading are above average. More able readers are successfully using inference and deduction to gain insight into the characters they read about in, for example, *Harry Potter* stories. Teachers encourage readers to select examples in their text to justify the opinions they reach. Writing has been a relative weakness. The school identified this as the main area of concern in English three years ago. A series of measures have been put into place to address shortcomings, for example in ensuring opportunities for more extended writing in other subjects, and improvement is being seen in all years.
40. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 7. Pupils listen well to their teacher and to each other. In discussion about their work in ICT a group of able pupils talked with confidence and enthusiasm. They responded very well to questioning, showing good awareness of their audience, and were keen to put over their points of view clearly. Year 7 pupils are mainly independent readers who read a good variety of texts for pleasure. They attain good standards retrieving and organising information from books and from the internet. Though their writing is not as good as their reading or spoken English, pupils are writing in a variety of forms. Their work is lively and interesting and they engage the interest of the reader well. Recent writing stimulated by Chaucer's introductions to his characters followed his example well. Some of the pieces were excellent and brought the characters they described to life on paper. Achievement in Year 7 is good and overall attainment is above average.
41. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of literacy and plan very well to give their pupils a progressive and stimulating experience of language. They make good use of interactive whiteboards to enliven their well-structured lessons. Lesson introductions are clear and set out what will be covered. There is a good mix of

activities and this helps to sustain interest. Teaching assistants are used well to support and extend learning, particularly when they work with individuals or small groups with special educational needs. One-to-one work with pupils with a statement of special educational needs is often very good. These teaching assistants draw on very good knowledge of literacy and of the pupils they work with to develop highly individualised programmes of work that ensure that their charges make very good progress. Closing sessions of lessons make sense of what has been covered and are used well to celebrate the progress that has been made. This helps to give pupils confidence in themselves as learners. Marking is good and stimulates pupils to improve their writing through encouragement and helpful comments. Teachers set targets and these are attached to writing books. An analysis of books during the inspection showed that teachers' practice in checking up on progress against the targets varies. Teachers maintain good relationships with their pupils, promoting good learning attitudes. Because little time needs to be spent in dealing with inappropriate behaviour, there is more time for learning. Lessons are well-ordered, purposeful and enjoyable experiences.

42. The subject is well led and managed. Careful analysis of pupils' test results has helped to identify the subject's strengths and weaknesses and has led to the good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in writing and in the standards attained in Year 7.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

43. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. Teachers make some use of role-play in subjects such as English and history to encourage the development of speaking and listening. Throughout the school, question and answer is used well to encourage pupils' oral responses, although teachers often have to spend some of their time building up the confidence of some pupils – particularly girls. In a good range of subjects, pupils are expected to produce extended written responses and this has contributed to the improvements seen in the standard of writing.

### **French**

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good
- Instructions are too readily repeated in English, so pupils do not have to persevere to understand the teacher's French
- There is not enough space in the teaching area used for French

#### **Commentary**

44. French is taught to pupils in Year 7. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age and achievement is satisfactory. The teacher gives satisfactory support to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs but work is not always adequately adapted to enable the less confident to succeed at an appropriate level. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and behaviour is

good. They listen attentively and try hard. They respond well when they are asked to work in pairs and small groups.

45. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons start with a game to promote listening skills and revise vocabulary. Most of the instructions are given in French, but in some instances these are too readily repeated in English, negating the need for pupils to listen carefully to the French. Activities build on previous learning so pupils are building up a satisfactory range of vocabulary covering topics like the family, the home and daily life, colours, time and the school day. Pupils have completed a good amount of work in their books, but marking is inconsistent and some mistakes are not corrected.
46. Leadership and management of the subject and improvement since the last report are satisfactory. The room where all pupils learn French has little space for display to reinforce vocabulary or promote discussion.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Achievement is good because of consistently good teaching
- There is a good focus on the use and application of mathematical skills in other subjects
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, place good emphasis on oral work and maintain a positive working ethos in class
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not help pupils understand how they can improve

### **Commentary**

47. Year 6 test scores have been consistently above average but standards in the current Year 6 are lower. They are in line with the national average, although this still represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting point when they joined Year 4. Pupils in Year 7 continue to achieve well and produce work of an above average standard. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. This improvement has been achieved by more effective evaluation of teaching and good use of assessment to see where pupils can improve their skills. As a result of this, problem-solving and thinking skills are being developed. Each lesson starts with a problem to work out as soon as the pupils arrive in their different ability sets. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support that enables them to make good progress and achieve well in relation to their ability.
48. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and prepared with varied activities to motivate pupils. Year 6 pupils were engrossed in solving logic and number puzzles on the theme of *Harry Potter*. Because activities are well prepared, pupils settle down to work eagerly. Year 4 pupils' "secret mission" was to sort shapes with right angles. Each group received a sealed envelope with their instructions, which they could not wait to open and get started. Teachers establish very good relationships with their classes. As a result, there is a very good working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn, work very well together and show an obvious enjoyment of mathematics because the lessons are fun. The good teaching of basic number facts is reinforced in lively sessions of mental work. Teachers have

high expectations of pupils' behaviour and application. There is a focus on using the correct mathematical language so pupils can explain their answers clearly. Teachers make effective use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to help them build on what they have learnt before. However, boys are generally more eager to answer questions whereas, in most lessons, girls tend to hang back unless asked. Teachers mark work regularly, but not all teachers provide consistent feedback to pupils so they can see how to improve their work. This is particularly the case where pupils use printed worksheets. Homework is used very effectively to follow up work done in class and to prepare for future work.

49. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The subject is led with high aspirations for raising standards. Staff are provided with good support and role models for the skilful teaching of mathematics. There are good systems to assess and record pupils' progress in mathematics. These are analysed very closely and used very well to keep track of pupils' progress and identify any problems that arise.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

50. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. These links are especially effective in science where pupils learn to use protractors to measure angles of reflection. Pupils apply skills learnt in mathematics to reading grid references in geography. ICT is used for drawing graphs and teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support learning. Literacy skills are promoted well when pupils explain their mathematical thinking.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and reach standards that are above average
- Teachers plan interesting lessons that capture the imagination of pupils
- Science is well organised and homework is used very effectively to extend learning
- Girls are sometimes reluctant to willingly answer questions during lessons
- The accommodation is sometimes cramped for whole-class teaching

### **Commentary**

51. Standards in science are above average in Year 6 and Year 7. This reflects the national test scores reached in 2004. By Year 6, pupils have developed a good understanding of a wide variety of scientific knowledge and can apply this to their investigations and experiments. They know how to plan an investigation, identifying what they want to find out and recording their results in a systematic manner. Their skills and knowledge are extended further in Year 7, where pupils explore ideas, such as how to classify animals using relevant questions, with confidence and interest. There has been some difference in the performance of boys and girls, with boys doing considerably better in tests than girls, contrary to the national trend. This difference in performance fluctuates from year to year, and there is little difference in the work seen during the inspection. However, in lessons, girls are far more reluctant to volunteer answers than boys, with boys almost jumping out of their seats to answer questions. In the best lessons seen, teachers were very vigilant about this and actively encouraged the girls to answer by targeting their questions at particular individuals.



52. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are interesting and many are planned around investigations and experiments. These lessons capture the imagination of pupils so that they are very keen to learn and want to try hard. This particularly energises the boys who are very keen to get on with practical activities. This was seen in a good Year 7 lesson, when the boys dived straight into the activity of drawing up their own key to classify animals, whilst the girls undertook the task in a systematic way, planning out their questions before committing themselves to paper. Teachers are knowledgeable so that they can challenge pupils in lessons. In Year 6, pupils were asked to find out about bubbles, and enjoyed determining which mixture produced the best ones, whilst in Year 5, pupils investigated bouncing light beams. This caused great excitement when the lights were switched off and light beams could be clearly seen so that pupils could plot their path. Homework is especially well used to reinforce and extend learning. It is not merely completing work that has gone on in lessons, but sets pupils challenging activities, such as identifying a variety of gases around us. Some of the homework is research, whilst some is preparing for the next lesson. All pupils know what is expected of them and teachers give deadlines for the work to be handed in. This results in lessons that have a smooth start and proceed at a brisk pace, because pupils have done their homework with little time having to be spent on recapping past knowledge. In turn, this results in pupils making good progress in lessons and over their time in school. Assessment is good and teachers know how well their pupils are doing. Marking gives good encouragement as well as guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
53. Science is well led and managed in the school. This has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have remained above average and the quality of teaching has improved. The most significant improvement has been in assessment, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Resources for science are good, but accommodation is far from ideal. The science room is well equipped, but it is still too small for whole-class teaching and space is cramped. The same is true for some classrooms, where pupils have to be careful to avoid bumping into each other in the small space provided. The school is very aware of this and plans are in place to improve the situation.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good use is made of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects
- Accommodation and resources are good

### **Commentary**

54. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well. Pupils use a range of programs to word process and to combine text and graphics. They use *Powerpoint*<sup>TM</sup> well to develop fairy stories for Year 4 pupils. They make sound use of the internet for research. They have a satisfactory understanding of how databases are used in the world around them. They model graphical information well when they design football strips on screen. They model financial information well in a project around a market stall. In science, they learn how to use sensors to log

information about such things as temperature changes. They also know how to write simple procedures to draw geometric shapes on screen.

55. By Year 7, standards are again in line with national expectations. Pupils have a good awareness of the ways in which ICT affects their daily lives. They attain average standards in producing publicity materials about the locality. They make good progress in control technology learning to program traffic lights. A number of Year 7 pupils are engaged in producing the school web site. They are gaining a good understanding of the internet. Their achievement is good overall.
56. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan well, breaking down tasks into manageable chunks that help the pupils to learn by building methodically on what they have done before. Pupils in Year 7, for example, made good progress in learning how to construct flow-charts to define the processes involved in carrying out simple domestic tasks such as making a cup of coffee.
57. The subject is well led and managed with increasing use being made of ICT, both as a discrete subject and as a learning tool in other subjects. There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' work, and accommodation and resources are good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

58. Pupils demonstrate good levels of ICT capability in a range of subjects using a good range of software. For example, in geography they use spreadsheets to gather and present information from a traffic survey. In science, they measure their heart rates before and after exercise and draw graphs using ICT to show the difference. In a number of subjects, they present information using desktop publishing and *Powerpoint*<sup>TM</sup>. In mathematics, they write procedures to draw geometric shapes on a computer screen. In several subjects, pupils make good use of the internet to undertake research.

## **HUMANITIES**

*Religious education was inspected in full and is reported below. Geography and history were sampled.*

59. There were two **geography** lessons seen during the inspection. Both were good. Pupils in Year 4 learnt about making simple maps and began to identify symbols that denoted geographical features. In Year 5, pupils used their knowledge of the local area to study the effects of the sea on the coast. By the end of the lesson, they understood how cliffs and other coastal features are eroded away due to tidal and weather conditions. It is evident from their work that pupils in Year 6 learn about worldwide environmental issues and how humans can affect what happens to areas of the world. They also develop a good understanding of the culture and features of Mexico, where pupils research the life of the Mexican people and begin to understand how weather conditions affect the way people live. By the time they leave the school in Year 7, pupils have researched many geographical areas and have a good understanding of the countries that make up the British Isles. Teachers' planning shows that pupils are systematically taught the skills and knowledge necessary for them to become confident

when exploring geographical ideas. Elements of geography are also covered through links with lessons in other subjects, including mathematics and ICT.

60. In a satisfactory **history** lesson, pupils in Year 6 working on their *Harry Potter* theme, looked at Tudor paintings and imagined they were able to talk like the portraits at Hogwarts. This linked very well to the work they had been carrying out on Tudor England and reinforced their knowledge. By the end of Year 6, pupils have explored various historical themes, such as where kings got the money to wage expensive wars, and use a variety of sources to research their work. These skills of historical enquiry are developed in Year 7, when pupils look at the feudal system and how it worked long ago. Planning shows that, from the time they enter the school, pupils are encouraged to find out about the past and use their English skills to write accounts and reports about a variety of topics such as the effects of the Reformation in England.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and reach standards that are above average
- The imaginative deployment of teachers means that all pupils have interesting lessons
- Homework is used very effectively to extend pupils' learning

### Commentary

61. Pupils reach standards that are above those expected, both in Year 6 and in Year 7. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because work is well planned and skills are taught systematically and in an interesting way. By the end of Year 6, pupils have had two opportunities to learn about Hinduism, for example. In Year 4 they begin to develop a good understanding about some beliefs of Hindus and, by the time they are in Year 6, pupils understand why there are many Hindu gods, yet only one Supreme Being (God). They learn to think about the teachings of many religions and relate these to their own experiences in a thoughtful and sensitive way. In Year 7, standards continue to be above average because pupils begin to understand about difficult concepts such as suffering.
62. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class so that they can make as much progress as others. Work is especially tailored to meet the needs of those with complex needs, and teachers make lessons interesting. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils had to imagine that they were reporters giving an account of the Buddhist festival of *Wesak*. Pupils were very enthusiastic about this and used the available resources very well to research their work. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards so that pupils can understand various ways of recording their work. Homework is very well used to help pupils prepare for the next lessons. This usually means that lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils are keen to know what they are going to learn next.
63. The subject is well led and managed in the school and this has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Imaginative use of teacher expertise is a positive feature of the religious education programme. In most year groups, one

teacher takes each class within that year for religious education lessons and this means that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. In the year group where this does not happen, teachers plan carefully, and work is rigorously monitored, to make sure that all pupils have the same opportunities.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

*Design and technology and music were inspected in full and are reported below. Art and design and physical education were sampled.*

64. In the one **art and design** lesson observed, which was very good, Year 6 pupils were using the interactive whiteboard to look at *Harry Potter* book jacket designs. Pupils' enthusiasm contributed to the very good progress that they made. From the work seen in sketchbooks and displays, standards are above those expected. A strength of much of the work is that it is developed systematically over several weeks, so that the improving techniques result in finished articles of a good standard. Pupils have good opportunities to experiment in changing the medium or in varying tone, colour or scale as their work progresses. Some outstanding examples of high quality work of this kind are displayed in Year 4, based on shape, tone and colour of bottles. Several good initiatives, such the *Arts Week*, art club, projects with professional artists and visits to galleries, have led to the school receiving the Artsmark silver award.
65. In the two **physical education** lessons observed, both of which were good, pupils achieved well because of the teachers' high expectations and pupils' opportunity to develop skills. As a result, standards were above those expected. The school provides many sporting activities outside normal lessons and many pupils attend these sessions. The school is successful in many inter-school sports, such as football, where both girls and boys do well, netball, cross-country running and orienteering. There are good sporting links with the high school and the local youth football club.

### **Design and technology**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching
- There is good learning of design and making skills
- The affects of any shortcomings in facilities in Year 7 have been remedied through the very good partnership arrangements with the neighbouring high school

## Commentary

66. Standards in design and technology are in line with expectations in both Year 6 and Year 7, and pupils achieve well. This is an improvement on standards reported in the last inspection. Throughout the school, more opportunities are now provided for pupils to plan and develop their own design ideas and evaluate their work. Pupils are developing their skills using a variety of materials such as card, wood, food and textiles. Work in design and technology is linked well to the other areas of the curriculum such as science, and music. Year 5 pupils' work was linked to the design and construction of simple musical instruments. Pupils carry out evaluations and comparisons of different products, for example, tasting various biscuits, comparing the taste and texture. Year 4 pupils show understanding of the need to modify designs in order to achieve a well-made product. Pupils' design work is satisfactorily presented and they take care with their practical work. They understand the need to consider health and safety issues when using tools and working with food.
67. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned with a clear idea of what pupils will be able to achieve. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils were considering the materials and construction of bags. They had the opportunity to develop new skills using a sewing machine. Teachers explain clearly, showing examples of the different stages of the work, so pupils know what is expected of them. The use of ICT within the subject to support pupils' design work is satisfactory.
68. The good leadership and management of the subject ensure that teachers are well supported and have the training, skills and resources to make the best of pupils' talents. Although the school has very limited facilities for teaching the subject in Year 7, this shortcoming has been successfully tackled through the very good links with the high school that ensure that the curriculum will be covered in full during the course of Years 7 to 9.

## Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very high
- There is excellent enrichment of pupils' learning through the many opportunities for performance
- The expert specialist teaching and the outstanding organisation of the curriculum by the subject leader ensure consistently high standards
- Pupils' personal qualities are developed very well

## Commentary

69. The excellent provision for music is an outstanding feature of the school. It permeates school life and enhances very considerably the quality of education that the school offers. Improvement has been excellent since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well above average standards in music in both Year 6 and Year 7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because they are encouraged to participate in all activities and their teacher and classmates give them sensitive and very encouraging support. Pupils' performances in singing, playing and composing are outstanding.

70. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent overall. This is because teaching is never less than good and sometimes it is excellent. As a result of friendly yet firm management and very good relationships, pupils strive to do their very best and their behaviour is very good. They listen very attentively, wait patiently for their turn to play an instrument, and become totally absorbed in their work. Pupils enjoy their music making and are rightly proud of their achievements.
71. Leadership and management are excellent, providing an inspirational role model for staff and pupils. Very effective management means that all elements of the provision are covered. In addition to the curriculum, all pupils are involved in either the senior or junior choir and have the opportunity to play in the orchestra, Marching Band, recorder consort, hand-chime group, opera group, chamber choir, Morris Dancers and musical theatre groups. Pupils' visits to perform at national and international venues provide excellent opportunities for their personal, social and cultural development.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

*Citizenship is taught in Year 7 and is reported in full. Personal, social and health education was sampled.*

72. Pupils' **personal, social and health education** is promoted through a well-planned series of lessons that cover all aspects of this subject. From the start of Year 4, pupils are encouraged to take an active role in the life of the school. Through school and class councils, pupils have the opportunity to share their views and ideas, and they are confident that they are listened to. Pupils are alerted to the dangers of drug misuse, alcohol and cigarettes. They learn about growing up and the changes they can expect as they enter puberty. By the time they are in Year 7, pupils understand about human reproduction and have a mature approach when writing about it.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers form good relationships with their class and provide an atmosphere where mature discussions can take place
- Pupils begin to understand the rights and responsibilities of living in a society
- Boys tend to dominate class discussions

### **Commentary**

73. The school complies with the requirements for teaching citizenship in Years 7 to 9. Pupils reach standards that could reasonably be expected for the first year of this course and they achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 7, pupils understand about the importance of gaining the skills and knowledge necessary to live in the wider world. Many know that they will have to earn money to live, but have little understanding about wider issues, such as those children who are not able to receive a good education and the reasons for this. Pupils feel that they have a genuine voice within the school and they begin to learn about democracy and working within a group of others. They begin to explore feelings that may make them uncomfortable and learn how to deal with these.

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well and form good relationships with their class. This means that pupils feel confident to contribute to discussions and share their views. There are times, however, when boys tend to dominate the conversations and girls are reluctant to join in.
75. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. This has resulted in citizenship being taught in accordance with guidance, and in conjunction with the local high school, so pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily. Citizenship was not reported at the time of the last inspection so no judgement can be made on the improvement since that time.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
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).*