

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ORCHARDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125866

Headteacher: Dr P Jones

Lead inspector: Eileen Chadwick

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 October 2004

Inspection number: 268084

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:	565
School address:	Nelson Road Worthing West Sussex
Postcode:	BN12 6EN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, The Orchards Middle School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs T Parkin
Date of previous inspection:	17 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Orchards Middle School, with 565 pupils, is larger than most other schools of the same type. There are slightly more boys than girls. In Year 6, however, nearly two-thirds are boys. The school serves a mixed area of private and local authority housing. Few pupils are of ethnic minority backgrounds and just two are at early stages of learning to speak English. The school has 123 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is above average, and, of these, pupils with speech and language difficulties, moderate learning problems and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties form the largest groups. Thirteen pupils with severe language difficulties, all with Statements of Special Educational Needs, are taught in a unit attached to the school, the Special Support Centre. Twenty-two other pupils in the main school also have Statements. The proportion with Statements is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is 17 per cent, which is above the national average.

There have been a number of changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher, although staffing has been very stable for the last two years. In 2001, the school won an Investor in People Award and has very recently won an Activemark Gold Award for the high quality of its curriculum provision in sport. The school is involved with the Primary Leadership programme and receives a regeneration budget. Mobility of pupils is similar to that of most schools. Pupils' overall attainment on entry is below average, although this ranges from well above average to very low. A significant proportion of pupils enter with potentially challenging behaviour.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19115	Eileen Chadwick	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector	
18935	Christopher Bolton	Team inspector	English Geography Music English as an additional language
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31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education Citizenship
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Orchards Middle School is a good school that is rapidly improving. The headteacher's very strong direction for improving the school, in close teamwork with all members of the school community, leads to pupils often achieving well. There is much good teaching, which is leading to rising standards after a decline. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 4 to 6 and satisfactory in Year 7. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education by Years 6 and 7 and in science by Year 6 through much good teaching.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader, who is well supported by governors and staff. They are responsible for the significant improvements that have taken place over recent years.
- Pupils with severe language difficulties make very good progress.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good and excellent in sport.
- Very good provision for pupils' moral and social development results in pupils behaving well and helps to create a climate where learning can flourish.
- The quality of mathematics teaching in Years 4 to 7, whilst satisfactory, needs to be improved so pupils can achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English and science.
- The school does not make sufficient use of assessment as a tool for raising pupils' achievement.
- Provision for some pupils who enter the school with lower attainment in reading, whilst satisfactory, needs more rigour for standards to be raised more rapidly.
- There are weaknesses in pupils' science enquiry skills in Year 7.

The school's effectiveness has improved well since the previous inspection in May 1999 with rapid improvement in the last three years. There have been good improvements in English, ICT and physical education in Years 4 to 7 and in science in Years 4 to 6. There has been sound improvement in religious education and collective worship. Pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching have significantly improved and there have been good improvements in the management of the curriculum. Overall, the school has made good progress in addressing its key issues.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is good overall. Standards for current Year 6 pupils have improved very well compared with those of Year 6 in 2003, when standards were low. Overall, pupils now achieve well in Years 4 to 6 and reach average standards in English, science, ICT and religious education, although standards are below average in mathematics. Standards are above expectations in physical education. Standards in national tests in 2004 for Year 6 pupils also showed significant improvement, although standards were still below average. These pupils, now the current Year 7, are achieving satisfactorily. They reach average standards in English, French, ICT and religious education but below average standards in mathematics and science. Standards are above

expectations in physical education. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils often achieve well but do not always achieve well enough in mathematics. Some very good work was seen in art and design, design and technology and in music in Years 4 to 7.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well. The school promotes very good relationships between pupils. It has very good procedures for ensuring the pupils behave well, including the significant minority with challenging behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and the school has very good procedures for promoting these.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Overall, teaching and learning are good. They are good in Years 4 to 6 and satisfactory in Year 7. Teachers often have good subject knowledge so they can introduce new subject knowledge in depth. They often ensure pupils learn through investigation and problem solving as well as through watching and listening. However, assessment is not always used well enough for extending higher-attaining pupils in mathematics. The curriculum provided is good. It is broad with rich provision in science in Years 4 to 6 and in English, art and design, music and physical education through the school. Extra-curricular activities are very good and excellent in sport. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Links with parents and the community are good and are much improved since the previous inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has very good management systems for improving pupils' achievement and enabling staff to teach well. Senior staff often set very good examples by their own high quality teaching and they lead well and give very good support. Governors are very well led by the chair and are effective in helping to steer the school. All the staff share the same sense of purpose, which is focused on school improvement. The school fulfils statutory requirements apart from omitting some information from the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the education the school offers. They feel that all aspects of the school have rapidly improved in the last few years. Pupils are very pleased with the school and enjoy making a contribution to its decision-making processes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure the quality of teaching in mathematics is always good enough to raise standards.
- Increase the use of assessment as a tool for raising achievement.
- Increase the rigour of provision for lower-attaining pupils in reading.
- Ensure investigative science teaching in Year 7 is of a similar quality to that in Years 4 to 6.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus meet all statutory requirements.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Overall, pupils achieve well. Standards are improving and are now average overall by Year 6, although, too often, still below average by Year 7. Pupils' achievement is good for Years 4 to 6 and satisfactory for Year 7.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6 pupils have achieved well in English, science and ICT and reach average standards.
- By Year 7 pupils have achieved well in English and ICT and reach average standards.
- By Years 6 and 7 standards are above average in physical education and pupils are now achieving excellently in Year 7.
- Achievement for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good for those in the special support centre.
- Standards in mathematics and science in Year 7 are below average and are not improving as fast as in English.
- In Year 4, lower-attaining pupils' achievement in reading is only satisfactory. This is not enough to quickly raise standards for the significant numbers entering with lower standards in literacy.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.4 (25.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.1 (24.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.4 (27.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 142 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Standards in national tests were often too low from 1999 until 2003. Early indications of the 2004 results for Year 6 pupils indicate significant improvements in English, mathematics and science, although standards are likely to be still below national averages.
2. In 2003 standards were well below national averages in English, mathematics and science. Compared with pupils' prior attainment in their Year 2 tests these standards were also well below average, indicating poor achievement. However, it must be remembered that although pupils attended The Orchards School between Year 4 to 6, they spent Year 3 in other schools. All evidence suggests that the current Year 6 and the current Year 4 pupils entered the school with below average attainment in English and mathematics.
3. The overall trend for school improvement until 2003 has been in line with the national trend but this needs to be faster if standards are to be raised. The school's provisional results in 2004 show the school exceeded its targets in English but did not meet them in mathematics. It is on course to exceed its satisfactory targets set for 2005 in English and to meet its modest targets set for 2005 in mathematics.
4. The findings of the inspection show that the hard work that has gone into raising standards continues to have a positive impact. By Year 6, standards are average in English, science and ICT and above expectations in physical education. Pupils achieve well in these subjects

with very good achievement in investigative science. In Year 7, standards are average in English, ICT and French but below average in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in English and ICT whilst their achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, science and French. In Year 7 standards are above expectations in physical education. Pupils' achievement is good and they are currently making excellent progress through excellent specialist teaching. By Years 6 and 7 standards are in line with the agreed syllabus in religious education and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

5. The reason pupils' achievement is only satisfactory in mathematics is that the overall quality of teaching is only satisfactory. Pupils are taught in ability sets in mathematics. This works well for pupils with lower attainment in mathematics, including those with special educational needs, because work is well matched to these pupils' needs. However, teaching does not always provide enough challenge for average- and higher-attaining pupils in higher sets. Consequently, the proportion reaching higher levels by Years 6 and 7 remains modest.
6. In Year 4, a significant minority enter the school with low and very low attainment in reading and writing. These pupils make satisfactory progress but systems for hearing them read need more rigour to enable these pupils to catch up quickly so they can more easily access their junior and secondary education.
7. Overall, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils supported by the Special Support Centre make very good progress in respect of the targets identified in their Statements and individual education plans. They achieve very well in literacy and numeracy and gain in general confidence. All take the opportunities offered to participate in school and class activities, where they are very well supported. In the rest of the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in mathematics, science and ICT. Good progress also occurs for those pupils with organisational, co-ordination, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, pupils with literacy learning difficulties only make satisfactory progress. They achieve well during specialist lessons but sometimes the class shared text is too hard in literacy lessons and systems for hearing pupils read are only satisfactory.
8. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and, overall, are beginning to achieve satisfactorily. There are satisfactory opportunities in English, art and design and sport. Their achievement in science is also satisfactory in Years 4 to 6. However, it is not good enough in mathematics in Years 4 to 7 or in science in Year 7 because of a lack of challenging work.
9. Since the previous inspection, there has been good overall improvement in standards. However, standards in mathematics in Years 4 to 7 and in science in Year 7 have not shown the same rate of improvement as in English in Years 4 to 7 or in science in Years 4 to 6. There has been good improvement in standards in ICT and its use across the curriculum, as pupils' achievement was previously unsatisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement in standards in religious education. There is still work to be done to improve standards in mathematics throughout the school and in Year 7 science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very high expectations of behaviour.
- Provision for pupils' for moral and social development is very good.
- The school has very good procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality.
- The school is successful in developing a happy and harmonious community.

Commentary

10. Attendance levels are similar to those reported at the last inspection. However, during the years following that inspection, attendance dipped significantly. The school has been very successful in reversing this trend and in reducing unauthorised absence. The improvement in attendance has had a positive impact on standards in the school and is also a reflection of how much pupils enjoy coming to school. The pupil data officer has very effective systems in place to monitor absences, contact parents and follow up any concerns. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates. As a result, there is very little unauthorised absence. Parents do remove their children for holidays during term time, though the school discourages this practice, and this has an impact on attendance figures. For example, during the last reporting period, the school would have achieved its target attendance rate of 95 per cent had it not been for holidays taken in term time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.2
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. Evidence from the last inspection and comments from parents indicate that much needed to be done to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Over the last three years this has been a priority for the school and has been achieved with considerable success, creating a safe and happy learning environment.
12. Pupils' attitudes to learning and to school in general are now good. Almost all the parents, who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children like coming to school, and this was confirmed by the pupils themselves in their own questionnaire and in discussion. In general, pupils are interested in their work and try hard to complete what they have been asked to do. Their keenness in school is further shown in the high numbers that take part in extra-curricular activities.
13. Pupils are proud of their school, polite and confident with adults, and happy to talk about their work and school life. They willingly take on responsibilities offered to them, such as becoming house captains, playground buddies or as class monitors. Their views are listened to and taken account of through representative junior governors.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are equally valued and they thrive as a result. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Special Support Centre, are full members of every class. As a result, they grow in confidence and self-esteem and enjoy class-work and the working partnerships they make.
15. Behaviour in classes, in assemblies, at lunch-times and around school is good. Pupils get on well together with little bullying or racism. Staff work effectively as a team to provide good role models and to bring out the best in pupils. All adults consistently expect pupils to respect a clear code of conduct and to show consideration for others. As a result, pupils have a good idea of right and wrong and how they are expected to behave. Fixed period exclusions involving eleven pupils and one permanent exclusion, most of whom were boys from the 'White British' category, have been used carefully and appropriately to demonstrate the school's low tolerance of unacceptable behaviour. The school has very good procedures for supporting pupils with emotional and behavioural problems and managing their behaviour. This leads to a calm atmosphere for learning in the majority of lessons and raises self-esteem

of pupils. Parents are very pleased with how incidents of bad behaviour and bullying are dealt with and how provision has greatly improved in the last three years.

16. School life, how it is structured and its expectations, provides a very good base for pupils' personal development. At the time of the last inspection the provision for spiritual, moral and social development was satisfactory. Very good improvement, particularly in the areas of social and moral development, has been made. Well-planned whole-school and year group assemblies, along with thoughts for the day, provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on many important spiritual and moral views. The school continually recognises and celebrates achievement, so helping pupils to feel good about themselves and others. Religious education lessons give pupils some insight into different beliefs and the cultures often associated with them. Lessons in history and geography give some insight into cultures past and present. Through a well structured programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship, pupils discuss important ideas relevant to both their own and society's well-being. A wide range of visits and very good extra-curricular activities, including residential trips and excellent sporting opportunities, provide further opportunities for enhancing pupils' personal development.

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	450	24	1
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	84	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. It is good in Years 4 to 6 and satisfactory in Year 7. There is much good teaching and the school provides an interesting and relevant curriculum for its pupils in Years 4 to 6. These are both satisfactory in Year 7. The very good care and guidance of pupils and good links with parents provide secure foundations for pupils' learning. Accommodation is good, whilst resources are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is good in Years 4 to 6 and satisfactory in Year 7. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and very good teaching in Years 4 to 6 is beginning to raise standards.
- The specialist teaching of physical education and music is very strong.
- Teaching in science in Years 4 to 6 is exciting and relevant because teachers are very well prepared for teaching their science topics.
- Teachers do not use ability groups in their mathematics sets well enough.
- The frequency of hearing lower-attaining pupils read, especially in Year 4, is only satisfactory.
- Teaching styles in Year 7 science focus too much on instruction.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 75 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (3%)	17 (23 %)	32 (43 %)	23 (30%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

17. Since the headteacher was appointed three years ago, much attention has been given to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The programmes for improving subject training and the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, senior management team and subject leaders are all having a significant impact on improving teaching. Subject leaders in English, ICT, physical education and music in Years 4 to 7 and in science in Years 4 to 6 set very good examples to the rest of the staff by their own high quality teaching and leadership. In these subjects, planning is rigorous and provides very effective support for teachers in their teaching. The use of subject workshops, prior to the teaching of aspects of subjects, is a most effective way of providing teachers with the depth of knowledge they need. Some high quality work in art and design was seen throughout the school, and particularly in Year 7, as a result of this training for staff.
18. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the overall quality of teaching. There is now much more good or better teaching and a smaller proportion that is unsatisfactory. There are particularly good improvements in Years 4 and 5 in the management of pupils' behaviour. The weaknesses in the teaching of ICT and religious education have also been successfully addressed. However, the quality of teaching in Year 7 is now satisfactory whereas it was good at the time of the previous inspection.
19. Teaching across the school has a number of strengths, including teachers' very good relationships with pupils and their very good organisation and management of pupils. Partnerships with teachers and support assistants for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the special support centre, are very good. Throughout the school teachers use homework effectively as a tool for raising standards and working closely with parents. Parents are pleased with homework and the way that teaching is addressing pupils' learning needs. In many lessons, there is good use of new technology such as interactive whiteboards and class computers, including laptops, as natural and effective tools for learning. ICT teaching is now good, although class computers are not being used as consistently in mathematics lessons as in English and science.
20. Teaching and learning in English in Years 4 to 7 are mainly good. The quality of teaching in the Literacy Hours is often at least good with very good features. Teachers provide very interesting contexts and structure skills over a period of lessons before pupils write extended

pieces of work. In Year 6, role-play in drama was used very effectively to underpin pupils' thinking and speaking skills before writing. Good and very good lessons were seen in unsettled and settled lessons. Nevertheless, in unsettled lessons, there is not always enough support for lower-attaining pupils in the small steps in their reading, particularly for younger pupils. The shared text for these pupils is not as well matched to their needs as for other ability groups. In unsettled classes teachers have the difficult task of meeting the needs of a very wide range of prior attainment. The school, aware of the need to raise reading standards more rapidly for lower-attaining pupils, is providing extra guided reading sessions for all pupils. However, the frequency and quality of this provision is only satisfactory for lower-attaining pupils, especially in Year 4. Closer tracking of pupils' mastery of key words and phonics is needed by some class teachers. There are satisfactory systems for home/school reading, although, occasionally, pupils' home/school reading books are too hard or too easy. There are no specific home/school reading records in Year 4, although there are good homework diaries throughout the school.

21. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory in Years 4 to 7. A half of all lessons were good in mathematics, with some good or very good teaching seen in all year groups. However, teaching is not consistently good in any year group. This is limiting its power to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement. Teaching is often good or very good for lower-attaining sets because of the way teachers match pupils' work carefully to their needs and provide stimulating contexts for learning. However, in middle and upper sets, there is not enough use of ability groups. This causes a loss of rigour and pace for higher-attaining pupils. In one unsatisfactory lesson for a potentially higher-attaining set, pupils were taught too much to the average when they could have achieved more. Teachers' subject knowledge is variable in mathematics and not as consistently good as in English and in science.
22. The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Very good work is carried out in the Special Support Centre and in classroom settings for pupils with severe language difficulties. Together with the speech and language therapist, teachers and assistants provide sensitive and highly relevant support for pupils experiencing language difficulties. The teamwork demonstrated by the support staff is of the highest quality and represents very good linkages between the education and health professionals involved. The sensitivity and target setting undertaken by class teachers is usually of a good quality and contributes well to the very good progress these pupils make. In the rest of the school specialist support assistants provide good support for pupils across the full range of special educational needs. They are given clear and specific individual educational plans which provide good learning targets. The school, sensibly, assigns one special educational needs teacher to each year. Where these specialists have the opportunity to teach with the classroom teacher, there is a better match of work and more involvement on the part of pupils with learning difficulties. Special needs assistants provide good support to pupils with special educational needs within classrooms. This support is characterised by attention to individual targets and, normally, good planning by teachers that links classroom work closely to pupils' levels of attainment.
23. Assessment procedures are good overall. Good assessment procedures in English and science are enabling teachers to build an understanding of pupils' performance. This is being used to improve teaching and learning in order to improve achievement. Assessment procedures in mathematics are satisfactory and are used to track individual performance. However, in mathematics this information is not being used effectively enough by teachers to adjust the next stage of their planning to ensure that the level of challenge is right for individual pupils, especially in the higher ability sets in Year 6 and Year 7. Throughout all subjects there is high quality marking which provides very good feedback to pupils. Both pupils and parents are pleased with the quality of this feedback because it helps pupils to improve. Pupils are very aware of their targets for improvement.

The curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision is good. The teaching programme is well planned and there are very good opportunities for pupils to learn outside the school day, which stimulate pupils' commitment to learning and achievement. The accommodation and staffing are good. Resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed its curriculum well since the last inspection and this is having a positive impact on raising standards.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for pupils to participate in sport are excellent.
- There is some high quality provision for pupils to develop their artistic, creative, practical and sporting skills and talents.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good
- A good range of both teaching and support staff supports the curriculum and accommodation is good.
- Resources are satisfactory overall but limited for structured reading books for lower-attaining pupils and library books for science research and history.

Commentary

24. The curriculum has been significantly strengthened since the last inspection. It meets all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education. Senior management and subject co-ordinators have carried out a thorough review of the curriculum over the last three years and introduced good schemes of work, which are regularly reviewed. Major improvements have been achieved in the teaching of English, science, ICT, physical education and religious education through improved planning and staff development. Areas for development are identified in clear plans of action, which reflect the school's desire to raise standards further. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing its key issues. These related to the need to improve curriculum planning and to ensure statutory requirements are met for religious education and collective worship. There has been rapid progress in recent years.
25. The curriculum is broad. Senior management has ensured that the curriculum provided has been enriched in recent years. It is now broad, with rich provision for pupils to develop their artistic, creative, practical and sporting skills and talents in addition to their academic skills. Art and design are very strong features in the curriculum and are used very well for enhancing other subjects, for example, design and technology from Years 4 to 7. Art has also been used effectively to improve the visual learning environment through attractive displays of pupils' work and achievements. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are developed well in other subjects and are particularly good in history throughout the school and science in Years 4 to 6.
26. There is good provision for personal, social and health education together with the development of citizenship. Through a well-planned programme, the school is successful in raising pupils' self-esteem, which is having a positive impact on their learning. There are effective policies for sex and relationships education with the effects of drugs and alcohol misuse being taught in Year 7. A very strong feature of the provision is the encouragement of pupils to voice their opinions through the junior governors and through class discussions. Pupils are consulted well and the staff and governors of the school act upon these consultations.
27. The good range of visits and visitors to the school makes a significant contribution to the whole curriculum. Examples of visits include historical sites, the immediate locality and geographical field trips as well as places of worship. Visitors extend pupils' understanding of history, music and art and the school provides exciting first-hand experiences such as dressing-up for a day as Victorians and regular drama performances. There is excellent provision for sport, with pupils highly involved in an extensive programme of competitions with other schools. These,

together with a very wide range of extra-curricular activities including the arts, computers, chess, cribbage, dance, drama and choir, provide good enrichment to the whole curriculum.

28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Through well-planned support, they are helped to acquire the skills necessary to access the full curriculum. There is very good provision for pupils in the Special Support Centre, which enables them to be fully included in the life of the school. They all receive the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers. The Special Support Centre provides very good classes for addressing the development of language.
29. There is a good range of well-qualified teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a strong ethos of supportive professional development for all staff, which has a positive impact on both the quality of staff and recruitment. The school's internal and external accommodation is good and helps to create a very positive learning environment. There is a large hall, a very good library and well-used specialist teaching areas for music, ICT, science, and food technology. The outside areas are well planned, with an adventure playground, good playground space and an extensive shared sports field. Resources are satisfactory, overall, but reference and reading books are limited in the library and classrooms. There are too few structured reading books for teachers to use for guided and home reading for lower-attaining pupils in Year 4 onwards and resources for history research are also limited.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring are good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures for child protection and health and safety.
- All staff know pupils very well and pupils have a very great deal of trust in them.
- Support for pupils with behavioural problems is very good.
- Pupils' ideas and suggestions are listened to and acted upon when possible.
- Pupils new to the school settle well.

Commentary

30. Child protection has a very high priority in the school and this area has strengthened from the good levels seen at the last inspection. A governor with specific training in child protection matters has played an important role in developing the school's procedures. The special educational needs co-ordinator is the main designated person for child protection, with the headteacher also having responsibility.
31. Health and safety arrangements are also now very good and all the points raised at the last inspection have been dealt with. The site manager, who is also a governor, plays a very important role in ensuring the buildings and grounds are safe and also clean and attractive. Governors are involved in annual risk assessments and the local authority also carries out regular checks. There are very good systems to ensure pupils who have specific medical needs are known by all staff and detailed records are kept of any accidents or illnesses and what treatment, if any, was given.
32. All adults in the school, including non-teaching staff, are very caring towards the pupils and provide good levels of support for them. The school's behaviour policy is well understood by all pupils, including those who have challenging behaviour. Pupils have targets for literacy, numeracy and their approach to school. As a result of the very high levels of interest and

respect that adults show to pupils, pupils have a very trusting relationship with them. Pupils are confident that any worries would be listened to and acted upon.

33. Pupils are regularly consulted via questionnaires and also through the junior governors, a large group of pupils made up of representatives from each class. The junior governors meet regularly to discuss issues such as how to improve the environment. The pupils are confident that their ideas are taken seriously. Consultation of pupils has had a very positive effect on their confidence and self-esteem.
34. Overall, there are good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress. These are good in English and science but only satisfactory in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs have good plans, which link well to the additional needs identified. Their success in achieving their targets is well monitored by the special needs co-ordinator. Although the recording and monitoring are good, action based upon lack of progress does not always ensure immediate improvement. This is particularly the case with a few pupils in literacy who are not receiving specific specialist help. Pupils with significant language difficulties have very good plans, which link well to their language and social needs. The review of targets is regular and detailed.
35. The school has good induction arrangements for those who join in Year 4 and also for the pupils who start at other times. A recent survey showed extremely high levels of parental satisfaction about how induction is handled. There are several visits for the new intake and they are also invited to social occasions such as a summer term disco. If pupils come other than at the start of the year, they can visit beforehand with their parents and are given a "buddy" to look after them until they feel settled. As a result, pupils spoken to and observed during the inspection had slipped easily into school life.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. There are good links with the community and satisfactory links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are now much more involved in their children's learning.
- Parents have very positive views of the school and are regularly consulted.
- The governors' annual report to parents gives a large amount of information.
- Links with the community are mutually beneficial and have improved in recent years.

Commentary

36. One of the key issues at the last inspection was to develop ways to get more parents involved and the school has been very successful in doing so over the last three years. The headteacher and deputies are very accessible to parents. Parents have also been successfully encouraged to play a greater part in their children's education through the Parent Partnership Group workshops run by the school where parents can experience how different subjects are taught. Parents are very appreciative of this type of support and feel more confident in their abilities to assist their children at home. The school ensures that parents feel in partnership with the school through the use of regular questionnaires and through staff support for the Parent, Teacher and Friends' Association, which has recently been re-established. Parents also volunteer to run clubs such as cookery and several help out in class on a regular basis, which enhances the sense of community and partnership.
37. Parents have very positive views of the school. However, a very small number felt they could be better informed about their child's progress and some also felt that homework wasn't always appropriate. The evidence from the inspection is that homework is good overall and is used well to support work done in class. The annual progress reports that parents receive, whilst satisfactory, could give more information about year-on-year progress. They do not use National Curriculum levels and the information about targets is inconsistent.

38. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appreciative of the work carried out and the progress made. Parents of pupils with complex language difficulties participate well in their children's education and are very appreciative of the skilled support they receive. There are very good working links with the local authority support services, speech and language therapy services and local schools, which assists in the smooth transfer of pupils.
39. Information for parents about the work of the school and their children's progress is satisfactory. The school prospectus is an attractive and informative document, though it does not include a statement on the parents' right to withdraw their children from religious education or contain enough information about the school's policy for pupils with special educational needs.
40. The school is part of a local family group of schools and the headteacher is currently the chairman of this group; as a result, some joint initiatives have taken place. Pupils join from several first schools, with the majority coming from the adjoining one, and most transfer on to one local high school. Links with this school have meant pupils have benefited from the use of more specialist equipment and have been involved in some sporting activities.
41. The school premises are used fully by the local community, with clubs such as karate using the hall and football teams using the playing field. The local community also supports the work of the school, especially through close ties with a local church that runs a breakfast club several mornings a week. This church has also established a group to help pupils prepare for transition from the first school and to the high school, the Fuse Club, which has been very supportive and much appreciated by those involved. The school makes use of the local area and several local sporting groups have been involved in coaching. This has done much to improve the school's reputation in the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for improving the school and very good management systems to make improvements happen. The leadership provided by the deputies is very good whilst those provided by other senior staff and subject co-ordinators are good. The governance of the school is very good. The chair of governors provides very good leadership and works very closely with the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strategic leadership for all-round school development is excellent.
- The headteacher, in close partnership with his deputies, has engendered a common purpose in all staff for improving pupils' achievement.
- Governors have a very good range of expertise and hold the school effectively to account for the standards it achieves.
- The use of assessment data to set targets for raising the achievement of groups of pupils is not yet used as a rigorous tool in the school improvement process.

Commentary

42. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is responsible for the very clear sense of direction for improving the school. He has worked hard and effectively to raise attainment over the last three years, after a period of decline. There have been significant changes to teaching staff in the last three years although staffing has been stable for the past two years. The headteacher has engendered a strong will to improve in all staff and provided very good management systems to make improvements happen. All the staff now share the same sense of purpose and direction that is focused on school improvement and raising achievement.

43. The school has two deputies, who both teach the same class part-time in a job-share arrangement. This is a creative solution to enable one deputy to be constantly available to assist the headteacher with management duties. This also puts into practice the belief of the headteacher, senior managers and governors that improving teaching and learning are at the heart of the school improvement process. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators lead by example, often setting very good examples by their own standards of teaching. Performance management has been used very well to identify strengths and to address any weaknesses. Senior managers arrange effective in-service training based on the needs of individuals and the requirements of the school improvement plan. The very strong commitment to staff development through modelling, monitoring and training has been effective in increasing the amount of good and very good teaching. The school was awarded Investors in People status within a year of the headteacher's appointment to the school.
44. There was much to be done to improve the school when the headteacher arrived in January 2001 and improvements to behaviour, curriculum, teaching and learning, the accommodation and learning environments were seen as necessities in order to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement. Since then there has been what the school describes as a "a journey of school improvement" involving all staff. Parents are delighted with the improvements made in the last three years, especially the improvement in ethos, their children's behaviour and attitudes to school and improved standards. Standards are now improving in many subjects, although mathematics provision is not as strong as that in English and science. The two deputy headteachers provide very good support to the headteacher in his drive to raise standards and implement his vision for 'all round' development of pupils.
45. The school recognises that "the journey of school improvement" is not over and the school improvement plan is a working document used by the staff and the governors. Procedures for producing the school's improvement plan involve all staff and governors. The document shows very good strategic oversight of key priorities for improving the school. This also shows that the school has used time very effectively for tackling the large amount to be done. Teachers have now been given numerical targets for raising standards in their classes but this information is not yet being used in the otherwise very good systems for monitoring and evaluating actions to improve achievement. The school administers its own tests in Year 4 to establish baseline assessments on entry. However, the recording of pupils' achievements up to this time, in first schools, is very patchy. A barrier to the school's tracking and analysis of pupils' achievement over time is that first schools do not always supply details of pupils' prior attainments in Year 2 national tests and in Year 3, despite repeated requests from the school.
46. Special needs provision is well led. The special educational needs co-ordinator helps all staff to develop targets and programmes for this group of pupils. There is an effective link from the governing body to the special educational needs co-ordinator. Training has been good for all involved and the co-ordinator ensures that all support staff have opportunities to pursue their own professional development. Teaching assistants, in particular, value the guidance and support they receive from the special educational needs co-ordinator and head of the Special Support Centre. Both of these senior managers are very good role models as teachers.
47. Leadership and management of the Special Support Centre is very good. The leader has established relevant priorities for its development and works very well as a team member within the base, providing staff management skills of a high order. In this she is well supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and senior managers. All senior staff have a very clear and practical vision for the centre and this enhances the school's very strong inclusive philosophy. The impact of this can be seen throughout the school in how well pupils from the centre are integrated, supported and learn when included in mainstream lessons.

48. The governors have a very good understanding of the work of the school and standards it achieves and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable and provides much support and challenge to the school. Her leadership is very good and the governing body is very well organised. She works closely with the headteacher in monitoring the school's priorities, reporting regularly to the governing body. Governors bring a good range of expertise to the school and successfully manage change in the school and in the composition of the governing body. All the committees have clearly defined terms of reference. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties except that there are omissions in the information provided for parents in annual report to parents. These are:
- information about the success of the school's policy for pupils with special educational needs;
 - information about school security;
 - arrangements for admission of pupils with disabilities and accessibility for them;
 - targets for the proportions to reach Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics.
49. The school's budget is very well managed. Forward planning is very good and the programme of spending is carefully linked to the school improvement plan. Governors monitor the school's budget very closely and the school uses specific grants well for their purposes. The principles of best value are carefully applied. The school is constantly seeking to attain value for money for its purchases. However, the lack of rigour in the use of numerical targets weakens the school's drive to do this. Funds identified for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately and the school adds to this budget, allowing a good level of teaching and special assistant support throughout the school. Spending for pupils with special educational needs is very well used for those pupils in the Special Support Unit. Overall, it is well spent for pupils in the main school, although, sometimes, the special needs co-ordinator and special needs teachers' time is used for teaching smaller groups when more pupils could benefit. When the headteacher and chair of governors joined the school the budget was overspent. Budgeting is now prudent and the contingency fund is appropriate. There have been very good improvements to leadership and management since the last inspection.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,396,884
Total expenditure	1,398,871
Expenditure per pupil	2,538

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	48,837
Balance carried forward to the next	46,850

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is much good and very good teaching of the Literacy Hour throughout the school.
- From a low base on entry to the school, standards have risen by Years 6 and 7 to average and, overall, pupils achieve well.
- Cross-curricular links are good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Speaking skills are less well developed than listening skills.
- The frequency of hearing the reading of pupils who enter with lower attainment in literacy, in Year 4, is only satisfactory.

Commentary

50. Standards at the end of Years 6 and 7 are now average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Standards have risen since the last inspection as then standards in national tests were well below national averages. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards in 2004 national tests showed significant improvement compared with the standards that pupils reached in 2003. Inspection shows continuing improvement and pupils' overall achievement is now good in relation to their below average attainment on entry. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and more capable pupils, achieve well. However, lower-attaining pupils are making only satisfactory progress in reading in Year 4. Considering a significant proportion enter Year 4 with below average standards in literacy, satisfactory progress is not enough to raise standards rapidly for the pupils who enter with lower or 'borderline' standards in reading.
51. By Years 6 and 7, speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Pupils listen carefully to what teachers and other adults have to say and pay close attention to the contributions of their classmates. As a result, they understand the information and know what they have to do. Speaking is weaker and some pupils struggle to find the right words. Pupils develop their speaking skills well in science in Years 4 to 6 through much practical work in small groups and, in English, through drama and role-play. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas clearly or to develop their use of subject vocabulary through discussion in small groups; this is especially so in mathematics and ICT in Years 4 to 7 and in science in Year 7.
52. Most pupils enjoy reading and the library is well used. By Years 6 and 7, the majority of pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction confidently for information, instruction and for pleasure. However, a significant minority of pupils still have low standards in reading. Guided reading opportunities are well organised and enhance provision in reading for most pupils. However, support for the significant minority who enter the school with below average reading skills, although satisfactory, is not rigorous enough to quickly raise standards. Throughout the school, pupils receiving support from the special needs teachers achieve well and those in the unit achieve very well. In Year 4 pupils' home/school reading books are occasionally too hard and there are not enough structured reading books with repeating word patterns.

Teachers do not always keep a close enough check that all pupils have mastered the key words and have a thorough grasp of phonics.

53. By Years 6 and 7, pupils often write grammatically for a good range of purposes. By Year 7 pupils can often write extended pieces in a lively style that engages readers. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write in a wide variety of contexts. Good attention is paid to developing grammatical skills and handwriting but some weaknesses persist in spelling because it is not always emphasised during writing. There are good cross-curricular links as teachers pay careful attention to developing pupils' writing skills, for example in history and science. These opportunities make sure that pupils are challenged well, write at length and make good progress as a result.
54. The quality of teaching is good overall, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There is much good and very good teaching during the Literacy Hour in Years 4 to 7. Additionally, the extra guided reading and handwriting sessions are helping to raise standards. In Year 6, setting arrangements are helping teachers successfully to meet the wide range of pupils' prior attainment. Where support is available, teachers and assistants support those pupils with special educational needs well. However, in other years, in mixed ability classes, the text that is shared with the whole class is sometimes hard for lower-attaining pupils. Teachers often have high expectations and are secure in their knowledge of the best way to teach the Literacy Hour. Skilful questioning consolidates and extends the pupils' learning, as it did in a very good Year 4 lesson when a teacher was observed leading pupils to appreciate the importance of a good beginning to their stories. The teachers manage pupils very well and this has a positive effect on the quality and quantity of work produced. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.
55. In all the Year 6 lessons observed, development of speaking and thinking, through drama, underpinned pupils' reading and writing when they created stories from the point of view of a cat. The very steady build up of skills over a period of time, the use of a text which interested pupils and very good opportunities to share ideas in groups led to pupils achieving well throughout. In the lowest set very good teaching by the teacher and the support teachers for pupils with statements and a pupil from the Special Support Unit led to all pupils learning rapidly. In this lesson there was a very good match of work to pupils' needs.
56. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable because she makes a point of keeping up to date. She provides strong leadership. Targets are set for individual pupils, which are shared with them so that they know what they have to do to improve their work. However, more careful organisation and monitoring of reading provision for lower-attaining pupils is needed, especially in Year 4, given the pupils' below average attainment on entry.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in language and literacy in different subjects. In history, for example, pupils research the life of people in ancient Greece and then organise the stories of Greek mythology into a well-presented piece of extended writing. Such activity boosts progress in history and improves standards of English.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond keenly to the many oral activities, which help to develop their listening skills well.
- Teaching provides a lively mixture of tasks and games, which make learning fun and effective.
- While book and ICT resources are good, videos and recordings of original speakers are limited.

Commentary

58. In Year 7 pupils attain standards which are in line with those expected and all achieve satisfactorily. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of a range of spoken vocabulary and are beginning to speak with confidence on an initial range of subjects, such as greetings, their names and ages. The standards of attainment have been maintained satisfactorily since the last inspection and improvements in teaching and assessments are promoting pupils' progress.
59. Pupils in Year 7 show a willingness to answer and ask questions and have a satisfactory command of basic vocabulary. They maintain good levels of concentration and apply themselves well to the tasks set for them in class and as homework. The amount of written activities is appropriately limited as pupils concentrate on oral activities in the early stages of learning. However, they use course books well to help them reinforce their learning of vocabulary such as numbers.
60. Teaching was satisfactory in all lessons observed. There is a strong emphasis on speaking and listening and there is good use of games and puzzles to hold pupils' attention and stimulate the pace of learning. Where written material is introduced, it is closely linked to the topics covered in oral work and is well reinforced by classroom displays. Opportunities for pupils to hear native speakers from tapes or video are limited but teachers' pronunciation and subject knowledge are generally good. Pupils do not always have enough chances to repeat phrases in each lesson to gain familiarity and confidence with all the sentences covered. In other respects, learning is good and pupils take a lively interest in developing their understanding of language as well as French life and culture presented in lessons. This provides a good preparation for the annual visit to France, which many Year 7 pupils enjoy.
61. The subject is soundly led and managed by an enthusiastic subject leader, who also teaches Year 7 classes. The systems for assessment are satisfactory and are used to monitor pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving but are below average by Years 6 and 7.
- Good use is made of mathematics in other subjects.
- There is good provision for homework and parents are encouraged to support their children's work.
- Assessment and planning are not always sufficiently focused on individual pupils and improving their progress.
- There is some good teaching in every year but this is not consistent across all classes.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT in numeracy lessons.

Commentary

62. Standards by both Year 6 and Year 7 are below average. The proportions of Year 6 pupils achieving average and above average standards in national tests have shown some improvement in recent years. From generally below average attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress due to well-matched work and the focused support they receive. The school's arrangements for teaching pupils in ability sets is having a positive impact on the achievement of lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. These pupils are achieving well through predominantly good teaching. However, the

achievement of average and higher-attaining pupils is only satisfactory, and unsatisfactory for gifted and talented pupils. A major reason is that procedures for teaching pupils in ability groups, within sets, are not systematic throughout each year group. This prevents teachers providing a consistent challenge for the range of ability in each set and particularly affects average- and higher-attaining pupils. Teaching for these sets is generally satisfactory with some weaker aspects.

63. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Further improvement has been hindered by the lack of rigorous use of assessment for clearly identifying individual pupils' progress in providing the right level of work. The school has recognised that problem solving is a weaker area and is now focusing on this. The results of national and other optional testing are now used to check pupils' progress year on year. They also inform setting arrangements and are used to set targets for teachers but are not yet being used sufficiently to identify where and why underachievement occurs. Teachers' ongoing assessment records also indicate that, although areas of the subject have been covered, pupils have nevertheless not always understood the concepts being taught, indicating weaknesses in past teaching.
64. Teaching and learning are, overall, satisfactory, as at the last inspection. A half of all lessons seen were good or very good. However, the quality of teaching is not consistently good in any year group. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory; one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. Strengths include clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of lessons. Pupils are well managed and established relationships help to ensure good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils listen well and, in better lessons, are more fully involved in explaining answers. In good and very good lessons teachers assess the impact of their teaching on how well the pupils are understanding and adjust their teaching to meet pupils' individual learning needs. Work is generally well presented. This helps to ensure greater accuracy in calculation. A significant proportion of good and very good teaching was seen in lower sets and in some Year 4 classes. In these lessons expectations for pupils were high throughout and pupils were always provided with the right steps in their learning to help them achieve well, including those with special educational needs.
65. Teachers are starting to make effective use of interactive whiteboards for presenting lessons but very little use of computers was observed in numeracy lessons to support pupils' learning. Homework is now regularly set to reinforce classroom learning and is followed up in class.
66. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Homework is being monitored to check its content and completion. Evenings have been held for parents to show how the subject is now organised and taught so that they can give greater encouragement and support to their children. Monitoring of lessons and planning has been carried out but it has not yet had enough impact in providing consistently good quality teaching across each year group. The National Numeracy Strategy is now fully in place. Teachers are following published plans linked to it but do not always use the National Curriculum to check on the levels pupils are achieving. This restricts teachers' ability to keep their eye on the proportions reaching different levels in order to raise achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Pupils have good opportunities to practise and develop their numeracy skills, particularly in ICT, science and design and technology. In ICT, skills of data handling and use of formulae are well developed. In science, pupils measure accurately, record carefully, construct a range of graphs, use spreadsheets, calculate averages (by Year 6), and search for patterns in their results. By Year 6, pupils interpret their mathematical results well in science as a result of skilled teaching.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good in Years 4 to 6.
- Investigative science is improving rapidly throughout Years 4 to 6.
- Planning in Years 4 to 6 is excellent and this helps teachers to perform well.
- Mathematics and ICT are used well in Years 4 to 6, which promotes scientific rigour.
- Investigative skills do not develop as well in Year 7 as in the rest of the school.

Commentary

68. Standards achieved in 2004 National Curriculum tests showed improvement compared with the well below average standards reached in previous years. In particular, standards rose significantly at Level 5. Inspection shows a continuing improving trend by Year 6 and standards are now average by Year 6. Throughout Years 4 to 6, pupils achieve well because there is much good teaching. The co-ordinator, in post for just over a year, provides a very clear direction for improving science and has a strong influence on the teaching in Years 4 to 6. The co-ordinator is teaching in Year 6 this year, having previously taught in Year 5 last year. However, the same co-ordinator does not yet manage Year 7 science and this restricts the continuity in approach. Pupils' achievement is only satisfactory in Year 7 and standards remain below average, as they were at the end of Year 6.
69. Throughout Years 4 to 6, pupils systematically learn and practise all aspects of investigative skills. Practical work underpins their learning of scientific knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Those pupils with severe language difficulties are very well provided for when taught in mainstream classes and achieve very well. Higher-attaining pupils often achieve well but achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for all higher-attaining pupils to learn at higher levels in investigative science, although opportunities for gifted pupils to acquire advanced knowledge and to apply this when reaching conclusions are not yet consistent in all classes throughout each year group. In Year 7, although some problem solving and investigative work occurs, it does not underpin pupils' learning in science so well as in Years 4 to 6. In Year 7 pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress because of specially adapted work and the sound support provided by classroom assistants. However, gifted and talented pupils make unsatisfactory progress because the work lacks challenge in scientific investigation.
70. By Year 6, pupils' investigative skills are above average. They successfully plan and conduct experiments and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are able to collect evidence through correct experimental procedures, for example, accurate fair testing, and they use mathematics well for collecting, recording and interpreting evidence. Many are achieving at Level 5 across much of investigative science. However, pupils' ability to predict and conclude on the basis of their scientific knowledge is not always yet as advanced as their experimental procedures. Pupils' scientific knowledge is average. Pupils' good achievement in science is due to the excellent curriculum that is now being followed through Years 4 to 6.
71. By Year 7, pupils' investigative skills and their knowledge are below average. When pupils carry out experiments they recognise the need for a fair test and the importance of accurate observations and recording. However, pupils do not take enough responsibility for their own work by suggesting ideas for their own experiments and how to improve their work. Evidence from last year's Year 7 work showed some opportunities for problem solving later in the year when pupils designed and made bridges to withstand heavy loads and also when they created an insulated container to keep drinks hot. However, investigative skills are slow to develop at

the beginning of the academic year because the curriculum does not systematically build these well enough.

72. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 4 to 6, they are good with very good features whilst satisfactory overall in Year 7. Throughout Years 4 to 6, teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have been very well prepared for teaching scientific knowledge through practical enquiry. The excellent planning, systematic across all year groups, shows opportunities for pupils of whole range of ability to achieve well and helps teachers to teach science. However, not all teachers yet keep their eye on the proportions reaching average and higher levels of the National Curriculum so they can promote even higher standards in their classes. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a very good system of assessment, which encompasses investigative science, although this has still to make a full impact. Teachers very successfully use the interactive whiteboards and specialist electronic equipment so pupils use ICT as an integral part of science. In Year 5, pupils learned how to use decibel meters to measure the impact of their ideas for muffling the sound of a ticking clock. This was very successfully followed up as a class by the rigorous searching for patterns in the pupils' mathematical results. In Year 7, classes are well managed, although the teaching and learning styles focus mainly on instruction, with fewer opportunities for pupils to learn through investigative work and managing their own learning. This weakens the school's drive to raise standards for all its pupils.
73. Subject leadership and management are good overall. They are very good in Years 4 to 6, although the lack of continuity in the curriculum, and subsequent teaching, in Year 7 is now affecting the overall rate of improvement in science. The Years 4 to 6 co-ordinator is very well qualified in science and this is reflected in the rigorous planning and vision for what pupils can achieve. The co-ordinator has planned teachers' work for Years 4 to 6, which is enabling other teachers to teach science successfully. Her monitoring of science, especially teaching and learning, is having a very good impact on improving the quality of learning. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good in Years 4 to 6 due to the rapid progress made in the last year. Investigative science is now above average by the end of Year 6. However, in Year 7, standards were average at the last inspection and pupils made good progress, so there has been a drop here.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in the teaching of the subject since the previous inspection.
- Developments are well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject leader.
- The methods and use of assessment are not fully developed across the school.

Commentary

74. Pupils attain average standards by Years 6 and 7 and achieve well. This includes those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and the areas of weakness noted at that time have been successfully addressed. Pupils' skills on entry to the school have been below those expected but they are now rising. Teachers are responding well to this and, under the guidance of the subject leader, regularly review how to raise standards. Teachers' knowledge and confidence have been improved through training and many are now making good use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' learning.

75. Teaching and learning are good. Nearly all staff are confident about using the computer suite and pupils benefit from weekly sessions of well-planned instruction in which they develop new skills. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of using ICT for communications, word processing and presentation. They make extensive use of computers for research from computer-based encyclopaedia and the Internet. Pupils' knowledge of control technology is good and they understand how computers can help in their learning and the wider world. Pupils work well together in undertaking joint projects.
76. The improvements made since the last inspection are testimony to good leadership and management. The subject is being well developed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable leader. She provides good leadership and is helping colleagues gain confidence with new equipment, such as the interactive whiteboards. Her management time is used well to monitor planning and liaise with the school's technician, who provides useful support for teachers. Teachers plan their lessons well from the good scheme of work. While there are computers available for use in class, these were not used regularly in mathematics lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good use of computers to aid their learning and demonstrate a good level of independence in the way they download and print their work. Procedures for assessment are being developed and the newly introduced system for pupils' self-assessment is very good but not yet fully used to monitor the exact skills which pupils have acquired. As a result, pupils' progress is not sufficiently well monitored across the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Pupils use ICT well to develop their literacy skills. They often create stories and newspaper articles and are good at presenting their research and ideas using multi-media. Pupils use the Internet to find information on history, science and art. They regularly use numeracy skills in data handling and presenting information in graphs but there was little evidence of pupils using ICT to assist their learning in mathematics lessons. Pupils use ICT well to help them learn and record their findings in science and, in music, they make very good use of a program to help them create their own compositions.

HUMANITIES

78. In humanities, only one lesson was seen in history and none were seen in geography due to the inspection timetable. Inspectors spoke to subject co-ordinators and to pupils and looked at pupils' work from the current and last academic year. It was not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in either of these subjects.
79. Examinations of pupils' work in **geography** indicate that pupils are given a sound range of experiences through Years 4 to 7. Teachers' planning indicates statutory requirements are met for covering the National Curriculum. Good use is made of visits, for example, to such places as Littlehampton and the River Adur to enable pupils to compare different environments. There is good evidence of writing being used effectively in geography.
80. Teaching in **history** is well organised to provide pupils with a full coverage of all the required elements of the subject. Pupils take an enthusiastic interest in aspects such as the contest for the throne in 1066. They develop satisfactory enquiry skills in researching for information in books and computer based resources. Teachers develop pupils' literacy and ICT skills effectively through the written tasks that they set for pupils. Pupils' learning is much stimulated by activities connected with their studies, such as visiting Bodiam Castle to understand the challenges of medieval life and spending a day in Victorian costume to appreciate some of the rigours of nineteenth century schooling. Resources are satisfactory overall but the quantity of video and ICT material is limited. The subject is currently led satisfactorily by an enthusiastic new co-ordinator, who has a good understanding of how teaching and learning can be improved.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved since the last inspection and pupils now attain average standards.
- The subject content of lessons is well researched.

Commentary

81. Standards in religious education by Year 6 and Year 7 are now in line with the locally agreed syllabus and show satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when they were below average. Improvements have been brought about by a review of the curriculum, better subject knowledge and more time being allocated to the subject.
82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are confident in the subject knowledge required to teach religious education. Classes are well managed. Established relationships result in good behaviour and generally positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are interested in the subject and understand the importance of finding out about others, what they believe and how they worship and celebrate. Where teaching is better, more exciting methods are used to enliven lessons. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson, pupils were 'hot seated' as Muhammad and had to answer questions about his thoughts on the care of animals. This helped to develop their understanding of stories from Islam and also provided good opportunities for speaking and listening. Past work shows that lessons often provide good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills. Where teaching has weaker aspects, too much time is spent on introductions and telling stories, often at the expense of discussion and time for further work. This did not ensure more capable pupils learned as fast as they could through their own research. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT. For example, some research different faiths using the Internet and CD-ROMs and virtual visits are made to different places of worship. There is sound use of literacy in religious education.
83. The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated. The scheme of work, based on the locally agreed syllabus, draws on national guidelines that provide further interest and support for teachers. As yet, there has been limited monitoring to improve the quality of teaching and learning and further raise standards. The subject improvement plan recognises the need to provide a greater range of visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. Some contact has recently been made with an Islamic centre and a practising Buddhist. This was a minor concern at the last inspection that has recently been acted upon.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. During the inspection, because of the timetable, few lessons were seen in art and design. None were seen in design and technology and only two in music. Therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement about provision and overall standards in these subjects. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to subject co-ordinators and to pupils and looked at pupils' work from the last academic year in design and technology and art and design. The inspection shows that the development of pupils' creative, aesthetic, practical and physical development is given a high profile throughout the school. The specialist teaching of music and physical education is having a very good impact on improving the quality of what is offered in these subjects.
85. In **art and design**, evidence from displays around the school shows that art has a high profile throughout the school and there are many examples of very good artwork. The National Curriculum is well covered, including three-dimensional work and textiles. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to develop good skills, to understand the work and techniques

used by other artists and to apply these in their own creative work. High standards were seen in Year 7 in pupils' dramatic paintings that followed studies of other artists' line and geometric shaped drawings. Very good work was also seen in three-dimensional sculptures when Year 7 pupils used a wide range of materials including 'modroc' and Year 5 pupils used wire and different papers for creating flowers. Year 6 pupils reached high standards when designing and making batik wall hangings after working with a visiting artist. During the inspection good teaching was seen in two Year 4 classes, when pupils learned about Picasso's famous line drawings and learned to apply some of the techniques he used to their own drawings. The curriculum is rich and very well co-ordinated. Teachers are very well prepared for teaching art topics. Workshops have been used very effectively to train staff prior to topics being taught. This has led to consistently high quality work across different classes in each year group. Art and design is often used very effectively to enhance other subjects, especially in design and technology textile work. In Year 6 pupils apply their art skills very well when designing and making slippers, using textures, colour and shape to enhance their end products. Year 7 pupils are currently creating fabric designs so they can use the fabrics when designing and making bags.

86. Art and design have also have been very successfully used to enhance the school's learning environment, to make the school more visually pleasing. In all classes, there is very well illustrated written work in English and other subjects. This brings the work to life.
87. In **design and technology** an exciting curriculum is followed and the subject is well led by a very keen and knowledgeable co-ordinator. Evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that an appropriate range of materials is covered in Years 4 to 7. There was evidence of high quality design work for Year 6 pupils when they designed and made slippers for different users. The quality of pupils' designing indicated some very knowledgeable teaching. Pupils' exploration of products, investigation of users' needs, setting of design criteria, modelling and the drawing of designs were all of a high quality. Pupils' practical skills were also very good and particularly good applications of art enhanced their end products. However, in this project pupils' evaluation of their end products was not as strong as the other aspects, suggesting evaluation was taught less rigorously than other aspects. For instance, there was no evidence that pupils tested and improved their products in order to meet their users' needs. Computer photographs of pupils' previous work indicate some strong subject knowledge amongst the staff. All evidence suggests mathematics and ICT are well used within design and technology. However, in Year 7, there are missed opportunities for linking design and technology with science when pupils study nutrition.
88. In **music** both of the Year 6 and Year 7 lessons seen were taught by the new music specialist. This specialist teaching is having a very good impact on the quality of provision. In the very good Year 7 lesson seen, pupils' keyboard skills improved considerably because of the teacher's insistence on following instructions as well as coaching them in how to change the style of their compositions. In the Year 6 lesson an excellent choice of music captured pupils' imagination and enabled them to understand some of the different types of musical arrangement. The teacher's strong subject knowledge was apparent in both lessons. The planning for these lessons was typical of the high quality and range of learning opportunities in music. The curriculum is enriched through extra-curricular activities such as the choir and recorder club. Visiting music teachers come to the school to teach a variety of instruments. Annual musicals are much enjoyed by staff, parents and pupils and provide an opportunity for pupils to refine their skills in music. Parents commented very favourably on the high quality of the musical productions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Excellent specialist teaching in Year 7 enables pupils to achieve above average standards.
- All pupils are now achieving at least well in the subject.
- Extra curricular provision is excellent and enhances learning opportunities for all pupils.

Commentary

89. Standards by Years 6 and 7, in those aspects of the subject seen, are above average. Over time, all pupils have achieved well but improved teaching is now enabling pupils to make excellent progress in Year 7.
90. The co-ordinator provides very effective leadership and management. He acts as a very good role model both for pupils and staff and has been instrumental in raising the profile of physical education in both this and other local schools. Continuing staff development has helped to improve the consistency and quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Key personnel have been nominated in each year group to give immediate oversight for the subject. Lesson plans have been prepared that give clear guidance and help to provide consistent teaching and learning. Lessons have been regularly observed and feedback given to teachers. Whole-school assessment procedures are being developed. Improved facilities and good resources contribute well to the success of the subject. Excellent extra-curricular provision for sport further enriches the curriculum. All of these initiatives have enabled the school to achieve the Activemark Gold Award. Along with raised standards and achievement they show that good improvement has been made since the last inspection.
91. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 4 to 6. Excellent lessons were seen in Year 7 where the co-ordinator takes all classes. The main strengths of lessons are the planning, organisation and management, and very high expectations. Planning provides clear learning objectives that are fully shared with pupils so that they know the purpose of lessons. The development of skills is carefully set out with opportunities to practise and combine them. Lessons are very well prepared so that no time is wasted and pupils achieve as much as possible. Classes are well managed; very good relationships ensure that pupils generally listen to instructions carefully and give of their best in response to teachers' very high expectations. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are a little too high and pupils need more time before moving on both to be reminded of the skills they have previously been taught and to practise them. Opportunities are given throughout lessons for pupils to observe each other with a view to improving their own performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

92. Only one lesson was seen in this subject and so no overall judgement can be made on provision.
93. The school has a strong commitment to personal, social and health education and citizenship and this is planned well across the curriculum, with good links to all National Curriculum subjects. There is an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has helped to establish and introduce a full, timetabled scheme of work. The policy for sex and relationships education provides appropriate guidance for all pupils. There is further provision for lessons warning against drugs and alcohol abuse. Older pupils are given responsibility for looking after younger pupils, for example through the developing playground buddy system. Meetings of the school's junior governors provide a forum where pupils' own voices can be heard and valued, providing an early insight into democracy. The school is strongly committed to listening to its pupils, who know that their opinions matter and that, as a result, changes can be made. Opportunities for pupils to work in teams, make joint decisions, take some responsibility for their learning and for problem solving are very good in science. Extra-curricular provision provides very good opportunities for 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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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