

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BACTON COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Bacton

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124816

Headteacher: Paul Calver

Lead inspector: David Page

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 268339

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 - 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	457
School address:	Wyverstone Road Bacton Stowmarket Suffolk
Postcode:	IP14 4LH
Telephone number:	(01449) 781 389
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Margaret Rose
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is bigger than other middle schools (457 pupils compared with the average size nationally of 391 pupils). The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (4.6 per cent) is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils at the school are white British. There are small numbers of Chinese pupils and pupils from other white backgrounds. There are no pupils learning in English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, (18.0 per cent, including those with statements) is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (2.4 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are small numbers of pupils on the autistic spectrum or who have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, speech or communication difficulties, or hearing impairment. There are no refugees or asylum-seekers. There is one traveller pupil and one pupil in public care. For the wards from which most pupils come, the percentage of adults in higher education is broadly in line with the national average, the percentage of higher social class households is broadly in line with the average, the percentage of minority ethnic children is well below the national average and the percentage of the overcrowded households is well below the national average. Overall, the school's intake displays some social advantage.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1028	David Page	Lead inspector	Special educational needs
9798	Vivienne Ashworth	Lay inspector	
27201	Clive Ashworth	Team inspector	English
30996	Anne Higginbotham	Team inspector	Mathematics Personal, social and health education
12356	Richard Dickason	Team inspector	Science
31096	John Thornhill	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship
19096	Sylvia McClean	Team inspector	Design and technology
20716	Reg Grogan	Team inspector	History Religious education
30215	Helen Feasey	Team inspector	Geography
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Physical education
13155	John Dixon	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
4697	Robin Black	Team inspector	Music
15940	Norman Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good, effective and improving school.** Pupils achieve well in their time at the school because teaching is good. Leadership by the headteacher is very good, and management provided by senior staff and governors is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the school's ethos are very good, and pupils' values and personal qualities are good. The value for money the school provides is good.

**The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- The headteacher's very good leadership has motivated and enabled senior managers to improve the school.
- All pupils achieve well, owing to good teaching.
- Assessment and marking are inconsistent and pupils sometimes do not know how well they are doing or how to improve.
- The school cares for its pupils very well.
- Behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is very good.
- Governors know the school well and hold it effectively to account.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to participate actively in lessons.
- The scheme of work for citizenship does not effectively support all areas of the subject.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection report. The weaknesses have been successfully dealt with. Good improvement has been made in pupils' attitudes, the curriculum, care and guidance and leadership, management and governance. Pupils' achievement, teaching and learning, and partnership with parents were previously good and satisfactory improvements have been made.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

**Overall, pupils' achievement is good.** On entry to Year 5, standards overall are above average now, although they were previously lower than this. Good teaching has led to standards at the end of Year 6 being above average. Standards seen in mathematics during the inspection were above average throughout the school due to improving teaching. In comparison with national averages, standards in Year 6 at the end of 2004 are considerably better than the previous year. This reflects the improving teaching. Standards in literacy are above the average and in numeracy are in line with the average throughout the school. Achievement during the inspection was good throughout the school due to good and improving teaching. Achievement is very good in English and history in Years 7 and 8, and throughout the school in art and design. Achievement in most other subjects inspected in depth was good but was satisfactory in science and information and communication technology in all years, in geography in Years 5 and 6 and in modern foreign languages in Year 6. Achievement of all pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or special educational need, is good.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Attendance is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, for social development it is good, and for spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.** Despite the use of assessment being inconsistent, teaching and learning have remained good, as in the last inspection report. However, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of good teaching. In the previous report, 66 per cent of teaching was good or better, and five per cent was unsatisfactory. The amount of good and better teaching has risen to 82 per cent and unsatisfactory teaching has fallen to one per cent. This is leading to good achievement throughout the school. Teachers use resources very well and insist on high standards of behaviour. The curriculum is good overall and opportunities for enrichment are good. Overall provision is very good in history. Provision in all other subjects inspected in depth is good with the exception of science, information and communication technology, geography, and modern foreign languages, where provision is satisfactory. The care for all pupils is very good and guidance and support are good. Partnerships with parents and links with the community are good; links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership is very good and management is good.** The headteacher's very good leadership has motivated and enabled senior managers to improve the school. Governance of the school is good. Governors know the school well and hold it effectively to account. A daily act of collective worship is not held for all pupils. All other statutory requirements are met. Financial management by the governors is very good.

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

Parents are very pleased with the school. They are particularly pleased that arrangements for children to settle in are good, their children like school, staff expect the children to work hard, teaching is good and that they feel comfortable about approaching school. A few parents were concerned that they were not well informed and that there was bullying at the school. The inspection found that parents were well informed and the small amount of bullying was effectively dealt with. Pupils were very pleased with most aspects of the school. They appreciate that they have to work hard, it is a good school to be at, the teaching is good, the school is well run and that the school is interested in their views. A significant number of pupils were concerned about bullying and the behaviour of other children. The inspection found that behaviour was very good.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- ensure the school's best practice in the use of assessment and marking to inform pupils of how well they are doing and how to improve is shared and applied consistently;
- ensure there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to participate actively in lessons;
- improve the effectiveness of the scheme of work for citizenship;

**and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- provide a daily act of collective worship.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising, due to improving teaching, and this is shown in the national test results for 2004.
- All pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or special educational needs, achieve well throughout the school.

##### Commentary

1. Achievement throughout the school is good, due to good and improving teaching. Recent improvements in teaching have led to the results in national examinations rising dramatically this year. The standards on entry to the school of Year 6 pupils in 2004 were lower than those of the current Year 5 pupils. By the end of Year 6 in 2004, results in English were well above the national average, in science were above the average and in mathematics were in line with the average. When compared to similar schools on the basis of the level of free school meals entitlement, results in English were well above the average, in science were average, and in mathematics were below the average. There is no statistically significant difference between the relative performances of boys and girls. In English and mathematics, the results in 2004 dramatically improved, with the preceding four years showing a downward trend compared to the national trends. In science, the trend in improvement has been slightly faster than the national trend. There is no statistically significant difference between the relative performance of higher-attaining pupils and their peers. The value added by the school, that is, the progress that the school helps pupils to make from the time they enter the school until the end of Year 6, is above the national and similar school averages.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (26.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.7 (25.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 119 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Overall, standards seen during the inspection were above the national expectation at the end of Year 6 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8. This still represents good achievement throughout the school, as standards on entry for the current Year 8 were lower than those for Year 6. In the subjects inspected in depth, standards seen at the inspection are, throughout the school, well above those expected in art and design and, in Years 7 and 8 in history. Standards are above those expected in English, mathematics, science and music, throughout the school and, in Years 7 and 8, in design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education. Standards in all other subjects and years are in line with the national expectation. Standards in literacy are above the average and in numeracy are average throughout the school. The standards of attainment of pupils with special educational needs tend to be lower than their peers as many of the special needs are related to literacy and numeracy. Due to effective in-class support from teachers and teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs are helped to achieve as well as their peers.



3. Achievement is good throughout the school for all pupils, regardless of gender, prior attainment, ethnicity or special educational need. Achievement is very good in art and design throughout the school and in English and history in Years 7 and 8. Achievement in most other subjects inspected in depth was good but was satisfactory in science and information technology in all years, in geography in Years 5 and 6 and in modern foreign languages in Year 6. Significant improvements have been made in teaching for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection. Pupils with a wide range of special educational needs now all achieve as well as their peers, due to good support from teachers and teaching assistants.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Behaviour and attitudes are generally very good in lessons and around the school.
- Attendance is good, and improving.

### **Commentary**

4. Pupils like their school very much, are proud of it and enjoy taking part in school life. In lessons they are keen to work hard and succeed. Behaviour in lessons is very good overall although in a small minority of lessons where teaching is less strong, behaviour is only satisfactory. The school sets very high expectations and the pupils know how to behave and show respect for their teachers. The behaviour policy is followed consistently and is working very well. It is sometimes necessary to exclude pupils but the school is working hard to reduce the number of exclusions. Good behaviour was observed when pupils were occasionally unsupervised, particularly along corridors. The lunchtime arrangements provide a pleasant social atmosphere where pupils behave appropriately and are adequately supervised. During the lunch break, the pupils played well outside in the playground and on the field. Observed behaviour getting on and off the school transport was also good. The pupils spoken to all agreed that any bullying or harassment is dealt with quickly and effectively by the staff and is not allowed to become a problem.
5. Pupils are polite and courteous towards adults and are encouraged to have good relationships with staff and their peers. They are happy to engage in conversation and articulate their views when invited to do so. Pupils are willing to take responsibility and enjoy the many tasks the class systems offer, together with responsibilities involving school activities such as the school production and raising money for charity. The Year 8 pupils are paired with Year 5 as reading partners, which the pupils enjoy and which helps to increase confidence and self-esteem. The school council provides very good opportunities for personal development and is regarded as a privilege by those who are elected.

### **Attendance**

6. Attendance figures were good during the last reported year, and are improving during this academic year. The school hopes to maintain this improvement and works hard to do so. Unfortunately parents continue to take children on holidays during term time, despite all the school's efforts. This absence does have an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Punctuality is good overall and lessons start on time. Very occasionally, problems with the school buses can affect punctuality at the start of the day.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/2004 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.3
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.*

### **Exclusions**

#### **Ethnic background of pupils**

#### **Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	460	13	1
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

7. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. The school promotes very good moral development and provision for spiritual and social education is good. Pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture but their appreciation of other cultures is limited.
8. The school's effective ethos ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are valued and promotes their self-esteem and respect for others, which encourages healthy spiritual development. Extra time has been allocated to religious education since the previous inspection. Many good opportunities are now provided for pupils to explore values and beliefs and reflect on questions of meaning and purpose in life. Good practice exists through aesthetic appreciation in art and design and exploring children's emotional development, as part of a technology project. The school does not observe a daily act of collective worship but the assemblies do include prayer and reflection.
9. The school is a highly moral community that prizes care, courtesy and consideration for others. Assemblies provide a very good platform for presenting the school's values, which are upheld in all subjects, many giving pupils the opportunity to discuss moral issues. Concern for others less fortunate than themselves is evident in the generous response from pupils to appeals for aid from charities.
10. Pupils develop their social skills well in nearly all subjects, through interaction in small groups. Teamwork is fostered particularly well in science, design and technology, physical education and music. A feature of work in technology is the Year 7 enterprise project, which encourages teamwork in setting up small businesses. All pupils have opportunity to take part in residential visits. The Year 5 residential visit to Hilltop Residential Centre makes a very good contribution

to younger pupils' social development. Year 8 pupils act as reading partners to Year 5 and show a responsible interest in their welfare. Pupils are also involved in the life of the school through their democratically elected council. Aspects of the citizenship curriculum are not sufficiently well defined to ensure pupils understand their rights and responsibilities as future citizens.

11. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture through the curriculum and the many extra-curricular opportunities in sport, music and drama. In religious education, art and design and design and technology, significant attention is paid to other cultures. Most subjects are more restricted in their provision for wider cultural development. Music places an emphasis on high culture but has a narrow range of world music. The French department organises a residential visit but little reference is made to the multicultural aspects of the French-speaking world. Citizenship does not devote enough time to issues of cultural diversity, to prepare pupils for living in modern, multicultural Britain.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good and all pupils achieve well.
- Too few opportunities are created for pupils to participate actively in lessons.
- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- The quality of assessment to inform pupils of how well they are doing and how to improve is inconsistent.
- Teachers enrich lessons through using resources such as data projectors to very good effect.

### **Commentary**

12. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection report. Whilst teaching remains good overall, there has been a significant increase in the amount of good teaching. In the previous report, 66 per cent of teaching was good or better, and five per cent was unsatisfactory. The amount of good and better teaching has risen to 82 per cent and unsatisfactory teaching has fallen to one per cent. This is leading to good achievement throughout the school. Almost all parents who filled in the questionnaire before the inspection liked the way their children have to work hard and appreciate the good teaching. In their questionnaire responses, almost all pupils indicated their appreciation of the good teaching and the expectation that they work hard.
13. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and thus pupils behave very well. In the best lessons, teachers use resources such as data projectors to very good effect, enriching lessons with stimulating film clips and slides. As a consequence, pupils are generally well engaged and work hard. Too often teachers rely on exposition to increase pupils' knowledge rather than actively involving them in the lesson and deepening their understanding.
14. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7 and 8 in English and history. In most of the remaining subjects inspected in depth, teaching and learning are good but they are only satisfactory in science and information and communication technology throughout and in geography and modern foreign languages in Years 5 and 6.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 70 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
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1 (1%)	17 (24%)	40 (57%)	11 (16%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
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*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.*

15. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally very good, due to the teachers' insistence on high standards. As a consequence, pupils apply themselves well to their tasks. They are highly motivated and concentrate well. Pupils generally progress well, increasing their knowledge. However, the over-use of exposition by teachers reduces the opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in the lessons. As a consequence, they do not deepen their understanding as much as they might.
16. Teachers and teaching assistants are well aware of the special educational needs of those pupils on the register. The support provided in class by the teaching assistants is good and they work together well with the mainstream teacher. There is some effective specialisation among the teaching assistants, for example one leads on hearing impairment. Guidance from national organisations such as the National Deaf Children's Society are used to keep teachers and teaching assistants well-informed.
17. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The quality of assessment is inconsistent and ranges from very good in mathematics, history, art and design and music to unsatisfactory in design and technology. Procedures to check on pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory, with some very good practice in some subjects. Although good systems have been introduced and are still developing, the use of them is inconsistent. In mathematics, history, art and design and music the tracking of pupils' progress is put to very good use, but is unsatisfactory in design and technology.
18. The quality of marking is inconsistent, even within departments. In mathematics, marking is excellent as pupils are given very clear guidance as to what they have done well and are set targets for improvement. These targets are linked very clearly to National Curriculum levels. In design and technology, marking is unsatisfactory, being minimal in some cases.
19. The school collects a great deal of data about pupils' attainment in order to help plan work that is suitable for different pupils' needs. The application of this varies between subjects. This is done very well in art and design, music, mathematics and history. Lessons are usually planned with objectives that are appropriate to pupils' needs but the pupils are not made aware of the level of the work. However, they are not always aware of what they need to do to improve and are not consistently involved in assessing their own progress.

## The curriculum

The breadth of curricular opportunities is **good**. Opportunities for enrichment are **good**. Accommodation and resources are **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The governing body challenges and supports the school very well in its close monitoring of curriculum development.
- A wide range of activities supports pupils' learning outside lessons.
- The quality of accommodation and resources for learning are very good.
- There is no daily act of collective worship.

## Commentary

20. Most of the curriculum issues raised during the last inspection have now been resolved. The provision of essential equipment and resources for information and communication technology has improved significantly. Information and communication technology lessons are timetabled

for all pupils every week, with additional information and communication technology experience provided through other subjects. There is now adequate time allocated to religious education in Years 5 and 6 in order to meet the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus. There has been very good improvement in the support for pupils with special educational needs, including the provision of full and open access to mainstream classes. Pupils' experience in lessons is enriched through, for example, through the very good enterprise project for Year 7 in design and technology, the high proportion of time allocated to physical activity and the chance to learn French in Year 6. However, there is not enough investigative work or opportunities for independent learning in science. Although the school's timetable provides slightly less than the recommended teaching time for pupils in Years 7 and 8, there is no evidence that this has a negative impact on learning.

21. The school is in breach of its statutory requirements because it does not provide a daily act of collective worship. Although there are opportunities for reflection and spiritual awareness in assemblies, in tutor time and in some lessons, the quality of these experiences is not monitored or evaluated.
22. An effective programme of personal, social and health education is in place, making a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The planned curriculum includes sex and relationships education and drugs misuse. These topics are covered within the schemes of work for individual subjects, in form time and on identified days during the school year when parents are invited to participate. Pupils begin the process of preparing for the next stage of their education by considering their future subject choices and through their enterprise project which introduces them to the world of work.
23. Support for learning outside lessons is good. Help with homework is available at lunchtime, together with a variety of challenging activities for gifted and talented pupils provided by teachers in individual curriculum areas. Many subjects sustain and develop pupils' interest through visits, outside speakers and clubs. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about the residential and local opportunities provided through the activities week in the summer term. A tradition of dramatic and musical productions is well established and there are now a school orchestra and choir to encourage music-making. Additional activities in sport are plentiful and very well supported by large numbers of pupils. There are county fixtures in a wide variety of sports such as athletics, netball and soccer, as well as many recreational activities.
24. The governing body is very well informed regarding curriculum development. There is a rigorous programme of presentations from individual departments together with visits to the school. These enable governors to question the school and clarify their ideas, working closely with the senior management as decisions on future directions are taken.
25. All pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into mainstream classes, with the exception of two pupils with literacy difficulties who receive intensive coaching in literacy in some of their English lessons. All pupils therefore enjoy full access to the curriculum.
26. In almost all subjects, with the exception of geography, teaching is done exclusively by specialists and there is a good balance of experienced and new staff. Although there have been a significant number of vacancies recently, the school has used this to its advantage by recruiting a number of good subject leaders.
27. Resources are very good in most subjects including mathematics, English, science, and design and technology. The number of books is very good and in history very good use is made of materials produced by teachers. Laboratories are well equipped and there is a very good range of tools in design and technology. Teachers have their own laptop computers and information and communication technology rooms are well equipped. There is a large number of data projectors which are often used very well to enrich learning. The library is a pleasant area with a good stock of books, in particular fiction and general reference. Subject collections vary in quality. It is open each break and lunchtime for pupils to borrow books and is used by classes in the school day. The loan system is effectively computerised.

28. Accommodation is very good. Much of it has been refurbished and displays in classrooms and public areas make it very attractive. Rooms are large, with the exception of some in music. Buildings are well cared for and well managed; for example, there are new heat reflecting windows in laboratories, provided as part of the school's renovation programme. Playing fields are large and litter-free.

### Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Provision of support advice and guidance is **good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection and pastoral care are very good.
- Pupils are able to have very good trusting relationships with at least one adult in school.
- The development of a school council has enhanced the involvement of pupils.
- The inconsistent use of assessment sometimes limits the provision of support and guidance.

### Commentary

29. This is a very caring school where the welfare of each pupil is paramount. All the pupils spoken to agree that they feel safe, well looked after and supported in whatever they do. Pupils were able to say that there was at least one adult in school in whom they could confide. The headteacher and governing body carefully monitor health and safety issues and all necessary risk assessments are carried out. The designated person responsible for child protection is well trained and experienced. There is a trained deputy in place and staff are clear about procedures. The school has good relationships with outside agencies, which are quick to respond to the school's needs. The year teams provide good support by recording and monitoring all pupils, whom they know well as individuals. However, the inconsistent use of assessment informed by the marking of work and use of national curriculum levels sometimes limits the pupils' access to appropriate support, advice and guidance.
30. The induction procedures on entry are very carefully managed. Great care is taken to understand the pupils' needs and make sure that they know as much as possible about the school to make them comfortable on arrival. The parents are very happy with the procedures which give their children every confidence to settle into their new surroundings. Children arriving at the school other than at the beginning of Year 5 receive care and attention appropriate to their needs and are able to say that they have settled very well. The school council is an elected body which takes its responsibilities very seriously. The members feel valued, know that they are listened to and that the views of all pupils are important to the school.
31. Individual education plans are of good quality and are reviewed regularly and contain very helpful guidance for both teachers and teaching assistants. Some targets for improvement are written in language which is not easily accessible to pupils. Aside from this, pupils are very well involved in the process of reviewing individual education plans. In addition to signing the individual education plan and discussing it with a teaching assistant, pupils set one of their own targets in addition to those set by the teachers. Pupils' targets are included in their personal organiser and teaching assistants are encouraged to provide feedback on these four times a term. This very good practice is not currently formalised and there are therefore inconsistencies in practice.

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

Links with parents and the community are **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have a very high regard for the school.
- Parents receive good quality information about school activities.
- The annual pupil reports are not sufficiently clear.
- The links with the high school vary in quality between subjects.

### **Commentary**

32. The parents who answered the questionnaire, together with those who attended the pre-inspection meeting, have very positive views of the school and the way their children are cared for. Those who responded to the questionnaire also particularly appreciate the good teaching and the way parents are encouraged to approach the school. There were some concerns about pupil behaviour. However, the inspection found behaviour to be very good.
33. The quality of information to parents, including details of the curriculum, is good. The newsletters are carefully timed, informative and helpful to parents. The interim pupil reports on effort, issued in the autumn term, are good. The full reports at the end of the academic year are satisfactory. Although they contain helpful detail on the work covered, target-setting and pupil self-assessment, they do not contain clear information on the national curriculum levels attained.
34. The school values parents' views, and the headteacher involves parents in the work of the school whenever possible. The recent drugs education programme for Year 8 involved approximately half the parents. School uniform and healthy eating are two areas where the school is seeking formal feedback from parents. The Parent Teacher Association is extremely active and successful. It brings parents into the school and raises considerable extra funds, which are greatly appreciated. Most parents want their child to succeed and will assist with homework and read and sign the pupil organisers. The Enterprise Evening is one of the highlights of the school year and is extremely popular with both parents and pupils, helping to raise self-esteem in many areas of achievement for those in Year 7.
35. There are close links with the partner first schools and the procedures for transfer into Year 5 are very good. At Year 8, the procedures for familiarising the pupils with the high school are good and the Year 8 pupils do not have concerns about the transition. However, in some subjects, the links on transfer are weak. Closer links are being developed and the headteacher has been invited to join the governing body of the high school. The school has an arrangement with Homerton College, Cambridge, and receives student teachers as part of their training. The school has plans for expanding the use of the information and communication technology suite for primary pupils.
36. Links with the community are good and continuing to develop. The school is used increasingly by the village and surrounding areas. There are many school trips and sporting and charity events. The Bacton under-fives' pageant, annual senior citizens' Christmas party and fireworks display are particularly successful. There are links with the church and local historical society and many friends and relatives attend the school productions.
37. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well involved with the review of their children's progress. Parents are invited in to discuss their children's needs very early in the

process. Individual education plans are signed by parents, who are invited in to discuss the review. If parents prefer, this is dealt with over the telephone or by letter. Parents are very effectively encouraged to contribute to the achievement of the pupils' individual education plan targets by specific suggestions of ways they can help which are included in the best individual education plans.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Both leadership and management of the school are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Governors play a very good and strong role in the strategic management of the school.
- There is an effective senior team, and leadership in departments is good.
- Finances are efficiently managed to ensure that the school is well resourced.
- In some cases, the use of performance data to set targets and improve provision is unsatisfactory.
- Governors do not ensure that the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is met.

### **Commentary**

38. The headteacher, ably assisted by his senior team and well supported by the governing body, has brought a vitality and a strong sense of purpose to the school. His energy and determination have enabled the school to make good progress since the time of the previous inspection. The governors know their school well, understand its strengths and weaknesses, and are well placed to call it to account for its performance. Their support has empowered the headteacher to make considerable advances in the improvement of the quality of the education which the school provides through investing in new technology to support teaching and learning.
39. Forward planning is good, and geared solidly to the raising of standards and improving provision. Subject planning is well matched to the overall priorities for the school which have been set by governors and the senior team. The governors still fail to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, an issue raised at the time of the previous inspection. The school makes very good provision to ensure that all pupils have access to all aspects of the curriculum, and that no pupil is disadvantaged in any way.
40. In subjects, leadership is mainly good. It is very good in English, mathematics, history and religious education, where the quality of the leadership of the subject leaders is characterised by their vision, drive and commitment to succeed. Most subject leaders set a good example to their colleagues and to the pupils by their energy and commitment. Management of subject areas is generally good. Teaching and learning are well-planned and organised. There are appropriate measures to ensure that the work of the department is well resourced, and that the quality of teaching is maintained. The evaluation of the work of the subject areas is strong, both by members of the senior team and through departments' own procedures for self-evaluation. The use of performance data to inform and develop work in departments and to set targets for pupils is still very variable, and in design and technology it is unsatisfactory.
41. The school evaluates its own performance well and bases its forward planning on those evaluations which take place both across the school and within subject areas. Performance management of teaching staff is well established in the school, and there is good provision for the professional development of teachers. Links with institutions for the training of new teachers are good.



**Financial information for the year April 03 to March 04**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,454,707	Balance from previous year	92,291
Total expenditure	1,359,643	Balance carried forward to the next year	95,064
Expenditure per pupil	2,937		

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PROVISION****Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the provision.
- Improvement since the previous inspection report is very good.
- Pupil involvement in the writing and review of individual education plans is very good.
- The feedback on pupils' progress against their targets by teaching assistants is informal and the best practice is not consistently applied.
- Parents are involved from an early stage and are kept well informed of progress.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator does not currently include lesson observations as part of the monitoring of provision although there are clear plans to do so.

**Commentary**

42. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the provision. She is very well supported by the headteacher and her position on the school's senior management team ensures that special educational needs are central to the school's planning. There are regular meetings with the governor who has responsibility for special educational needs and that is the main link with the rest of the governing body as no other formal presentations are made to them. The governor with special responsibility is well briefed and poses challenging questions which encourage the school to reflect critically on its practice. The co-ordinator carries out a detailed self-evaluation which includes a thorough analysis of pupils' standards and progress. A comprehensive development plan is well linked to the whole-school development priorities and constitutes an effective management tool. A very good, detailed and helpful set of guidelines for teachers and teaching assistants has been produced which sets out clearly the practical implementation of the school's policy. The special educational needs co-ordinator has good and frequent opportunities to provide staff with in-service training which ensures that all staff are well briefed on special educational needs issues.
43. The reduction in external funding is being partly offset from the school's own budget and by careful allocation of teaching assistants to support pupils in class. There is a clear set of guidelines for the allocation of support which ensures those with the greatest need receive the greatest support. Both academic and behavioural issues are effectively supported. The allocation of teaching assistant support is discussed by the co-ordinator weekly with the teaching assistants and this very good level of review ensures a quick response to changing needs.
44. Improvement since the previous inspection report has been very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs who did not have statements was unsatisfactory and is now good. The progress of pupils with special educational needs was satisfactory and is now

good. Pupils' needs are now accurately identified and specific individual education plans provided. These now provide information for staff regarding measurable targets, and training for teachers and learning support assistants in their effective use has been provided. Parents of children with special educational needs were not always fully informed or consulted. They are now involved from the earliest stages and invited into school to discuss progress. There was no overall plan for special educational needs and this has now been written.

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

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

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

##### **English**

Overall provision for English is **good**.

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

- Results in 2004 were well above national averages.
- Standards are above average by Years 6 and 8.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good.
- Leadership of the department is very good.
- Marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils get better.
- Some lessons provide pupils with too few opportunities to be actively involved.

##### **Commentary**

45. In the 2004 end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests, results were well above average in relation to both national averages and similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was almost double the national average. These results were much better than those of 2003, when they were below national averages, and of 2001 and 2002 when they were in line with national averages. They were higher than those achieved in mathematics and science. There was no statistically significant difference between the performances of boys and girls. The improved results can be accounted for by the nature of the cohort, improved teaching methods and greater staffing stability.
46. Standards seen in the inspection were above average across all aspects of the subject by both Year 6 and Year 8. Achievement is good throughout the school with no significant difference between that of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers because they receive appropriate work and support. Most pupils speak confidently, employing suitable register and vocabulary, developing ideas into extended responses. The teaching of drama contributes well to pupils' oral development. Standards in reading and writing are above average overall but with a minority in both years being well above average. Year 5 and 6 pupils use inference and deduction well in looking at texts and employ methods such as skimming. Skills of analysis are well developed in Years 7 and 8 with increased understanding of authors' craft. Pupils of higher ability respond with considerable maturity and detail. Guided reading and reading logs contribute well to development of reading skills. Most pupils, except lower attainers, write with good accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils write a wide range of text types, including poetry, stories, non-fiction and diaries, although lower attainers do not produce much extended writing. There is appropriate emphasis on literacy skills throughout the school.
47. Teaching and learning are good overall and a significant proportion of lessons seen were very good, especially in Years 7 and 8. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Major strengths of the teaching include very good lesson planning which maximises learning opportunities; good use of time and resources, including very good use of data projectors, to facilitate learning and make it interesting and incisive questioning which compels pupils to refine ideas. Good

teacher-pupil relationships ensure that learning takes place in a calm, positive atmosphere. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They are interested, responsive and collaborate well. Some lessons are too teacher-directed so that pupils do not have the opportunity for active independent learning. Marking is variable in quality: whilst always encouraging, it often does not tell the pupil exactly what to do to improve. More use could be made of the library as an aid to research and learning.

48. Leadership of the subject is very good. The new subject leader has the vision and desire to raise standards further and the department works well together as a team. New teachers are well supported. Management is good. Documentation is of a good standard although not all policies are yet in place. Monitoring of lessons and books is formal. Assessment methods are generally effective: target-setting and tracking are well established and make good use of data from optional tests.
49. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. A declining trend in performance has been reversed and the 2004 results were the highest yet. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Marking, however, remains inconsistent. The department is now well placed to develop further.

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

50. Literacy standards are above average and facilitate pupils' access to the curriculum. A majority of pupils are able to read and write at the expected level, or above, for their age. Standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar are good overall. Speaking and listening skills are above those expected for the majority of pupils. Provision for literacy is good: in many subjects such as English, history and geography, there are opportunities for a range of extended writing though opportunities are missed in science. In food technology, pupils extend their writing well through product evaluations. Good speaking and listening situations are created in many subjects such as English, history, physical education and religious education, though such opportunities are not created effectively in information and communication technology. Key words are used well, for example in physical education and information and communication technology, and subject-specific language is well emphasised in English and art and design. Pupils draft work well to increase accuracy, for example in English.
51. Literacy skills are reinforced well in food technology when pupils use descriptive words in taste tests and extend their writing through product evaluations.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are mainly good, and pupils achieve well by the end of Year 8.
- Teachers make effective use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- Self-evaluation is good; the department analyses its performance well.
- Pupils do not speak enough French in lessons, and expectations of speaking are not demanding enough.
- The department does not have a range of suitable policies to guide its work.

### **Commentary**

52. In the work seen during the inspection, achievement was good by the end of Year 8 and standards seen were in line with national expectations. Higher-attaining pupils can write extended pieces about themselves and have made a start on the passé composé. Average

attainers are developing their writing well and the lowest attainers can write sentences correctly about their families and friends.

53. In lessons, pupils in Year 6 are beginning to be able to say how old they are and when their birthday is, and higher-attaining Year 7 pupils have good recall of vocabulary about clothes and colours. In both cases, however, the weakest skill by a considerable margin was speaking. Even some higher attainers in Year 7 are very reticent about speaking, even when what they have to say is written down in front of them. In Years 6 and 7, the lower attainers do not in general achieve as well as their peers because there is insufficient language rehearsal to ensure that all pupils are able to internalise the content of the lesson. Higher-attaining pupils can infer well and assimilate language without extended practice; consequently they are able to progress well.
54. Teaching and learning are good overall but satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. All lessons were carefully planned and related well to the pupils' level of development and prior attainment. Good use was made of the data projector to focus attention and to support learning. However, even some of the better lessons lacked the challenge to promote high levels of achievement. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support learning in French in Year 6, through regular use of the information and communication technology suite and through effective use of data projection and presentations to ensure pupils' concentration and attention. Opportunities for enrichment are good, and include visits, e-mail links and a weekly French club.
55. Leadership is satisfactory. The department works well to ensure that procedures for self-evaluation are professional and clear-sighted, and that the results of their self-evaluation are securely built into the department's planning. Leadership in general, however, is more tentative; the department lacks a set of policies to guide its work and planning. Management is good. The department is well resourced. It is well supported by the school. Monitoring of the department's work is good and helped by members of the senior team monitoring it as part of a rolling programme. The subject leader and her colleague monitor each other's books and make constructive criticisms, and there has been some peer monitoring of lessons. There is not enough tracking of pupils' progress although the department has made a start on recording pupils' levels and indicating these in pupils' exercise books. Improvement since the last inspection report has been satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good, and sometimes very good, promoting effective learning.
- The mathematics co-ordinator and subject team are very enthusiastic and effective.
- Relationships in lessons are very good; pupils behave very well and work very hard.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Test results at the end of Year 6 need to be improved in line with the pupils' prior attainment.
- A number of classes have more than one teacher for mathematics, which frustrates learning.

### **Commentary**

56. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level was in line with the national average for all schools. When compared to similar schools, the proportion was below average. These results were a marked improvement on the previous year. When the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8, they are working at levels above their prior attainment and are well placed to perform well in the national tests at the end of Year 9.

57. Standards of work seen in lessons and in the pupils' books throughout the school are above the expected level for the majority of pupils. Pupils at all levels of attainment have good number skills and draw accurate graphs. Calculators are used appropriately and many pupils display competent mental arithmetic skills. Attainment on entry is above the national average. Achievement over time is satisfactory by the end of Year 6 and good by the end of Year 8. Retention of knowledge and its application to solving problems have been a difficulty but, with earlier practice at test questions, achievement in the test at the end of Year 6 should improve. In all years, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
58. Teaching and learning are good overall. All lessons are at least good and several are very good. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers have high expectations of the pupils, the pace is good and a variety of tasks have been prepared in order to challenge the pupils. There is good use of information and communication technology. A variety of resources, including graphical calculators, enrich learning. Pupils in a middle-attaining Year 6 lesson were using computers well to consolidate their learning of temperature differences using negative numbers.
59. Some good starter exercises were seen to engage the pupils right from the outset of lessons but these are used effectively in too few lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, the pupils improved their ability to recall multiplication tables by placing four in a row in a grid generated by a laptop computer and displayed using a data projector. The ending of lessons varies in quality. Some consolidate learning appropriately and refer well to the learning objectives of the lesson but others are not as successful. Teachers make effective use of questioning, encouraging pupils to explain their answers and solutions to the rest of the class.
60. As a result of effective teaching, most pupils acquire knowledge of basic skills and concepts, which enables them to work on their own to improve their understanding. Literacy skills are improved by the good displays of key words, the insistence of teachers on the correct use of mathematical language and the good oral work in lessons. Pupils have a positive attitude to mathematics, they behave very well in lessons and relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good.
61. Leadership of the department is very good and management is good. The mathematics co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve standards further. He has worked hard on a very good list of priorities since his appointment and standards have risen in that time. Results at the end of Year 6 still need to improve in line with the pupils' prior attainment and more pupils need to achieve the higher levels. The development of schemes of work is progressing well. The co-ordinator is well supported by the other teachers who are enthusiastic, committed and hardworking. Together they are responding very positively to the National Numeracy Strategy and this is raising standards. Assessment procedures and use of data are very good, pupils are tested regularly, they are aware of National Curriculum levels and know what they need to do to improve. Day-to-day marking is both encouraging and informative. Appropriate and regular homework is set. The department development plan is linked closely to the school improvement plan. Liaison with the first and upper schools is regular and purposeful. Improvement since the previous report has been satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the use of computers has improved and marking is more consistent. Although attainment declined after the previous inspection, it has improved significantly recently.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

62. Pupils are using their mathematical knowledge and skills well in other subjects across the curriculum, and standards in numeracy are average. For example, pupils were drawing graphs competently in geography, science and design and technology. Cross-curricular work is developing in science, English and information and communication technology.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in Year 6 tests is above the national average.
- The best teaching is very good and pupils learn very well.
- Records of marks used to set targets are very thorough.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn independently.
- Pupils do not use information and communication technology often enough to support their learning.
- The National Strategy for science is not used consistently.

### Commentary

63. In the Year 6 tests in 2004, results were above the national average and, in comparison with pupils' prior attainment, they were average; achievement in Year 6 was therefore satisfactory. Test results are improving more quickly than results nationally and boys and girls do equally well. In lessons and in pupils' books, standards in both Years 6 and 8 are above average. Pupils' practical skills are good as is their understanding of difficult ideas about forces. Literacy and numeracy skills in science are above average.
64. Achievement in lessons in all years is satisfactory. In the best lessons, pupils learn well at a quick pace and teachers use information and communication technology skilfully so that pupils are interested. Generally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn independently and this limits their achievement. Boys and girls do equally well and the achievements of pupils with special educational needs are the same as those of their peers because they are well supported by learning support assistants and teachers.
65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all years. In the best lessons, they are very good because teachers provide clear explanations and work is demanding and well organised so that pupils work hard and behave very well. Lower-attaining pupils achieve unsatisfactorily when they are not sure what to do because demanding work is not explained clearly. Good planning allows pupils to write about science in the form of an information sheet. However, overall, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write extensively about science. The facts and concepts of science are taught thoroughly and pupils learn to interpret information in tables and graphs. However, they are not taught often enough to plan investigations and to evaluate their work. This practical aspect of the subject is insufficiently well supported. Well-chosen video material is used in Year 5 and pupils are attentive and behave well. Teachers use projectors and laptop computers well to make lessons interesting but pupils do not use computers enough and the opportunities for independent learning that they provide are limited. Pupils are well motivated and learn well when teachers use concept maps and interesting circuits of activities.
66. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Records of marks awarded to pupils are very thorough and they are used well to set targets for pupils. Marking provides good advice to pupils but pupils are not given opportunities to decide how to improve after assessing their own work. Links with first schools are innovative and very good; pupils receive a Passport for science and the transition to Bacton is very well managed. Teaching plans are generally comprehensive but the National Strategy for science, particularly teaching of parts of investigations, is underused.
67. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory: standards remain above average compared with national figures and about average compared with the pupils' earlier test

results. Pupils with special educational needs are now well supported and more teaching is more closely monitored in order to raise standards. Pupils still do not have enough opportunities to write about science and some pupils are not given sufficient help with their writing. Pupils still do not use information and communication technology often enough.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have risen since the previous inspection and are now in line with national expectations.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about information and communication technology and so they gain good skills and knowledge.
- In good or better lessons, tasks challenge pupils so standards are continuing to rise.
- Assessment procedures do not always help pupils know how they are progressing and what to do to improve.
- The recent strategic plan supported by good leadership and management has improved provision and raised standards.

### **Commentary**

68. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in using information and communication technology are in line with national expectations indicating satisfactory achievement. Pupils combine text and graphics in colourful holiday brochures, but do not always use the full range of formatting features to produce high quality presentations. Only higher-attaining pupils can fully explain the information provided by bar charts which show how Roman Emperors died. Pupils can draw plans of the school, but these are not always to scale.
69. By Year 8, pupils' knowledge and skills are also in line with national expectations which, given these pupils' standards on entry, represents satisfactory achievement. Pupils confidently use information and communication technology, including digital cameras and different types of software. They can combine text and graphics in eye-catching newspapers, but only the higher-attaining pupils use more advanced formatting. The finances for a school fete are studied using a spreadsheet, but pupils do not suggest the most effective ways of spending a budget. They can, however, successfully download factual information from the Internet to support their opinions about fox hunting. Whilst pupils can use information and communication technology with competence to create basic web pages with hyperlinks, they are less proficient in explaining how and why information and communication technology is used.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some good or better teaching. Lessons are well planned and structured to develop learning in progressive steps. In the good or better lessons, teachers set challenging tasks. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and focus on these tasks to gain skills in using different types of software. Teachers are sensitive to individual needs and relaxed classroom management creates a positive working environment. The good teaching is having an impact on raising standards further.
71. All pupils achieve satisfactorily. The support given to those with special educational needs ensures they make progress in line with their peers. In good or better lessons, different levels of challenge to tasks stretch the higher-attaining pupils so they achieve well. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils assess their own progress but not against National Curriculum levels and are not involved in setting targets. Teachers only grade activities when completed so pupils do not know how well they are progressing or how to make improvements. Learning is supported by good displays of technical vocabulary by topic, but they are not referred to enough in lessons. There is insufficient encouragement to extend speaking and reading skills. Levels of

numeracy are sufficient to support learning in information and communication technology and pupils are able to check that formulae in spreadsheets are correct.

72. Leadership of information and communication technology is good, with a positive strategic plan to continue the development. Strong commitment and clear vision are driving up standards. Good management ensures the department runs well on a daily basis, with appropriate procedures in place. The implementation of the National Strategy and on-line schemes of work covers all elements of information and communication technology; however, not all topics are covered in sufficient depth. Very good accommodation creates a welcoming atmosphere which helps pupils enjoy the subject. Good resources are being improved with a newer, more robust and secure network. This development is constructively managed by a well experienced technician. Good financial planning and investment have resulted in very good improvement in provision and resources since the previous inspection. These developments have ensured access to information and communication technology for all pupils and a significant rise in standards.

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

73. The provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory. In mathematics, pupils enhance their learning of certain topics through information and communication technology. In English, a well-documented scheme of work supports both teaching and learning. In music, pupils extend their understanding of sound through good use of technology. Imaginative use of presentation software in modern foreign languages extends pupils' speaking skills. In other subjects, such as history and religious education, pupils use the Internet to research different topics and widen their knowledge about them. However, there are weaknesses in science, where information and communication technology is not yet used sufficiently to support learning. Data projectors have been installed in all classrooms as part of the continuing development of resource provision across the curriculum. Good in-service training has encouraged teachers to make more effective use of information and communication technology in the presentation of their lessons. An audit of subject contributions to information and communication technology has been undertaken, but there is no formal structure to map and monitor that delivery. The developing use of information and communication technology across subjects is adding to pupils' learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

Geography, history and religious education were inspected in full.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- By the end of Year 8, standards of work are above the national expectations.
- Achievement is good overall, but it is limited by some non-specialist teaching.
- Assessment procedures show pupils how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- Pupils' good relationships with their teachers and their positive attitudes to work enhance learning.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to gain the practical experience of fieldwork.

### **Commentary**

74. Overall, standards of work are above national expectations. Pupils in Year 8 write fluently about human responses to natural disasters and use information and communication technology well to investigate and share ideas on environmental issues. Standards in Years 5 and 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils can explain why some human activity may lead to flooding but have a limited grasp of issues and locations beyond their own local area.



75. Achievement is good overall. Pupils achieve particularly well in their final year when they progress to more complex studies that catch their imagination, for example aspects of Antarctica. With individual support in lessons, pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. Although teachers know their pupils well, lesson plans do not include resources adapted to pupils' various needs. As a result, higher-attaining pupils often finish tasks quickly and are not given enough stimulating material to keep up their interest and extend their understanding. The subject knowledge of non-specialist teachers is not always sufficiently accurate to answer pupils' questions.
76. Teaching and learning are good overall but satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, most pupils are keen to learn, make good relationships with their teachers and enjoy taking part in lessons. Stimulating displays of work in classrooms and corridors encourage geographical awareness. Where teaching is most successful, lessons proceed at a good pace, enabling pupils to acquire ideas and skills rapidly and then transfer their knowledge to new learning. Much improved assessment systems show pupils what levels they have reached and how to judge their own achievements. At its best, marking is very good, celebrating success and giving pupils clear targets for improvement. These high standards are not reached by all teachers, however. In lessons which are satisfactory rather than good, pupils are given a list of tasks to complete with very little time for discussion of wider issues or active participation in learning. Very few opportunities exist for pupils to develop their investigative skills in the local area through fieldwork or to engage actively in lessons.
77. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new subject leader has a clear and enthusiastic vision for the further development of the subject and is generous in the distribution of resources to colleagues. However, the precise monitoring of the use of these resources and the quality of teaching and learning in lessons have yet to be established. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Highly effective leadership has raised the academic standing of the subject in the school.
- Standards are now well above average by the end of Year 8.
- Pupils enjoy history, relate well to their teachers and work hard to achieve their potential in the subject.
- Very good teaching is using historical sources most effectively to develop pupils' understanding of the past.
- The history curriculum is enriched through a programme of visits and visitors.

### Commentary

78. Standards in history are above national expectations in Year 6 and well above in Year 8. Year 6 pupils have used historical sources imaginatively to produce convincing diaries of life in Victorian times. In lessons, pupils demonstrated similar skills of analysis in examining letters written by evacuees during World War II. They are creative in their use of information and communication technology, producing posters on Victorian reformers and wartime defence. Pupils make accurate comparisons between Victorian and modern education and higher attainers draw reasoned conclusions about Victorian attitudes to children from the sources.
79. Achievement overall is very good. In Years 5 and 6, pupils enjoy their studies and are achieving well. In Years 7 and 8, pupils are achieving very well. Teacher assessments show two-thirds of pupils in Year 8 are attaining levels of work normally expected by Year 9, which represents very good achievement. This is the result of skilled teaching that makes maximum

use of source material to develop pupils' skills in history. Pupils handle evidence well and are beginning to question its reliability and recognise bias. In one lesson, they gained very good understanding of why Cromwell has been depicted as both hero and villain, and appreciated some of the reasons for the different interpretations. They are enthusiastic about researching the battles of the English civil war and are very capable of conducting an enquiry and organising their findings. Higher attainers have produced well-argued essays assessing Charles I's reign. Pupils with special educational needs are making very good progress, as a result of teachers adapting materials and tasks to them, plus the extra support they receive from teaching assistants.

80. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Teaching is full of enthusiasm that elicits a similar response from pupils, who apply themselves diligently to the planned learning. Lesson planning is very thorough and teachers produce high quality resources for pupils to use. Presentation of lessons has been transformed by the use of data projectors, screening prepared slides, which form an excellent focus for pupils' learning. History skills are developed extremely well, using a stimulating range of source material in all years and providing excellent instruction in its analysis. Materials and tasks are generally well matched to pupils' levels of prior attainment, except that higher attainers are not always extended in Year 6. Most of the marking provides very helpful feedback but some of it lacks diagnosis of what needs improving to meet the criteria for higher levels of attainment. Successful use of self-assessment supports pupils in setting targets to raise standards. Dramatic reconstructions of history by teachers and visiting actors, such as the recent presentation to Year 6 on the Blitz, have brought the subject alive for pupils.
81. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader is an excellent role model in her own teaching, encouraging the creative talents of colleagues in sharing ideas and producing resources. The expertise within the department is enhanced through close collaboration with a local historian. Teachers are using computer technology very effectively, both as a teaching tool and to enhance pupils' learning. The department is extremely well organised and its performance carefully monitored and evaluated. Assessments are standardised to provide accurate data for tracking pupils' attainment and progress in the full range of history skills. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, particularly in the last two years which have seen a significant rise in the subject's popularity and status under the present leadership.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and are achieving well.
- Teaching makes effective use of multimedia techniques and information and communication technology to improve learning.
- Leadership is highly experienced and informed by involvement in professional development beyond the school.
- Assessment is mainly pupil self-assessment, lacking the objectivity of formal testing.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and education in citizenship.

### **Commentary**

82. Attainment in religious education meets the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus in Year 6 and rises above average in Year 8. Year 6 pupils have a reasonable understanding of some basic beliefs in Christianity and Judaism and are aware of the significance of common religious symbols in the faiths. Year 5 pupils have gained a good knowledge of different church buildings from their visit to a Salvation Army citadel and through studying local

churches on an Internet website. Achievement in lessons is good but the reduced time for the subject in Year 6 and a citizenship focus in one of the units limits pupils' potential achievement over the year.

83. More time for the subject in Years 7 and 8 promotes good achievement and contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils' work shows thoughtful reflection on some of the mysteries of life and religious answers to them. In lessons, Year 8 pupils were fascinated by the role of angels in religion and in exploring questions about what happens after death. They have shown a mature approach in their writing on bereavement. Their awareness of social issues is expressed well in staged photographs empathising with the plight of the homeless. Year 7 pupils' work on human rights and Amnesty International shows similar concern for the victims of injustice. Homework is optional in religious education. Many pupils do follow up suggestions for further enquiry but expectations are not the same as in other humanities subjects.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The subject is taught by experienced specialists and much of the teaching is very good, especially in developing pupils' spiritual awareness. In particular, teachers are making imaginative use of film, photography and role-play to increase pupils' understanding of religious concepts and social issues. Increasing use is being made of information and communication technology, both in the presentation of lessons and for class use. Very good relations with pupils enable teachers to handle discussion of difficult issues such as death and bereavement sensitively. Comments on pupils' work give them valuable feedback on how to improve, as does their guidance when pupils set themselves targets. The lack of formal assessment is a weakness, as it limits the identification of specific subject criteria for identifying pupils' level of attainment and monitoring their progress.
85. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and the department's long experience and expertise is made available to other middle schools in the county. The department is committed to continuous improvement and monitors and reviews its performance very thoroughly. It is highly creative in its development of multimedia resources for teaching religious education. Management of the subject is good, organising departmental policies and schemes of work efficiently. Management of assessment is an area for development, as is homework, which is below the usual expectation of pupils in Years 7 and 8. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Lesson time has been increased, increased use is now made of information and communication technology and there are more visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum in each year. As a result, standards have improved by Year 8.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

Design and technology was inspected in depth.

### **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils demonstrate high levels of achievement and motivation in the enterprise project.
- Pupils experience relevant and interesting design and make projects.
- There is insufficient tracking of pupils' progress and pupils do not know how well they are doing or how to improve.
- In some lessons there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to participate actively.

### **Commentary**

86. In Year 6, the standard of pupils' work is in line with national expectations. This represents good achievement, as pupils enter Year 5 with a wide range of standards which are generally

below average. They experience projects that build up a broad range of practical skills and techniques using wood, food, and textile materials. At the same time they develop their product ideas through investigations and using information and communication technology to enhance their drawing skills. Practical work is of a high standard overall, particularly when using wood. There are generally lower standards, with wider variations, in textiles and food. In textiles, pupils achieve well when generating a wide range of ideas for protective clothing. Designing skills are in line with expectations for their age. Health and safety awareness is good across all areas. Literacy skills are reinforced well in food technology when pupils use descriptive words in taste tests and extend their writing through product evaluations.

87. By Year 8, standards are above national expectations. From the outset, practical skills are well supported through good teaching. Pupils use tools confidently to make products with a high-quality finish. Achievement is very high in the enterprise project, where the level of challenge demands that pupils use and apply an extensive range of skills. When pupils progress to designing and making a toy for young children, their folder presentation, planning and research skills in particular are above average. Information and communication technology skills, including knowledge of electronics, Internet research and use of drawing packages are of a good standard. Achievement is less good in projects where pupils are not encouraged to work together to discuss their ideas and conclusions. By the end of Year 8, pupils are well prepared for the challenges of high school.

### ***Example of outstanding practice***

**In a Year 7 design and technology lesson teams of pupils were completing the preparations for their mini-business projects to be presented at the school fair.**

The teacher created a tense atmosphere of anticipation as he addressed the year group. A high quality computer presentation engaged the pupils effectively from the outset. This helped the teams produce a comprehensive checklist for their mini-business. As a consequence they were able to judge for themselves their progress. Pupils paid rapt attention as the teaching team of three, acting as consultants, used their experience to display digital photographs of other pupils' ideas and expertly answered well focused questions. Following intense, brief discussions each team produced an action plan, delegated jobs, and set to work. They talked confidently about profit margins, points of display, quality control and how they had used ideas, like adding their logo stickers, from famous shops. Their highly original products varied from games and biscuits to bird feeders and jewellery. By the end of the triple lesson, and to deadline, teams had worked with great dexterity to produce high quality advertising banners, display posters, personalised company receipts and bags, staff rotas and uniform designs. This meticulously planned project provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to develop initiative, exercise responsibility, and enjoy achieving highly.

88. Teaching and learning are good overall. However, the quality ranges between satisfactory and excellent. The key strengths of teaching lie in the planning of projects and experiences of genuine interest and relevance to pupils. The highlights of learning are seen in pupils' enthusiastic application and enjoyment of complex challenges and in their ability to work collaboratively. Teachers generally have expert subject knowledge and this is translated into lively lessons, making effective links to pupils' experiences and the world of work. Lessons show thoughtful preparation of a variety of interesting resources, as demonstrated in the sweet wrapper project and when investigating the educational value of toys and games. Where teaching is less inspiring, pupils have insufficient opportunity to participate actively, spending too much time completing work sheet activities, at the expense of discussion and enquiry.

89. Pupils are highly motivated in lessons, particularly when given choices and real responsibility, as in the enterprise project. This project makes a strong contribution to citizenship. Assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent. Although it is regularly marked, pupils are not involved in agreeing targets for improvement and are not left knowing how to improve. Pupils' progress is not sufficiently well tracked and pupils do not know how well they are doing.
90. The department is well led and managed by a committed and experienced subject leader. Expectations are high and good teamwork is demonstrated in planning and team teaching. Pupils learn in a safe and well-ordered learning environment, enhanced by stimulating displays. Improvement since the last report has been good: literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills have been enhanced; product analysis and design skills have been improved; monitoring of standards through self-review is developing and the curriculum is kept under constant review.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

Art and design, music, and physical education were inspected in full.

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Standards are well above national expectations by the end of Year 8.
- Achievement is very good because of good teaching and the positive attitude of pupils.
- The relationship between the teacher and pupils is very good and is a positive influence on learning.
- Assessment is very good and provides information to help all pupils to improve.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Opportunities for pupils to use computers in art are limited.

#### **Commentary**

91. Standards on entry in Year 5 are in line with the average. A majority of pupils have satisfactory drawing skills but knowledge and understanding of the use of colour, mixed media and the work of significant artists are limited. By the end of Year 6 and Year 8, standards are well above national expectations. Craft skills and knowledge and understanding of art have improved because of good teaching and the good range of opportunities made available. A majority of pupils profess to enjoy the subject and work hard. Sketchbooks show that research skills improve, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Some very good examples of personal studies on the work and life of several significant artists have been done by pupils in years 7 and 8. Very good pottery artefacts have been made in all year groups. Achievement is therefore very good for all pupils. There is no significant difference in attainment of boys and girls.
92. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is often very good. Lesson planning is very good. The teacher has good subject knowledge and high expectations; pupils enjoy the lessons because of the sense of achievement generated. All pupils are given very good individual support because the teacher and the teaching assistant work as a very effective partnership. Key words are introduced in lessons, improving pupils' knowledge, understanding and research skills. Discussion plays an important role in lessons and therefore pupils are articulate and can use and understand some technical language. Relationships between the teacher and the pupils are very good and achievement is improving because of the positive working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils are more than willing to assist the teacher, often without being asked. References are made in most lessons to the work of significant artists and cultures, improving creative and visual appreciation. The classroom and public areas around school contain very good displays of work, encouraging pupils to raise their

aspirations. Assessment is very good and used to target achievement and influence lesson-planning. Including pupils in self-assessment would enhance learning. Work is marked regularly and includes very constructive comments which inform pupils how to improve. Homework is set and used effectively in lessons.

93. Leadership and management are good. Planning is very good; the schemes of work are very well organised. High expectations and good subject knowledge are raising standards. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are satisfactory and used effectively. There are insufficient digital cameras and dedicated software to encourage pupils' understanding and appreciation of the value of technology in art. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Achievement is now very good and therefore improvement since the previous inspection is good.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are consistently above average because of good teaching.
- Information technology is used very effectively to enhance teaching and learning.
- Assessment is very well developed and used to good purpose in helping pupils' understanding of how they can improve.
- Opportunities for pupils' music development are progressing well because of good leadership and management.
- Standards in singing are not as well developed as in instrumental music-making.

## **Commentary**

94. Pupils enter the school with average musical experiences and standards. From Year 5 onwards, standards are consistently above expectation. Achievement is good. Pupils' keyboard playing shows well-developed skills and the overall standard of performance is above average. Pupils with special educational needs take an active part in lessons and often have good support in learning, so that they achieve just as well as their peers. Pupils speak well, showing good knowledge, and they can readily recall earlier work. They can discuss assessment issues in a mature manner and can make judgements about the work of their peers. In Year 7, pupils make impressive use of technology in taking responsibility for entering recordings of their performances into the assessment program. Pupils in Year 5 read rhythms well; their singing, and that of pupils in other years, also, is strong and enthusiastic, but is generally undeveloped when compared to the skills shown in keyboard playing throughout the school.
95. Teaching and learning are always good. Lessons are well planned and give good attention to language development. Pupils' attitudes are good and they work well and with confidence. They are enthusiastic and show much interest in music; keyboard work is clearly very much enjoyed. The teachers' use of information technology is a particularly strong feature of the lessons. Materials for pupils to use are very well arranged and produced, as also are classroom display materials. The use of video playbacks to show finger patterns on the keyboard is particularly effective and innovative. It is, however, in the management of assessment that the use of information technology excels. Because of this, pupils have good understanding of their present standards and what to do to further improve.
96. The present subject co-ordinator has only been in post since the start of this term but has already shown good leadership in developing the department and in moving forward in areas of technology and of assessment. New elements in the schemes of work have been effectively introduced, including popular well-planned and progressive units which develop musical skills and interest through the use of electronic keyboards. Management is good and has organised

more opportunities for ensemble-making which have been enhanced by the formation of a choir and an orchestra, both of which are well supported by the pupils. The department has improved well since the previous inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching by subject specialists enables pupils to achieve well.
- Very strong relationships and high expectations mean that pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour in most lessons.
- Assessment does not allow pupils to evaluate and analyse their work or to know how to improve.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Extra-curricular provision for pupils to participate in sport are very good.

### **Commentary**

97. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of skills and are generally below those expected at the start of Year 5. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations and standards seen at the inspection match teachers' accurate assessments. It was not possible to observe games lessons in Years 7 and 8 during the inspection but teacher assessment of pupils' standards by the end of Year 8 indicate that standards are above national expectations. Given the standards on entry of these pupils, this represents good achievement throughout the school.
98. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, overall, in lessons and very well in Year 7 dance. Standards in this very effective lesson were above average. Boys and girls performed their own compositions with good control and linked them fluently. They made good use of basic jive steps to develop variations and included them in their routines, using different levels, turns and formations. However, a significant number did not achieve satisfactorily in Year 8 dance as their attitude severely limited their participation, despite the efforts of the teacher to encourage them. Although pupils gain new skills in games, with higher-attaining pupils making quick progress, techniques are of variable quality and lower-attaining pupils do not perform with consistent control.
99. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are specialists with good subject knowledge, which ensures that pupils gain new skills that are technically correct. They use a very good range of strategies to ensure that pupils, in the main, display very good physical efforts and perform willingly and keenly. Lessons are well-structured with clear objectives that are shared with pupils so they know what they are going to learn. However, although lessons start with tasks that engage pupils, there is insufficient focus on pupils reviewing and evaluating their learning. In the most effective lesson, the teacher's very enthusiastic approach rubbed off on the pupils and motivated them to try their very hardest. The tasks to compose their own dances were challenging and they responded well in order to make their performance interesting. In all dance lessons, teachers use key words very well in order to improve pupils' vocabulary of movement and provide them with ideas to develop their dances independently. In games lessons, skills are analysed carefully and introduced progressively to enable pupils to achieve well. In the best lessons, pupils are given good opportunity to discuss their work and refine their ideas.

100. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and carries out her leadership and management duties well. Although procedures to check on pupils' progress and achievement are well developed, there is a vision to improve pupils' knowledge of how they can improve. A very high proportion of pupils participate in the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs, fixtures and inter-form competitions. A helpful scheme of work to support teaching and learning is fully in place and teachers work together very closely to provide consistency in teaching approaches. Improvement since the last inspection report has been good. The quality of teaching has improved.

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

Personal, social and health education and citizenship were sampled.

##### **Personal, social and health education and citizenship**

101. Citizenship is delivered through personal, social and health education, religious education, other subjects and an extended form-time every two weeks. The subject leader has developed a programme of suitable topics and very good resources which help pupils gain knowledge and understanding about their role as informed citizens. This aspect is delivered using a technique where pupils discuss issues in a circle. This work is supported by very good resources during the fortnightly citizenship time. An audit of how other subjects contribute to citizenship has been conducted, but this is not detailed enough to ensure a complete record of how all the elements of the citizenship curriculum fit together. However, the scheme of work is limited in its extent. Pupils are given some opportunities to investigate the principles of citizenship and present their thoughts. Visiting speakers provide first-hand experiences for the pupils on a range of topics such as Amnesty International. Pupils have opportunities to experience the practical elements, through such activities as a school council and charity work with the homeless. They make a personal statement about their involvement in citizenship and identify targets for further development. Teachers provide an evaluation of how pupils respond in citizenship time and reports include a statement about pupils' contribution to the citizenship programme. Personal, social and health education is also taught through different areas of the curriculum. Work related to drugs is undertaken in Years 6, 7 and 8 and there is good involvement of parents who come into school on special days. The parents appreciate the opportunity to discuss the various drugs alongside their children and with the teachers. Teaching staff work well together to plan and cover issues in the form-time. More detailed mapping of the coverage of topics in the curriculum now needs to be developed, together with methods of assessment of pupils' attainment.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
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
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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