

INSPECTION REPORT

ST GEORGE'S C OF E MIDDLE SCHOOL

Minster-on-Sea

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118844

Headteacher: Mr P Trigwell

Lead inspector: Mrs J Greenfield

Dates of inspection: 10th - 12th January 2005

Inspection number: 268461

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: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 9 -13
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 479

School address: Chequers Road
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Sheerness
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Canon Gilbert Spencer

Date of previous inspection: 31st January 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St George's CE Middle School is bigger than most other middle schools. With 479 pupils on roll, it caters for boys and girls aged 9 - 13. Pupils come from all parts of the Isle of Sheppey and from a range of social and economic backgrounds, which are relatively more disadvantaged than advantaged. Although many have weak literacy and social skills, pupils' attainment is broadly average on entry to the school. The great majority of pupils are of mainly White-British backgrounds and the remainder are of Mixed and Black-African heritages. No pupil is in the early stages of learning English. Eight pupils are in public care. Many more pupils than the national average have special educational needs but the proportion with a statement is broadly average. The range of needs includes learning, behavioural and speech and communication difficulties, hearing impairment and autism. The school received a School Achievement Award in 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
20709	Mr D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English and Drama
30553	Mr R Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics
30553	Mr S Goldsmith	Team inspector	Science
20533	Mr D Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design
18065	Mrs S Dutson	Team inspector	Design and technology
19530	Ms J Bray	Team inspector	Geography
20247	Mr R Parry	Team inspector	History
18032	Mrs I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs
1995	Mrs K Seager	Team inspector	French
8360	Mr F Peacock	Team inspector	Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St George's CE Middle School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has some good features. Standards are similar to those found nationally in most subjects, and the school has worked hard and successfully to address the underachievement found at the time of the last inspection. Relationships in the school are very good and pupils' attitudes are positive. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science by Year 8 is good.
- Senior managers are providing good role models to other staff in their focus on raising standards but the school's development plan is not sharp enough to move the school forward.
- The positive ethos in the school enables pupils, who behave well, to develop good attitudes to learning and to establish very good relationships between themselves and with staff.
- Standards in design and technology and music by Year 8 are below the level expected nationally as the teaching is not always challenging enough.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in literacy and numeracy but miss out on areas of the curriculum when they are withdrawn from lessons.
- Although work is marked regularly, teachers do not give pupils enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.
- Subject leaders do not do enough to monitor and evaluate the quality of work in their areas of responsibility.

The school has made satisfactory progress overall since its last inspection in January 2003. Standards are rising and the school has tackled the underachievement noted at that time well, although the higher attainers are not challenged enough in all subjects. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably and the school has developed better systems for reviewing its performance and that of its pupils. The provision in music and design and technology remains unsatisfactory, mainly because of staffing difficulties. Risk assessments are carried out regularly but not all non-teaching staff have received training in child protection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although not consistently so in all subjects. By Year 6 and Year 8, standards are at the expected level in nearly all subjects but are below this level in design and technology and music by Year 8. Pupils are underachieving in these two subjects. In the national tests in 2004, standards were in line with the national average

in mathematics and science but below average in English. The school's performance was average when compared with the results in similar schools, with pupils doing better in mathematics and science than in English. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, the small numbers from minority ethnic heritages and the most capable pupils is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Their attitudes are good and they behave well. Attendance is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory, but there are areas of weakness in aspects of the curriculum. **Teaching is satisfactory overall** and enables pupils to make steady progress in most subjects. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but the current arrangements for supporting them through withdrawal from lessons affect their broader education as they lose time from the same subjects every week. The range of extracurricular and enrichment activities is satisfactory, as are the resources to support the curriculum. The accommodation is well looked after but is insufficient to cater for the number of pupils in the school. The school provides good levels of care and satisfactory support, advice and guidance to pupils. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory and are good with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Senior staff provide a positive example to pupils and other staff and are committed to raising standards and improving the quality of provision. Leadership by other key staff, including subject leaders, is satisfactory overall but they do not do enough to monitor and evaluate the work in their subjects to ensure consistency across classes. The governing body is undertaking its responsibilities satisfactorily in the main, but has not ensured that all pupils in Years 7 and 8 study citizenship and careers education or implemented fully the requirements of the Disability Act 2001. Governors are playing a stronger role in providing strategic direction to the school's work but the school development plan does not provide them or senior staff with sufficient information to enable them to monitor progress systematically and rigorously.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are positive. Nearly all are comfortable in approaching the school if they have any concerns or a problem. Some express concerns about behaviour and a significant minority consider that the school does not listen sufficiently to their views or that they receive enough information about their child's progress. Inspectors judge that reports lack clarity and that there are inconsistencies in the way that teachers use the contact book to communicate with parents. Most pupils like school and say that they are expected to work hard. Some pupils are concerned about behaviour and bullying, and say that not all staff treat pupils fairly. Inspectors judge that the school deals promptly with any issues between pupils and that behaviour is generally good. There is no evidence to indicate that staff treat pupils unfairly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in design and technology and music and eradicate the unsatisfactory teaching;
- provide more written guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work;
- have higher expectations of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work in their areas of responsibility;
- sharpen strategic planning to provide a clearer focus to the school's drive to improve standards;
- ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement to all subjects of the National Curriculum;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- include citizenship and careers education in the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 and 8;
- implement in full the requirements of the Disability Act 2001.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall standards are in line with national expectations by Year 6 and Year 8 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although not consistently in every subject. Different groups of pupils achieve as well as one another, but the higher attaining pupils are not always stretched enough in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science by Year 8.
- The performance of pupils in Year 8 who sat the national tests in the core subjects a year early did very well, especially in mathematics and science.
- Teachers do not provide the most capable pupils with enough challenging work.
- Standards in design and technology and in music are below average and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

1. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004, the results were in line with the national average in mathematics and science but below average in English. Pupils' language and literacy skills, especially writing, are below the level normally found when pupils enter the school in Year 5, which partly accounts for their weaker performance in English. When compared with schools with a similar level of attainment in the tests at the end of Year 2, the results were average in mathematics, above average in science but below average in English. Pupils did not do as well at the higher levels in English and mathematics as found nationally. Overall, they did not do as well as might have been expected when account is taken of their earlier performance in the national tests at the end of Year 2. Since the last inspection in 2003, there has been an improvement in the school's results, and over the period from 2000 to 2004, they have improved at a faster rate than the national trend. In 2004, the school exceeded its targets at the expected Level 4 or above and the higher Level 5 in mathematics, but did not reach them in English.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (26.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.3 (26.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.3 (28.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 121 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. As part of a national pilot, about half the pupils in Year 8 have been entered for one or more of the national tests in English, mathematics and science that are normally taken a year later at the end of Year 9. Almost every pupil entered for each individual subject gained a Level 5 in English, mathematics and science; almost one-fifth in English and just over a half in science gained the higher Level 6 or above. Their performance in mathematics was even more impressive, with two-fifths gaining Level 6 and a further two-fifths gaining Level 7. These pupils did very well for their age. The figures in the following

table are based on the number of pupils taking each test and not on the total number of pupils in the year group.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 8 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	35.3 (32.7)	n/a (33.4)
mathematics	39.9 (38.3)	n/a (35.4)
science	36.8 (33.3)	n/a (33.6)

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

3. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is broadly average, but the literacy skills of a number of pupils are below average. In Years 5 and 6, they make steady progress and their achievement in almost all subjects is satisfactory. In history, their achievement is good as their knowledge and understanding in this subject when they enter the school is below that found in other subjects. By Year 6, standards are below the level expected nationally in English, although their achievement is satisfactory. Standards are in line with national expectations in mathematics and science, and in French, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, design and technology, art and design, and physical education. In music, standards are below the level expected and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory as the teaching does not challenge them sufficiently and frequent staff changes affect the continuity of learning. Pupils' achievement in personal, social and health education is satisfactory and standards are at the expected level.

4. Most pupils continue to make steady progress in Years 7 and 8 and their achievement overall is satisfactory, but is not consistent across the subjects. Standards in Year 8 are in line with expectations for pupils of this age in English and science, and exceed the level expected in mathematics. Achievement is good in all three subjects, although this has not yet had sufficient time to lead to better than average standards in science. In other subjects, standards are at the expected level in French, ICT, geography, history, art and design, physical education and personal, social and health education and pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all these subjects, other than physical education where it is good. In design and technology, standards are below the level expected because the curriculum does not give pupils consistent opportunity to develop and reinforce the key elements of the subject. As a result, their achievement is unsatisfactory. Standards are also below expectations in music and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory as there is insufficient continuity in the teaching and the work is not matched well enough to their interests and capabilities. The school has not yet implemented citizenship into Years 7 and 8 and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on standards or pupils' achievement.

5. In their current work, there are no marked differences between the attainment and achievements of boys and girls in most subjects, and little evidence to show why boys do better in the tests at the end of Year 6 in English. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that there are more weaknesses in boys' writing, especially in spelling and punctuation. Girls attain better standards than the boys in ICT because they take greater care and are more accurate. The overall achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and is in line with that of other pupils. They achieve well in reading through being withdrawn for special learning programmes. However, in subjects from which they are regularly withdrawn for literacy and numeracy support,

particularly in French, history and geography, they cannot keep up with the work undertaken by the rest of their class. Where teaching assistants work with them in class, they achieve as well as others. Without such support teaching, they achieve less well because teachers know their difficulties but do not always know how to meet their needs.

6. The achievement of the most capable pupils, including those that have been identified as gifted and talented, is satisfactory. In many subjects, however, they do not always receive more challenging work to stretch them further. This applies particularly in the choice of literature in English, being given similar tasks to less capable pupils in French, and a lack of extension tasks in some lessons in ICT, geography, history, design and technology, art and design and physical education. The achievement of the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages, all of whom are fluent in English, is satisfactory.

7. Pupils' literacy, mathematical and ICT skills are satisfactory overall, and are sufficient to enable them to cope with the demands of their subjects. Most subjects provide good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills but fewer subjects encourage enough reading and writing. Mathematical skills are not so well used and developed in many subjects, as they are not adequately planned for, although they are a strong feature of the work in science. In ICT, the picture is mixed, with some good examples of its use in a few lessons in art and design, mathematics, English, science and history. However, in most subjects, it is not used sufficiently or consistently.

8. The school's performance in the national tests has risen over the past few years although less consistently in English. This improving picture is confirmed by the inspection evidence, which shows that standards are steadily rising. Much of the underachievement identified in the last inspection report has been tackled, although more needs to be done to ensure that the most capable pupils are challenged further in all subjects. Staff have worked hard to raise standards in the last two years. Better planning, the school's involvement in the national pilot of early entry to the Key Stage 3 tests, more effective use of data and the monitoring of pupils' progress have all made an important contribution to the improving standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Relationships are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Punctuality is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory despite the school's good monitoring procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to the school's positive and supportive ethos and very good relationships.
- Behaviour is good and often very good during lessons and when pupils move around the school.
- There is a good tracking system to monitor and improve attendance, which remains below the national figure.
- Pupils' moral and social education is good, but opportunities for their cultural development are too limited.

Commentary

9. The majority of pupils have good attitudes towards school and want to learn. Pupils are proud of their school and they take care of their environment. Relationships are very good between pupils and the staff. Pupils feel confident to ask for help with difficulties in academic work and with any personal problems.

10. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the life of the school. They are encouraged by the very thorough support that they receive, and so they make good efforts, both in withdrawal sessions and in normal lessons. They relate well to their teaching assistants so that they are usually confident in lessons. The majority try hard to improve. They enjoy specialist support programmes, working hard throughout. However, they find it difficult to keep up with the rest of the class when they are withdrawn regularly from the same lessons and so become discouraged.

11. Behaviour is good and the school is a very pleasant and orderly community. In spite of the restricted space in corridors and the dining room, pupils behave sensibly and with a good level of self-discipline. They are very friendly and polite to visitors. During lessons, behaviour is good and often very good, and the majority of pupils concentrate well and work hard. They listen well to their teachers, and they are keen to answer questions and to contribute their own ideas. The majority of pupils work well in groups and share resources co-operatively. However, in a few lessons, where the activities do not fully engage the pupils' interest or where the teacher's classroom management skills are weak, their behaviour deteriorates. The school's procedures for managing behaviour are effective and pupils are regularly rewarded for good behaviour and academic success. Some parents express concern about the quality of behaviour and the level of bullying in the school. However, no evidence was seen of bullying, harassment or racism of any kind during the inspection. The school deals effectively with any issues of inappropriate behaviour and pupils agree that any issues between pupils are dealt with promptly.

12. The high level of fixed-term exclusions in the academic year 2003-04 was due to a specific incident of inappropriate behaviour by a small group of older pupils who have now left the school. The current level of exclusions is low. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	428	10	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	44	8	0

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

13. The school has greatly improved its procedures to monitor attendance and is working very hard to follow-up unauthorised absence promptly, but the level of attendance remains slightly below the national average. The rate of authorised absence is higher than average, with a high proportion of pupils taking holidays during term time. The school is currently taking a firm stand to try to reduce this figure. The majority of pupils are punctual and arrive at lessons on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.7	School data	0.1
National data	6.0	National data	0.3

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

14. Pupils' personal development is good and is closely linked to the school's caring and friendly ethos and the very positive system of commendation and celebration of success. Pupils of all capabilities are encouraged to grow in maturity and to be responsible for their own actions. Those with special educational needs and physical disabilities are supported well by their fellow pupils. Pupils enjoy being in school and recognise their place as members of the school community. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and respond well to the School Creed and Code of Conduct.

15. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory and pupils' experience is enriched through prayer and reflection in assemblies. Although opportunities for spiritual awareness and deeper understanding are often missed within the curriculum, a good example was seen in a geography lesson when pupils discussed the recent tsunami and earthquake with genuine feeling and sympathy for others. The provision for moral and social education is good and is linked closely to the school's ethos and high expectations of good behaviour and relationships. During a history lesson, pupils considered the inequality and social deprivation in Victorian England and sensitively made comparisons with today's society. They consider a range of moral and social issues during assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons, and most pupils demonstrate a clear sense of fairness and justice. Although pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, opportunities to appreciate their own culture and that of others are limited. Occasional visits to museums and art galleries enrich pupils' experience, but the provision for multicultural education is insufficient to ensure that pupils develop a keen awareness of life in a multicultural society. Pupils regularly organise sponsored activities to support both local and national charities. All these activities raise pupils' expectations, preparing them for a world of opportunities beyond the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory, although there are areas of weakness in aspects of the curriculum. Teaching is satisfactory overall and enables pupils to make steady progress in their learning in most subjects. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but the current arrangements for supporting them through withdrawal from lessons means that they miss out on some subject teaching. The range of extracurricular and enrichment activities is satisfactory, as are the resources to support the curriculum. The accommodation is well looked after but is insufficient to cater for the number of pupils in the school. The school provides good levels of care and satisfactory support, advice and guidance to pupils. Links with parents and the community are satisfactory and are good with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and, as a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in nearly all subjects and good in a few. The assessment of

pupils' work is satisfactory, although it is not used consistently enough in all subjects, especially to help pupils improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in English, science, history and physical education, and in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, is mostly good.
- Most teachers plan their lessons well to provide pupils with a variety of interesting activities, although not all of the planning takes sufficient account of pupils' individual needs.
- Most teachers manage pupils well and ensure that learning takes place in a positive atmosphere.
- Teaching assistants provide pupils with good support.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 84 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	12 (14%)	35 (42%)	31 (37%)	6 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. The table above shows the quality of teaching across the school. It has not changed significantly since the last inspection. The teaching is satisfactory overall, but is good in English, science, history and physical education, and in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. The teaching is mostly unsatisfactory in design and technology in Years 7 and 8 and in music in Years 5 and 6; as a result, pupils do not attain the standards they are capable of reaching in these subjects. There are examples of very good teaching in many subjects, including mathematics in Years 6 and 8, English in Years 6, 7 and 8, art and design and French in Year 5, history in Years 6 and 8, and personal, social and health education in Year 8. The teaching is marginally better in Year 7 than in the other year groups as none of the teaching was less than satisfactory.

17. There are a number of common features that distinguish the more effective lessons from those that are satisfactory or less than satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers plan a variety of suitably challenging and interesting activities to aid learning, match the work carefully to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, link the planned work explicitly with that covered previously and use questioning techniques well to check, challenge and extend pupils' learning. These teachers make the intentions of the lesson clear, although not always explicitly as learning intentions, get the lesson off to a good start with a suitable starter activity, and give sufficient time at the end to review what learning has taken place. The teachers' enthusiasm in these lessons motivates pupils to want to work hard and do well, which results in good achievement. Many of these elements are missing in satisfactory lessons. The relatively less successful lessons have a number of similar characteristics. Teachers do not match the planned work well enough to address the needs of all pupils in the class, in particular the higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, the work does not stretch the more capable pupils and is pitched at too high a level for pupils with learning needs. Teachers do not make enough connections between the work to be covered and earlier work, or clarify what pupils are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson or unit of work, and sometimes leave

insufficient time at the end of the lesson to undertake a review. As a result, pupils are not clear about the purposes of why they are undertaking some activities or what they have achieved. This is a particular weakness in design and technology.

18. Most teachers manage pupils well, and their very good relationships with their class and encouragement means that learning takes place in a positive and well-ordered atmosphere. As a result, most pupils are keen to undertake the tasks and apply themselves well. In a small number of lessons, pupils are not managed so well and tasks do not engage them or meet their needs sufficiently, with the result that they lose concentration and make unsatisfactory gains in their learning. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups when given the opportunity. Teachers are using a greater variety of approaches to encourage pupils to play a more active part in the lesson. Most subjects do not make enough use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Although there have been improvements since the last inspection, the use of ICT is not extensive enough to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum in sufficient depth. The use of homework to support learning is satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in French, art and design and music.

19. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. Teachers are well informed about their individual needs. Almost all teachers work very well with teaching assistants in lessons, using the assistants' knowledge of the pupils to help in their planning and agreeing specific roles so that they maintain pupils' interest and understanding. Support teachers give good assistance to individual pupils, paying close attention to their specific needs when pupils are withdrawn for extra support. Where there is no support assistant, the work set in mixed ability groups is not always matched to the needs of pupils with special educational needs, so that they struggle to understand written information and to express themselves in writing.

20. In general, subject teaching does not do enough to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are examples where these aspects of pupils' personal qualities are raised and developed well: for example, in English through the choice of topics such as justice, good and evil, in history on issues related to settlement, and in physical education through cooperative working and good sporting behaviour. Elsewhere, they are not included as an explicit part of teachers' planning.

21. The use of assessment is satisfactory overall. The school policy lays down principles to be followed, but practice across subjects is inconsistent. The thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment are generally satisfactory, good in history, and good in ICT, where the teachers' assessments have been confirmed by external moderation. Assessment is unsatisfactory in French and design and technology, as it is insufficiently thorough. Currently, there is no assessment of standards in music, citizenship and personal, social and health education. Assessment is linked to the National Curriculum levels in science, ICT, history, art and design and physical education.

22. Teachers' use of assessment to meet the needs of individual pupils is satisfactory. Most subject teachers assess work regularly and know how well pupils are doing. They use this information well in mathematics, science, history and physical education to plan for the learning of groups and individuals. This varies according to individual teachers in English and geography. In other subjects, teachers do not give enough attention to the needs of highest and lowest attainers.

23. Pupils' knowledge of how to improve their work is unsatisfactory. Comments made by many teachers relate to general issues such as work rate rather than giving subject-specific advice on what pupils need to do to improve. Higher and lower attaining pupils are well advised in English, but in some other subjects the comment is usually too general.

Only in ICT, history, physical education, and mathematics in Year 7 and 8, are pupils given clear advice on how to improve, although even in these subjects the guidance does not always relate securely to the National Curriculum. Teachers in some subjects are beginning to ask pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others, but they are not yet being pressed enough to give reasons for their views.

24. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards. The school has implemented many of the recommendations of the National Strategies but these are not confidently or consistently applied across all teachers and subjects to raise standards significantly. Senior managers have increased their programme of lesson observations to monitor progress and performance, and have a clearer idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching. In individual cases, they have taken appropriate action to raise expectations. Most subject leaders are not monitoring the quality of work in lessons rigorously enough, which is a weakness, although they undertake a scrutiny of work and links with other schools to moderate judgements about standards.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is mostly satisfactory, but some pupils do not have equal access to all aspects. There is no specific provision for citizenship in Years 7 and 8 or for careers education. A satisfactory range of activities is available for learning beyond the school day. Resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory, although the amount of accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A number of pupils do not have equal access to physical education activities, and those withdrawn for special educational needs support teaching miss time from some foundation subjects.
- Higher attaining pupils benefit from taking the national tests at the end of Year 8, but the more capable pupils do not always have enough challenging work in lessons to stretch them.
- Arrangements for citizenship and careers education in Years 7 and 8 are unsatisfactory.
- Few opportunities are available outside the school day for pupils to participate in the performing arts.
- The accommodation is attractive, but it is too small for the number of pupils and this limits activities in a few subjects.

Commentary

25. The curriculum meets most statutory requirements, including the provision for a daily act of collective worship. The curriculum includes nearly all subjects of the National Curriculum, including French, which is taught from Year 5 upwards, but there is no provision for citizenship and careers education in Years 7 and 8. Provision for ICT meets statutory requirements, but it is not used sufficiently in all subjects to support teaching and learning. One lesson each week is allocated to reading as a strategy for improving pupils' weaker literacy skills, and one lesson for personal, social and health education. The teaching time of 25 hours per week exceeds the recommended time for pupils of this age. The time allocated for each subject is broadly satisfactory, apart from physical education, where it is less than usually found for pupils of this age. This affects the depth to which all areas of activity can be taught, and not all classes in Year 6 are taught dance. Consequently,

access to the required areas of activity is unequal for some pupils. Drama, which could make an important contribution to enhancing pupils' literacy skills, is not taught consistently within the English curriculum or in other subjects. Pupils' mathematical skills are not used or developed sufficiently in subjects other than mathematics and planning for numeracy across the curriculum is poor. The school is using the recommendations of the National Strategies for Literacy, Numeracy and Key Stage 3 satisfactorily to improve the quality of the curriculum.

26. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They receive good support in lessons from teaching assistants, who are deployed well by most teachers. When teaching assistants are not present, the support given by teachers is only satisfactory and pupils do not achieve as well. Pupils on the special educational needs register also have their needs met through a programme of withdrawal for small group or individual work, mainly using a commercial literacy and numeracy computerised programme, along with intensive basic literacy support. These pupils make good progress in basic skills. However, this system of withdrawal has a number of weaknesses. It affects their broader education as they lose time from the same subjects every week, so that it is very difficult for pupils to make progress in these subjects, and in some instances, lose their entire entitlement. The large number of pupils withdrawn from half of the lessons in a subject sometimes causes disruption to the work of the remainder in their class. For these reasons, the curriculum is not wholly inclusive for pupils with special educational needs.

27. The school has identified a group of pupils who are considered gifted and talented, and has arranged a workshop for them later this term. One of the deputy headteachers, who leads this programme, is working in collaboration with other schools to develop work for these pupils. Activities that focus specifically on this group of pupils are not consistently included in lesson planning in individual subjects.

28. The content and time for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The school provides sex education for pupils in Year 5, and through the programme of study for science. This latter arrangement does not allow parents to withdraw their child from sex education or ensure that it is taught within the context of family life. The school has not implemented citizenship as a required element of the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 and 8, which has been a statutory requirement since September 2002, nor made any provision for careers education, which has been a requirement since September 2004. In both areas, the school does not meet statutory requirements.

29. The school's preparation of pupils for the next stage of education is satisfactory. At regular intervals, teachers from the school meet teachers from the secondary school in subject groups to ensure that pupils cover all the required elements of the National Curriculum during the key stage. Teachers from the local secondary school visit the school at the time of transfer to introduce pupils to the subjects and activities they will take. Teachers from St George's also visit primary schools to ensure that the transfer is smooth when pupils start in Year 5.

30. The school reviews its curriculum on a regular basis. By means of a questionnaire, staff evaluated the pupils' experience and success in taking the national tests in English, mathematics and science a year early. These were entirely positive. The deputy headteacher responsible for the curriculum meets regularly with subject leaders, both individually and as a group, to review progress on areas of development. There is no evidence yet of any evaluation of the issues on enrichment, developing home-school links, and schemes of work for lower attaining pupils identified in the school development plan.

31. The school provides a good variety of enrichment opportunities, including an extensive programme of events planned for the school's activities week. Pupils take

advantage of booster classes and homework clubs, accelerated learning workshops and drugs awareness programmes. Their horizons are extended by some cultural trips abroad, historical trips to neighbouring places of interest and artistic visits to London galleries. Because sporting activities are strong, teams successfully compete against local schools and win many trophies. Some pupils learn instruments and provide musical contributions to the Abbey carol service.

32. Staffing is satisfactory in most subjects. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology where there is insufficient specialist expertise to cover all aspects of the subject. It is also unsatisfactory in music, due to the long-term absence of the teacher and the difficulty in recruiting specialist teachers. The provision of teaching assistants is very good. They are used well to lead withdrawal sessions and are being offered specialist training to extend their skills. Constraints on flexibility of allocation to classes means that some classes are well provided with several assistants whilst other needy groups have none, but the difficulty is recognised and is being reviewed.

33. Accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. It is all in good order and well maintained, but is insufficient for the numbers of pupils in the school. Specialist provision in science is excellent and is very good in physical education, although the changing rooms are small. The ICT room is unsatisfactory as the curvature of the room means that the whole class cannot be kept in view by the teacher. It is also unsatisfactory in music because of the room's awkward shape and cramped condition. The small art room, which has very poor natural light, and a kiln room that is used for storage due to inadequate space elsewhere, are unsatisfactory. This clearly limits the use of the kiln and poses a health and safety risk. The teaching and administration areas for special educational needs are overcrowded, with limited space so that they have to use the library and dining room for some individual or group sessions. Several classes are very large and the lack of sufficient accommodation means there is little flexibility to organise smaller groups or to allow a wider range of teaching approaches, especially those that require more practical activity by pupils. Some areas of the school are not accessible to pupils with physical difficulties. At present, those with impaired mobility are provided with adult assistance when, for example, they have to go upstairs for computer-assisted withdrawal sessions. Playground space is insufficient for the numbers on roll and lunchtime arrangements for those with packed lunches are unsatisfactory as they have to eat in a narrow thoroughfare.

34. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory. Resources are very good in science and include a wide range produced by teachers. They are unsatisfactory in music where there are insufficient class instruments and keyboards to enable the curriculum to be taught adequately. There are good specialist resources to aid pupils with special educational needs, although in mainstream lessons subject departments do not always provide support materials to match their needs.

Care, guidance and support

Standard of care, welfare, health and safety are good. All pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance from teachers. The arrangements for involving pupils in the school's work and development are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils relate well to their teachers, with whom they have a very good and trusting relationship.
- Very good induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly in Year 5.
- The school's pastoral system provides good support and guidance for all pupils.

- Systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' academic progress and achievements are inconsistent across subjects and not all pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

35. The school has good procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils and these have improved since the last inspection. The statutory requirements for health and safety are met through regular monitoring; risk assessments are in place and are reviewed with sufficient regularity, including procedures for planning trips and visits out of school. Although the quality of the accommodation is good, overcrowding still remains an issue in the corridors, a number of classrooms and in the dining area. Child protection procedures have also improved since the last inspection and the headteacher and all teaching staff have received appropriate training. However, guidance in the teachers' planners is limited and the non-teaching staff have yet to receive training. Procedures and rewards to promote good behaviour are now well established as a result of the school's focus on behaviour management, and pupils are well supervised at work and play. There is a clear code of conduct; pupils know what is expected of them and feel they are treated fairly.

36. The very good relationships fostered in the school enhance pupils' personal development. Pupils feel confident that form tutors and heads of year know them well and their individual circumstances. They know that there is a teacher in whom they can confide, if they are in difficulty or have a problem. The support for their pastoral development is good. The school supports pupils in public care sensitively and relationships with the family liaison officer and the education welfare officer have mostly been very positive. A policy to guide staff about racial equality is now in place. Systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' academic progress and achievements are in place but are inconsistent across subjects. Not all pupils know what they need to do to improve and are not effectively involved in deciding their own targets. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into school life and well cared for. They receive good support through a range of programmes to cater for their individual needs.

37. The recently appointed coordinator for special educational needs has made sure that teaching assistants working closely with pupils give their valuable insights into the monitoring of progress, and that class teachers have easy access to information about the needs of individuals. The behaviour, attitudes and progress of individual pupils are monitored through the records kept by teaching assistants so that issues are identified and dealt with quickly. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed twice each year, with contributions from specialist support staff, teaching assistants, parents, pupils and class teachers. However, they contain limited information and so their format is being revised. The school should also consider reviewing them more frequently.

38. There are very good induction arrangements for pupils entering in Year 5. The programme includes a transfer day where pupils visit the school, opportunities to participate in a summer school involving pupils in a range of activities including English, mathematics, science, physical education and orienteering, and culminating in an induction day at the beginning of Year 5 welcoming them into the school. Pupils feel well prepared and confident in moving between schools.

39. The systems for involving pupils in the school's work and development are satisfactory. The school council, with a representative from each class, meets once a month and provides opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to school life, although many pupils are unaware of what the school council does and acts upon. The school has carried out two surveys of pupils in the last four years and more genuine concerns have

come through the surveys and via members of staff. As a result, the role of school prefects has just been introduced to assist in supervising pupils during the school day.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are satisfied with the quality of education the school provides.
- Communication with parents is too limited to ensure that they receive regular helpful information about the curriculum and the work of the school.
- Reports are inconsistent between classes in the amount of clear information provided about progress.
- Links with other schools in the area support the curriculum well.

Commentary

40. The school welcomes parents and contacts them promptly to discuss any concerns. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school and have confidence that any issues will be dealt with effectively. The majority of parents are supportive of the work of the school and are interested in their child's progress. This is reflected in the high attendance at open evenings and support for fund-raising activities. However, there are a significant number of parents who do not consider that the school has a policy of regularly seeking their views. Some parents use their child's contact book as a means of communication with teachers, but there are inconsistencies between classes in their use and the practice is not well established throughout the school.

41. The quality of information prior to induction into Year 5 is good and parents and children receive helpful information about the school. Newsletters once a term inform parents about events and proposed activities, but they receive insufficient information about the curriculum and the celebration of pupils' achievements. A significant proportion of parents do not feel well informed about their child's progress. The school has recently revised its reporting format and has introduced an interim report during the year. Some parents may find these confusing when there is no explanation of the grades included and no indication of targets. The quality of the annual reports is inconsistent between classes and overall they are unsatisfactory. Although some helpful information is included about what has been taught, statements about the pupil's actual progress often lack clarity and give limited information about how to improve.

42. The school involves parents in annual reviews of pupils with special educational needs by inviting them to take part in review meetings. Only a minority attend, but individual education plans are made available to parents who are unable to attend. The special needs coordinator has good communication with first schools and with the local secondary school so that pupils' needs are identified and can be met when they change schools. The school makes full use of relevant outside agencies to assist with the range of pupils' special needs.

43. The school has satisfactory links with the community. Local clubs and organisations use the accommodation regularly. Pupils take part regularly in fund-raising for local and national charities. There are close links with Minster Abbey, and the Canon is a regular visitor to lead assemblies. Pupils attend special services and make Christmas decorations each year, which are displayed in the Abbey. The school's partnership with other schools is

good, and pupils benefit from the opportunity to take part in competitive sports and other activities. The headteachers and subject leaders in other local middle schools and the upper school meet regularly to discuss curricular issues. The school has a good partnership with local teacher training institutions and welcomes students for specific projects and teaching practice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and have several good features. The leadership team are good role models and share a commitment to school improvement. The governing body is beginning to give strategic direction to the school and is undertaking its responsibilities satisfactorily, but it has not ensured that citizenship and careers education are taught in Years 7 and 8 or fully implemented the Disability Act 2001. The routine management of the school is effective and satisfactory financial structures and procedures are in place.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior leadership team provide good role models and have established effective working relationships within the school.
- The development plan is not sharp enough in its focus on priorities for improvement and how to achieve them.
- The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Monitoring and self-evaluation within subject areas is not rigorous enough.

Commentary

44. Since the last inspection, when governance was unsatisfactory, the governing body has been strengthened by the appointment of new members and the provision of additional training. Governance is now satisfactory. The governing body has an effective committee system and receives detailed reports from the headteacher. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of their role in holding the school to account. They are supportive of the leadership team and understand the questions they should be asking in challenging the team. The governors do not meet their statutory responsibility for ensuring the teaching of citizenship and careers education in Years 7 and 8 or in the implementation of the Disability Act 2001 with respect to accessibility. They do not yet take a strong enough lead in policy formulation or in monitoring the plans for school improvement.

45. The headteacher has created an effective leadership team, which has clear responsibilities and builds on complementary skills. They are good role models and their high expectations of behaviour and achievement create a positive and caring ethos in the school. There are also good role models among the wider senior management team and subject leaders, a number of whom are recent appointments. Leadership is good in English, science, history and physical education but is unsatisfactory in French and music as not enough has been done to tackle the weaknesses found at the time of the last inspection. Leadership of citizenship is also unsatisfactory. In other subjects, leadership is satisfactory. The management structure is well understood and day-to-day management of the school is efficient. Most subject leaders manage their subjects satisfactorily, with good management provided in English, science and physical education. It is unsatisfactory in design and technology, music and personal, social and health education. The monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out by the leadership team, but has not yet been in place

for long enough for its impact on targets for improvement to be measured. Data on pupils' progress is recorded accurately, but is not centrally monitored in such a way that challenging targets for improvement can be set and measured on a regular basis. Monitoring and evaluation within subject areas, especially by subject leaders, is not regular, consistent or rigorous enough.

46. The school development plan has a large number of strands but includes too many priorities. The success criteria are vague and there is insufficient detail on timescales and the costs of undertaking individual activities. In addition, the arrangements to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in raising standards and improving the quality of provision are not sharp enough.

47. Leadership of the special educational needs area is satisfactory, with good improvement over the past year. The recently appointed coordinator has increased the effectiveness of teaching assistants through specific training and by involving them to a greater extent in the planning for individual pupils. She has already provided discussion documents raising key issues about the school's strategies for dealing with special educational needs, and so is taking a leading part in planning for improvement. Her thoughtful approach, based on building relationships and researching alternative routes with expert external advice and further training, is designed to make sure that future directions are well matched to the needs and resources of the school.

48. Management of the provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. Communication is good, with regular meetings to share information. The deputy coordinator provides very good support to teaching assistants during withdrawal sessions. The guidance available to subject teachers is clear and accessible in that they can easily identify pupils' needs. There are, however, no specific strategies for dealing with individual pupils in class, either in the individual education plans or in the documentation available to teachers. The large number of teaching assistants are heavily involved in withdrawal sessions so that their effective classroom support is not always available even to classes who are almost all on the special educational needs register. There are weaknesses in the management of the timetable for withdrawal sessions as many pupils miss the same session every week to the detriment of their subject work.

49. Performance management has improved since the last inspection, following changes in the sharing of responsibilities amongst the senior management team. The new team leaders carried out statutory performance reviews in September 2004. Currently, all lesson observations are undertaken by the headteacher, who has seen and made written records on two-thirds of the teaching staff. Teachers' professional development needs have been identified and provided for, such as in the management and use of the school's ICT resources. Overall, the arrangements for performance management are satisfactory, and provision for the professional development of staff is good.

50. The school has a good programme for the induction of new staff and makes a good contribution to initial teacher training. It has managed satisfactorily the difficulties it has faced in the recruitment and retention of staff, for example, by appointing teachers under the Graduate Training Scheme and retaining their services when qualified. Through internal promotion, opportunities have been taken to encourage teachers to develop their careers in the school. Newly appointed staff and recently promoted subject leaders receive good support from senior staff.

51. The school manages its resources satisfactorily and uses its funding appropriately to benefit pupils currently in the school, although there was a higher carry forward figure at the end of last year than normally found. This was due to the postponement of decisions to extend the school's accommodation and proposals to review the organisation of schools in the area. The pupil-teacher ratio is well above the average for pupils in middle schools but

this is partly the result of the limitations of the accommodation, which provides very few additional spaces to group pupils more flexibly. On a day-to-day basis, the school's finances are managed well. The budget is up-to-date, and financial procedures are carried out in accordance with requirements. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily in managing and using resources in order to secure improvements. Overall, the school give satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,474,504
Total expenditure	1,554,013
Expenditure per pupil	3,251

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	184,602
Balance carried forward to the next year	105,093

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective planning and management of lessons enable pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers' enthusiasm and high expectations lead to positive responses from the pupils, particularly in Years 7 and 8.
- Pupils do not often receive specific advice on how to improve their work.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Opportunities for pupils to benefit from drama in English lessons are limited.

Commentary

52. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards were below the national average and those for similar schools, although the proportion gaining the higher levels was in line with the national picture. Girls performed better than boys, and reading was stronger than writing. Similar standards overall were attained in 2004, although fewer pupils gained Level 5 or higher. Pupils did not do as well in the English tests as they did in mathematics and science. In the Year 9 tests taken a year early by selected pupils in Year 8 in 2003, the results were in line with the national average, with girls significantly out-performing boys. In 2004, the results were better than in 2003. In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment on entry is below average, particularly in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards remain below the level expected nationally, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 8, standards are in line with national expectations, showing that pupils have achieved well since the start of Year 7. Most pupils are articulate in spoken English. They listen well to the teacher and increasingly well to each other. Most have a good grasp of the plot and characters in the books they read, and the more capable pupils can comment on theme and language. Most are able to write in an appropriate style for a range of purposes, but there are still weaknesses in spelling and punctuation, particularly in boys' writing. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because there is effective partnership between teachers and support staff.

53. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in Years 5 and 6. They arrive punctually and ready to work. Most can maintain their concentration and interest throughout the lesson. In Years 7 and 8, attitudes are very good. Pupils work well together and show respect for each other's ideas. There is a very good level of engagement in teaching groups of all abilities.

54. Teaching and learning are both good overall in Years 5 to 8. Lessons are well planned, enabling pupils to build on previous knowledge and skills. Most lessons get off to a good start with an appropriate and engaging activity. Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious, making the pupils keen to do well. Objectives of the session are usually shared with the class, but are not always expressed as clear learning intentions. Reviews of learning at the end of lessons are planned but do not always take place; as a result, learning is not always

consolidated. In many lessons, an effective blend of encouragement and challenge stimulates learning. Behaviour is well managed and expectations are high. Pair and group work is used well to encourage pupils to develop their own ideas. Marking is regular and encouraging, but pupils do not often receive specific advice on how to improve. Some classes use ICT well to enhance their work, leading to stimulating displays in corridors and classrooms.

55. The schemes of work are well structured. The range of writing tasks is broad, giving opportunities to explore a variety of purposes and readerships. The literature studied by differing ability groups is insufficiently challenging for the most capable pupils and does not provide appropriate levels of language for others. Since drama is not taught as a discrete subject, the English scheme of work is not specific enough in identifying opportunities for using a dramatic approach in lessons. Through exploring topics such as justice, good and evil and homelessness, English makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development as young citizens.

56. English is led well, and management is good. The subject leader has clear priorities and strategies for improvement, making good use of support from the local education authority. Clear guidance is given to the large team of teachers of English. Good use of assessment data informs planning and enables the progress of individuals and groups to be tracked. Monitoring of books and planning is regular, although there are few opportunities for lesson observation. Self-evaluation is candid and constructive. Individual target-setting is becoming well established, and pupils know what is expected of them. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Strengths such as planning, class management and subject leadership have been maintained. The overall quality of teaching has improved, along with levels of challenge and provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. There is a whole-school policy for developing literacy skills across all subject areas, and several subjects have their own statements and strategies for marking and ensuring the correct use of subject vocabulary. Most subjects offer good opportunities to develop listening and speaking skills, but fewer subjects encourage reading and writing. Standards of literacy are average overall in all years, and in no subject is low competence a barrier to learning.

Modern foreign languages

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good class management and relationships provide a positive environment for learning.
- The most capable pupils in Years 7 and 8 do insufficient extended reading and writing.
- The use of too much English in most lessons limits pupils' progress in French.
- Unsatisfactory assessment and recording of pupils' achievement in Years 7 and 8 hinders the monitoring of their progress.
- Insufficient progress has been made on issues raised in the last report.

Commentary

58. Standards by Year 6 and Year 8 are in line with national expectations overall. Speaking and listening skills are much stronger than reading and writing. Most pupils exchange routine phrases confidently from memory. Standards in reading and writing are average in Year 6; most pupils recognise and match French words to pictures and copy words and phrases with reasonable accuracy. In Year 8, reading and writing skills are below average. The little reading aloud heard was hesitant. Most writing is to a model and there is minimal free extended writing. The small amount of homework given is mainly learning, which further reduces opportunities for extended reading or writing.

59. Achievement in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory overall. It is very good in occasional lessons when pupils hear and use a significant amount of French. Achievement in Years 7 and 8 is also satisfactory overall. Pupils in the top sets in Years 7 and 8 underachieve because they are insufficiently challenged by similar tasks given to lower sets, a relatively slow pace of teaching and not reading or writing longer pieces of French often enough. Achievement in the bottom Year 8 set is also unsatisfactory. The pupils learn very little as class control over-rides the teaching of French. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve in line with others in their class and several achieve well. Those who are withdrawn to work on computerised reading or numeracy support programs make very poor or erratic progress as they miss too much basic teaching. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve broadly in line with others in their class or set. More girls than boys are in top sets.

60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but occasionally very good in Year 5 and good in Year 7. Most pupils are keen to participate and to gain reward points. Teachers plan a good variety of activities and provide interesting display material to aid learning. Good use of visual aids and audio and video materials contrasts with minimal use of computers for word-processing; languages software that is available has not yet been used. Teachers are competent in French but often speak in English, so that pupils hear and speak too little French.

61. Marking in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory and mostly regular, but the lack of a guiding comment prevents pupils from knowing how they can improve. The teacher provides some oral guidance in class, however. Assessment is unsatisfactory because the infrequent recording of a single overall test mark makes it difficult to track pupils' progress in individual language skills, especially as not all pupils have tracker sheets in their exercise books.

62. Management is satisfactory. The two teachers meet quite frequently. The lack of any written evaluation or target setting limits the effect of monitoring by senior staff. Leadership is unsatisfactory as progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards remain similar but insufficient progress has been made in development planning, planning to raise standards, the setting of homework, improving reading and writing in Years 7 and 8, and the use of ICT. Pupils still have too little awareness of how to improve their work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection as a result of a well-planned curriculum.
- A significant proportion of pupils in Year 8 entered for the national tests attained standards normally associated with higher attaining pupils in Year 9.
- Insufficient challenging work and a limited variety of approaches prevent some pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 from progressing well.
- Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but give insufficient guidance on how to improve it.

- Teachers receive insufficient guidance on how to choose suitable activities for developing pupils' understanding successfully.

Commentary

63. Pupils come to the school with standards in mathematics that are typical of pupils of their age. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004, the results overall were in line with the national average and with those in similar schools, with girls doing better than boys. Although the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or above was average, the proportion reaching Level 5 or above was below the national average. The results were similar to those in science and better than those in English. Overall standards improved in 2003 and again in 2004. By Year 6, standards of work in lessons and in pupils' books are in line with the national expectation and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are competent in the use of number and use calculators well.

64. At the end of Year 8, the more capable pupils take national tests designed for pupils a year older. In 2003 and 2004, about half of the year group were entered for these tests. Of these, four out of five attained Level 6 or above which is above the standard expected of pupils in Year 9 and a significant proportion attained the higher Level 7, which is well above the standard expected. Although there is a wide range of attainment, overall standards by Year 8 are above the level expected nationally and pupils' achievement is good. Capable pupils very competently draw upon a broad base of knowledge to solve complex problems but are less adept at setting out their working; all pupils use satisfactory working out for routine exercises.

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good and very good lessons in Years 5 and 6 and occasionally in Year 8. A Year 5 class interpreted graphs well because pupils had a good understanding of principles, some developed using computers, and the topic was set in an interesting context. With the exception of the most capable, pupils in Years 6, 7 and 8 do too many repetitive exercises, which do not challenge them. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 briskly draw upon well-developed algebraic skills, together with a comprehensive knowledge of shapes, to solve problems successfully. However, typically, pupils' learning in Years 7 and 8 is but satisfactory because new experiences are not rooted sufficiently in previous learning. There is also a lack of variety in activities, such as in-depth discussion and investigative work, to promote understanding. In some classes, homework and the use of ICT are not used to best advantage to raise standards and broaden pupils' experience. Teaching assistants contribute significantly to the standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs; groups of pupils in Years 5 and 6 progress well as a result of this support. In addition, the use of a commercial computerised programme is effective in developing the numeracy skills of lower attaining pupils.

66. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored through half-termly tests, which are assessed against National Curriculum criteria. Teachers use this information appropriately to focus attention on pupils needing additional support. Generally, however, individual guidance for improvement through the marking of pupils' work is inadequate. The provision of an accelerated course benefits a significant number of capable pupils in Years 7 and 8 but there is no further enrichment for those identified as gifted and talented. A Saturday Booster Club enhances the attainment of around 30 higher attaining pupils in Year 6.

67. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The subject leader provides a very good role model and is a knowledgeable source of advice to a large enthusiastic team. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. However, although standards and the quality of teaching have improved recently, there is not enough

rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the last inspection. More teaching by specialists is required in Years 7 and 8 to raise standards for all pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Planning for mathematics across the curriculum is poor. Consequently, mathematical skills are neither broadly used nor developed in other subjects, including design and technology, ICT and geography. In contrast, this is a strong feature of science, for which higher attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8 use mathematics well. Perspective drawing, enlargement and pattern making in art use mathematical skills satisfactorily. In mathematics lessons, opportunities to apply mathematics to other subjects, including aspects of social and cultural understanding and citizenship, are not planned. Overall, pupils have adequate mathematical skills for the study of all other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attainment of those pupils entered at the end of Year 8 for the national tests for 14 year-olds a year early is notably high.
- The subject coordinator provides enthusiastic and determined leadership.
- Teachers have high expectations and provide challenging work, which extends all pupils.
- Pupils are kept well informed about their level of attainment but the marking of their work does not help them understand what they have to do to improve.
- The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

69. The results of the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were in line with the national average and were above the average for similar schools. Apart from a slight drop in 2002, the trend in these results has been consistently upward since 2000 and is above the national trend. The results were similar to those in mathematics and better than those in English. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or higher is above the national average and the average for similar schools. As their attainment on entry to Year 5 is broadly average, pupils' achievement through Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve equally well.

70. In 2004, half of the pupils in Year 8 were entered for the national tests normally taken by pupils at the end of Year 9. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 or higher was well above the national average and significantly higher than in 2003. As the attainment of these pupils on entry to Year 7 is above average, the achievement of this group during Years 7 and 8 is good. Standards of work of the pupils in Year 8 who will not be taking these tests in 2005 are in line with the national expectation. The attainment of these pupils on entry to Year 7 is average, and their achievement during Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory. Overall, pupils' achievement during Years 7 and 8 is good although it has not yet had sufficient time to have an impact on overall standards by the end of Year 8. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational

needs achieve as well as other pupils because of the good support they receive in lessons from teaching assistants.

71. Teaching is good. It is at least satisfactory in all lessons and more often good. The proportion of good teaching is the same in all years, even though the Year 5 and some Year 6 classes are taught by non-specialists in general classrooms. Pupils' learning is good because teachers make the lessons interesting as well as matching the work closely to pupils' learning needs. Teachers' high expectations of their pupils are evident in all of the work that they undertake. Pupils are routinely presented with activities that challenge and develop their knowledge and understanding of science. The monitoring of pupils' progress by the use of end of topic test scores is good. The results of these tests and their end of year targets are kept in pupils' exercise books and they understand what these tell them about how well they are doing. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly and write many supportive comments. However, these focus on its accuracy and presentation rather than providing the pupils with advice about how to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

72. Despite the availability of an adequate range of software and the opportunities for its use defined clearly in the scheme of work, teachers do not exploit the particular advantages of computers to support pupils' learning. Pupils do not use ICT to present their work. They have inadequate access to the necessary facilities to use simulations or virtual experiments that allow them to explore areas of the scheme of work where other practical activities are limited.

73. Leadership of the subject is good. There is a clear drive for improvement, with the enthusiasm and determination of the subject coordinator being significant factors in the improvements made in the provision. Information about the quality of teaching, which is gathered routinely by the subject leader, is used effectively to enable suitable support to be provided to both newly qualified and non-specialist teachers. The management of the subject is good. Teachers are deployed effectively, making good use of subject specialisms and expertise with particular groups. The accommodation for teaching science is excellent. The subject is well organised, with a very good range of teaching resources. The subject handbook provides very good support for inexperienced teachers and those new to the school. The progress of the subject since the last inspection has been good and it has the capacity to improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages are being taught good technical skills to equip them for the use of ICT.
- The school co-operates well with other schools to provide consistent progression in the development of ICT skills.
- The improved network and training give teachers confidence to use ICT in other subjects.
- Teaching does not encourage pupils to think enough about their application of ICT.
- Teachers do not plan well to provide additional challenge for higher attaining pupils.

- The ICT room is poorly designed so that it is not possible to supervise a class while supporting a pupil at one end of the room.

Commentary

74. Standards by the end of Year 6 and Year 8 are in line with those found nationally. Pupils enter the school with the skills expected for their age, and so their achievement over the four years is satisfactory. They have good technical skills throughout the school, particularly in designing presentations in Year 6 and in Year 7. All pupils use digital photographs and clip-art to illustrate their message. They link screens competently, for example, to create alternative endings to stories. By Year 8, they design their own web sites using a desktop publishing program. Higher attaining pupils design their links logically to cross-reference screens. The majority are able to create a working sequence of screens. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because they are given good individual support.

75. Throughout the school, the main difference between pupils of different capabilities lies in the extent to which they create consistency in their designs. Girls attain better standards than boys because they take greater care and so are more accurate. Pupils' main weakness in all year groups is the extent to which they think about their work. They do not apply their numeracy or literacy skills well to ICT. When using spreadsheets, pupils in Year 6 created graphs but did not interpret them. A large proportion of the spreadsheets produced by pupils in Years 7 and 8 show that they calculate results and enter them rather than write formulae. Their writing is inaccurate, both in sentence construction and in spelling when a spell-check is not available, as, for example, in Word-art. Although they enjoy using computers, both in ICT and in other subjects, their standard is lower when they do not take time to think before they act. Only the presentations of the highest attainers show that pupils have thought about the relationship between purpose and design. Their evaluations of their own work and that of others do not demonstrate thinking beyond their own personal preferences.

76. This mixed picture is the result of teaching that is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, leading to good behaviour in most lessons, even in the very difficult conditions of a curved classroom. They give clear explanations of procedures in well-planned demonstrations so that technical skills are well developed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by individual help, although teachers do not plan tasks to challenge the higher attainers. Teachers, however, do not encourage pupils to research the purpose of their work, to meet needs other than their own preferences or to evaluate the outcomes in terms of their effectiveness.

77. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The new subject leader receives good support from senior staff and the local education authority, and has made a good beginning in establishing a basis for developing ICT in the school. There is good communication through regular meetings but the monitoring of ICT is superficial as it relies too much on close examination of work on the network. As a result, the leader knows that the scheme of work is being covered, although he has no means of establishing the extent to which higher thinking skills are taught. The ICT curriculum is satisfactory, with strengths in the coverage of processes and in links with other schools, so that pupils are well prepared for transfer to the next school. Improved coverage of the curriculum and more reliable equipment has led to satisfactory improvement in the quality of provision for ICT since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. Pupils have sufficient skills in ICT to enable them to make satisfactory progress in most subjects when they are given the opportunity to use computers. However, the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum is being developed but is not yet fully secure. Some departments, such as art and design and mathematics, have planned well for the use of computers. Some teachers of English, science and history also use ICT well to help learning. Most teachers, however, make insufficient use of ICT to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum. In most subjects, the situation has improved since the last inspection as staff have been trained and the equipment is more reliable, and the use of ICT is being written into schemes of work. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to teachers' high expectations, work well together and contribute willingly to discussions.
- There is no planning for ICT opportunities and the development of fieldwork techniques.
- The revised schemes of work allow both specialist and non-specialist teachers to teach with confidence and consistency.
- Assessment is not used to show pupils what they must do to improve or to set challenging targets for them.
- There is insufficient extended writing and research to challenge the higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

79. The attainment of pupils on entry is typical for their age but their general knowledge of places is weak. Their achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory and they reach the standards expected for their age. Pupils have a good knowledge of the continents, understand the water cycle and use technical terms well. Standards remain in line with national expectations by Year 8 and pupils' achievement in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory. They have a good knowledge of the local area and of why people choose to live in different locations. Atlas skills are well developed. Boys achieve as well as girls in class, in response to opportunities for discussion and paired work. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and the learning assistants are deployed well to support them. The achievement of higher attaining pupils is satisfactory but they are not given sufficiently challenging extension tasks.

80. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in Years 5 and 7. Unsatisfactory teaching in Year 8 reflects the boisterous behaviour of pupils in the lower set. Both specialist and non-specialist teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. They plan well-structured lessons with varied activities and resources. Questioning techniques and personal anecdotes are used well to stimulate pupils' interest. The use of homework to extend learning is satisfactory and oral feedback is good. Written comments, while positive, do not tell pupils clearly what they have to do to improve.

81. Pupils develop satisfactory literacy skills through the reinforcement of key words. There are many opportunities for reading and discussion but little evidence of extended writing or individual research. Satisfactory teaching of numeracy skills results in the accurate use of graphs and charts in Years 7 and 8. The use of ICT is not integrated into schemes of work and there is not enough use of subject-specific software. The selection of world-wide case studies contributes well to pupils' cultural and moral development. They were able to reflect sensitively on the impact of the tsunami disaster on families and governments.

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has re-written the schemes of work to ensure a balanced curriculum and is putting strategies in place to improve assessment. Textbooks are now modern and appropriate for each age group. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, particularly in the consistency of marking and in subject content. The application of ICT and fieldwork techniques remains unsatisfactory and the monitoring of development plans is rudimentary.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good because it motivates pupils to learn and achieve well.
- The subject leader gives clear guidance to teachers for raising standards.
- Pupils know how well they achieve from comments on their work and regular assessments.
- Teachers do not match tasks to pupils' abilities consistently in all lessons.
- Some pupils do not use information obtained from the Internet with sufficient discrimination.

Commentary

83. Standards are below expectations when pupils begin the subject in Year 5. The writing of average and lower attaining pupils is slow and inaccurate, and their work is sometimes incomplete. By the end of Year 6, standards are as expected for their age because pupils achieve well in learning new skills, improve their writing, as well as their understanding of where events fit into time. For example, they reflect well upon the social care in Victorian times by interpreting a photograph of people in a workhouse, and compare this with their knowledge of what happens today. Higher attaining pupils produce good quality independent work using Internet sites, although lower attaining pupils download information using a framework given by the teacher without attempting to analyse it. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 use their skills well to select evidence from many sources for writing extensively about the Inuit people of North America; average and lower attaining pupils use a clear structure to guide their work. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs draft their work first to check on spelling and punctuation, and they achieve as expected. Overall, standards by the end of Year 8 are as expected for pupils of this age, as at the time of the last inspection, and there are no marked differences between those reached by boys and girls.

84. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Examples of satisfactory and very good teaching and learning were also seen. Effective lesson planning includes clear

learning objectives and a check that these have been met at the end of lessons. In very effective lessons, teachers make pupils think carefully about evidence through thoughtfully constructed questions. For example, pupils in Year 8 studying the impact of Europeans on Native North American people, found evidence from a film to answer a list of searching questions from the teacher, such as, *why were so many buffalo killed by Europeans?* Higher attaining pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented, were challenged to consider the moral issues of settlement using an additional sheet of tasks. However, this practice of matching tasks to pupils' capabilities is not seen consistently in all lessons or for homework. In classes where there is a wider range of abilities, not all teachers provide tasks, or use questions, that allow pupils to understand at their individual level. Occasionally, this results in their attention waning and low-level noise developing amongst pupils who normally behave well and have good attitudes. Teaching assistants help pupils with special educational needs to make progress by ensuring they understand questions and know what is expected. When teaching assistants are not present, the support given by class teachers is inconsistent. Pupils keep a record sheet of their National Curriculum levels from assessed work. This helps them to track and improve their progress, based on the requirements for each level.

85. Subject leadership is good, and management is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning and the assessment procedures has improved and progress has been good. Teachers continue to organise visits so pupils see evidence at historical sites to illuminate topics studied in school. The new subject leader has introduced assessments that relate well to National Curriculum levels, but the evaluation of data is not yet fully in place. The subject leader sets a good example of how the subject should be taught to raise achievement, and he shares this through regular meetings with the team.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn and support each other.
- Lesson planning across the department is unsatisfactory and fails to identify the designing, making and evaluating skills of design and technology.
- The subject leader's regular meetings with staff are helping to promote a team approach and good working relationships.
- The use of ICT to help pupils with the presentation of their work is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

86. Standards by Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 8, standards are below national expectations because the curriculum fails to provide pupils with consistent opportunities to develop and reinforce the key elements of design and technology, such as designing, making and evaluating. Pupils are not taught the necessary skills and techniques, including the use of ICT, to produce accurate and detailed drawings. There are too many repetitive tasks, for example, poster design, where pupils are not taught the skills necessary for them to improve the quality of their work. Pupils' achievement in Year 5 and 6 is satisfactory; it is unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are identified within lessons but a

lack of detail in teachers' planning means that their needs are not consistently addressed or met. As a result, their achievement is unsatisfactory. Currently, higher attaining pupils are not identified and their needs are not met adequately. Their achievement is unsatisfactory because of the lack of challenge and a failure to build on technology skills and competencies.

87. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, but based on a limited number of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, it is unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8. In a food technology lesson in Year 6, pupils responded very positively to opportunities to evaluate a variety of fillings for their cakes. The good quality teaching, with a strong practical bias, stimulated their thinking and pupils of all capabilities were able to make valuable and lively contributions to the discussion. In the majority of lessons, in all years, insufficient attention is given to producing a clear specification of what the pupils should do, and the criteria for the successful completion of tasks are not identified. Pupils are unclear about what they need to do in order to improve their work and opportunities for teachers to assess pupils' technological skills are limited. As a result, the assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Time is not always well used because pupils spend too long on activities that are too abstract and theoretical.

88. All pupils are cooperative and behave well; they are keen to learn, particularly in practical sessions where their enjoyment is evident. Learning is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 but learning for the older pupils is unsatisfactory because they are not taught the basic skills of technology that would enable them to make progress.

89. Leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader has worked hard to produce a unified team of technology teachers. However, management is unsatisfactory because the steps taken to remedy weaknesses identified in the last inspection report are taking too long to implement. Progress since that time has been unsatisfactory. Group sizes are smaller but graphical and written communication skills remain weak. No consistent links are made with either literacy or numeracy and improvement in these areas is unsatisfactory. Until very recently, the shortage of specialist staff to teach food technology and textiles in Years 7 and 8 has narrowed the breadth of the curriculum. Topics identified in the scheme of work are appropriate but are not matched well enough to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory and the technical workshop support is effective.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on the development and improvement of drawing skills.
- A wide range of media is well used.
- Assessment is firmly linked to National Curriculum levels.
- The pace of work is insufficiently demanding in some lessons.
- The erratic approach to homework and the inconsistency in marking in some classes slows progress.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

90. By Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations. In one Year 5 class, standards were above average as a result of the teaching strategies used. Observational drawing skills, work in three-dimensional materials and different approaches to the use of composition and colour, including the use of ICT, are effectively developed. Pupils understand how to enlarge small drawings accurately in readiness for large colour work and how to blend colours and shade with pencils in order to represent form. By Year 8, standards are at the level expected for pupils of this age. Their work reflects successful experimentation in a wide range of materials, including a variety of approaches to printmaking. Work in class also extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of famous artists. Little is planned to expand their awareness and appreciation of other cultures. The current timetable arrangements mean that pupils are not taught art on a regular weekly basis throughout the year. This method of organisation and the absence of a homework programme slow their progress.

91. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 5 - 8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in all years as the result of the teaching methods used and the levels of support provided. There are no additional extension opportunities planned for pupils identified as gifted and talented. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

92. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is sometimes good in Year 8 and occasionally very good in Year 5. Teachers are enthusiastic and generally thorough in their planning. Lessons are most successful when learning intentions are clear, the task is challenging and there is very high expectation of pupils' involvement. Pupils are not always sure of the aims of the lesson and sometimes the pace of work is insufficiently demanding for some pupils. The end of lesson review is not always used effectively to evaluate learning or to raise expectations. The half-termly review sheet, linked to National Curriculum levels, which incorporates pupils' views and targets for improvement, is a good feature. This contributes to the satisfactory opportunities pupils are given to use their literacy skills, although more could be planned to assist this development. The approach to general marking is inconsistent and pupils do not get enough regular guidance on ways in which to improve their work and raise their standards. Pupils behave well and most respond with interest and enthusiasm.

93. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is an enthusiastic and experienced teacher who provides good support materials for non-specialist teachers in Year 5, three of whom were new to the school this year. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There has been a strong emphasis on raising standards of drawing, in the use of ICT and in establishing procedures for levelling work in Years 6, 7 and 8 against National Curriculum criteria. The data now available is capable of being used more effectively to identify underachievement and to inform planning. An attractive and well-ordered environment for learning has been created in a room with very poor natural light, very inadequate storage and with working space sufficient only for the small groups currently timetabled. The good displays in the art room and public areas around the school make a good contribution to the school's ethos.

Music

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Frequent staff changes adversely affect continuity of learning.
- Standards in Years 6 and 8 are below the level expected nationally and pupils are underachieving.
- ICT is not used to support teaching and learning.
- A small number of pupils are learning to play musical instruments.

Commentary

94. Standards by Year 6 and Year 8 are below the levels expected nationally and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is due mainly to the lack of continuity in teaching caused by the long-term illness of the present subject leader and the frequency with which supply teachers change. There is no significant difference between the work of boys and girls. The supply teacher currently teaching music was at a disadvantage by not having met the classes he was to teach before the inspection began.

95. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 because the work is not matched sufficiently to the interests and abilities of the pupils. Most of the work is based on copying from the board and drawing rhythm charts and, as a result, pupils soon lose interest. Although the teaching and learning in Year 8 is satisfactory, lesson objectives are not clearly outlined at the beginning of the session. The pupils, however, display good attitudes and behaviour and persevere well with their written work. Singing was not attempted in any lesson and the inclusion of other practical work was negligible. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for by the teaching assistants who are also supportive of others who need help in the class. ICT is not used in any lesson nor is there any evidence of assessment being used to support learning. The good displays of key words around the room are not used effectively to improve standards. A few pupils that are more talented learn instruments and the visiting instrumental teachers make a good contribution to the work of the department. To raise interest further, a military band has recently given a successful workshop for pupils in Year 6. As part of the school's involvement in the community, and to extend pupils' musical experiences, instrumentalists and singers take part in the Abbey carol service.

96. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because of the frequent changes of staff and the lack of continuity, which depresses standards. The scheme of work could benefit from being re-written to emphasise the enjoyment and pleasure that music making brings to many pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory as standards have not risen and there is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are good and pupils benefit from very good specialist accommodation.
- Relationships are very good; pupils are interested and enjoy physical education.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations demanded of them and, as a result, attitudes to learning are good.

- The subject makes a significant contribution to the moral and social development of the pupils.
- The good extracurricular provision is well supported by pupils and school teams are highly successful in local competitions.
- An over-emphasis on games limits the amount of time to cover other areas of the curriculum, especially dance.

Commentary

97. Standards by Year 6 and by Year 8 are in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry and make good progress from Year 5 to 8. In Years 5 and 6, lessons were seen in games and dance. In games, pupils are beginning to perform games skills with increasing control and confidence, individually, with a partner and in small groups. In a Year 6 hockey lesson, pupils made good progress in controlling the ball, changing speed and using reverse sticks. Pupils do not achieve as well in dance as the teachers lack specialist subject knowledge. In a Year 5 class, the tape recording used dictated the content and pace of the lesson and as a result, pupils had insufficient time to experiment and improve the quality of their work. Their movement vocabulary was limited. However, pupils responded sensitively to the music and the stimulus.

98. By Year 8, pupils become more expert in their skills and techniques and how to apply them in different activities. They understand the importance of warming up before physical activity, but are not confident in using technical language to describe the muscle groups when stretching. The majority of pupils achieve well in basketball, hockey and gymnastics, but the units of work are not long enough for pupils to consolidate their skills and apply them into recognised games and gymnastic sequences. This has an impact on standards. In a Year 8 basketball lesson, pupils performed a range of skills with increasing control and accuracy, changing speed and direction, and building upon previous experience. A number of higher attainers are beginning to anticipate moves in order to outwit their opponents and perform the skills with increasing consistency. Pupils use the specialist equipment and facilities with due care and attention and have a good awareness of their own and others' safety in all areas of activity.

99. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the physical education curriculum and achieve well. Both teachers and learning support assistants give them good support. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are encouraged to extend their skills in extracurricular clubs, school teams and local sporting clubs. However, in curricular time, these pupils are not sufficiently challenged to extend their knowledge and skills further.

100. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In Year 5 and 6, the teaching varies from satisfactory to good. The majority of lessons are taught by non-specialists, who lack sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding in a number of areas of activity. In Year 7 and Year 8, experienced specialists teach pupils. Where the teaching is good, lessons are well planned, managed and organised with a good balance of activities, although lessons do not always end with a cooling-down activity. The majority of pupils are involved in planning, performing and evaluating their work. The National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been implemented well, although the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT to enhance teaching and learning are not embedded in planning and teaching. Teachers develop very good relationships with all pupils; as a result, pupils concentrate, listen well, respond quickly to given tasks and work hard. They enjoy physical education. Assessment for learning is still in the early stages of development. The subject leader is currently piloting a system whereby pupils' progress can be monitored from Year 5 to Year 8.

101. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They respond well to the high expectations demanded of them and as a result, behaviour is good. In all areas of activity, pupils demonstrate good social and cooperative skills, and in competitive games, fair play and good sporting behaviour.

102. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is an experienced specialist who gives effective support to the physical education team, and is a good role model. Good quality policies and procedures ensure consistency within the subject. Games, especially invasion games, dominate the curriculum, greatly reducing the amount of time allocated to other areas of activity. The swimming programme in Year 5 has been postponed because of refurbishment of the local swimming pool. The curriculum time for physical education is lower than usually found for pupils of this age. Extracurricular provision is good and is well supported by pupils, and the school is highly successful in local sporting fixtures and competitions.

103. Overall, the subject has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Schemes of work have been developed further to involve pupils in planning and evaluating their work. A change of staff in Years 5 and 6 has resulted, however, in teachers lacking specialist subject knowledge in a number of activities. Dance is an area that has not improved; teachers lack subject knowledge and not all pupils have the opportunity to participate in dance activities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

104. The school has not implemented citizenship as a required element in the curriculum in Years 7 and 8. Consequently, provision does not meet statutory requirements. There is no scheme of work and no reference to its introduction is included in the school development plan. Pupils participate in a number of activities that are capable of contributing to the development of citizenship, such as raising money for local and national charities, the school's links with the community and through their contribution to the school council. In addition, topics covered in English, such as justice and homelessness, and in history and geography, have the potential to contribute to and form part of the curriculum for citizenship, as well as some topics covered in personal, social and health education. However, there is no clear leadership for developing this area of the curriculum and no strategy for taking the work forward to meet statutory requirements. Leadership and management overall are unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some sensitive teaching allows pupils to reflect on their experiences and develop confidence, self-esteem and positive attitudes.
- The assessment of pupils' work and development is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for sex education does not meet requirements in Years 7 and 8.

Commentary

105. All classes are allocated one period per week of personal, social and health education, but not all teachers make full use of this time to focus in depth on developing pupils' experiences in these areas. As a result, some lessons shown as personal, social and health education on the timetable were used for reading and other activities, which limited the amount of evidence available. By Year 6 and Year 8, standards are in line with expectations of pupils of these ages. This is evident from their work in lessons, on display around the school and in their behaviour towards and relationships with one another. They are making satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of a range of personal and social themes that are relevant to their age. Pupils in Year 6 are gaining good skills in being able to talk sensitively about some difficult issues, for example, in recognising other people's emotions, and are developing the confidence to make choices about what personal information they choose to share with others. In Year 8, pupils have a very good understanding of the influence that peer pressure, including the media, can have on people's views and their responses are thoughtful and positive. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all years.

106. In the small number of lessons seen, the quality of teaching is good and occasionally very good. Lessons are well structured and organised to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to discuss a range of issues in a secure atmosphere. In two lessons, one in Year 6 and one in Year 8, teachers have developed very good relationships with their pupils so that they are able to talk positively about their views and feelings in an atmosphere of trust and sensitivity. The reinforcement of rules, such as listening carefully, and allowing pupils to decide not to share their experiences, helps to create this positive climate. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups to discuss their ideas. Teachers make good use of questions to get pupils to contribute their ideas and use a wide variety of strategies and resources to maintain their interest and attention. Occasionally, the pace of a lesson diminishes slightly as too much time is spent on getting a contribution from all pupils in the class. As a result, pupils' concentration, which had been very good up until that time, began to falter.

107. Leadership is satisfactory, although there are some weaknesses, but management is unsatisfactory. The profile of the subject is being raised across the school but not with enough drive and energy. The coordinator has proposals for developing the current scheme of work and introducing new materials to help staff teach the programme more effectively. Sex education is covered in science, but this arrangement does not adequately meet the wider requirement of providing sex education in such a way as to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life or allow parents to withdraw their child from this aspect. There are no systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress and achievements. Not enough is done to monitor the work of teachers and pupils to ensure consistency of approach across the school. Some of these weaknesses were identified in the last inspection report and progress since that time has been unsatisfactory.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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