

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Oakfield School**

Frome, Somerset

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123866

Headteacher: Mr P. Hill

Lead inspector: John Carnaghan

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2004

Inspection number: 269100

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 - 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	702
School address:	Oakfield Road Frome Somerset
Postcode:	BA11 4JF
Telephone number:	01373 462539
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	October 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Oakfield School is a larger than average 9 to 13 middle school, serving the Somerset town of Frome. The area it serves has some deprivation and is, overall, below average in background. The standards of attainment of pupils as they enter the school are below what is expected. The number of pupils who take free school meals is average. Fewer than one in 20 pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. There are a very small number of travellers and no looked-after children. The school has no pupils from refugee families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and the numbers of those with Statements of Special Educational Need are also below average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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12890	Thomas Jardine	Team inspector	Science
17349	Paula Askew	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
2866	Robert Battey	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship Special educational needs
33368	Val Greatrex	Team inspector	Design and technology
4317	Ken Madrell	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education
28899	Graham Sims	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
33292	Hayley McDonagh	Team inspector	Music
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Oakfield School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils' standards have improved at a similar rate to the national average and their achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. The leadership of the school is satisfactory, focusing on raising expectations and improving standards. Management is satisfactory. The way the school is evaluated lacks the rigour required to ensure consistency between teachers. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is good so pupils learn and achieve well.
- Provision and achievement in English, science, geography, music and physical education are good. In modern foreign languages they are very good.
- The leadership and management of some subjects are hampered by divisions between arrangements for Years 5 and 6 and those for Years 7 and 8.
- Attendance is below average and procedures to promote good attendance are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their school.
- Opportunities for pupils' views to be heard and taken into account are good.
- Child protection procedures are not fully complied with although the school is addressing these.
- There are very good links with other schools and colleges and the local community.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities beyond the usual school day.
- Leadership and management of special educational needs are good.

The school was previously inspected in 1999. It has successfully addressed the key issue relating to improving the quality of education, but the quality of the school's self-evaluation has not improved enough and the school still does not meet requirements for acts of worship. Pupils' standards in Year 6 tests have risen, keeping pace with national improvements. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

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

*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.*

Current standards are average. On entering the school standards are generally below average, so pupils' achievement across the school is good. Pupils' achievement is very good in science in Years 5 and 6. It is good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), modern foreign languages, geography and music across the school and in science in Years 7 and 8. The performance of boys relative to girls varies between subjects but is generally similar to the national pattern. There are too few pupils from different ethnic groups to make judgements on standards but they achieve as well as their peers. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.

Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. Attitudes and relationships are good and behaviour is satisfactory. Development of moral and social awareness is good and that for spiritual and cultural awareness is satisfactory. The

action the school has taken to promote good attendance is unsatisfactory and attendance is below average.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are good. For the school as a whole, seven out of ten lessons seen were good or better. Teaching is consistent, is generally well planned and organised and has a clear focus on what is to be learnt. Lessons often have good pace. Where lessons are less effective, teaching can fail to inspire and focus on literacy can be weak. Pupils generally participate well in their learning when opportunities are given.

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. There are good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities. There are too few acts of collective worship. Guidance to help pupils improve is good. Assessment is satisfactory. It provides the school with valuable information and this is used to set clear improvement targets for pupils. The involvement of pupils in the running of the school is good and pupils' views are given sufficient weight. The school has satisfactory links with parents and very good links with the local community and other schools and colleges.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher, key staff and governors have a strong shared sense of purpose for the school. The leadership team is respected and hard-working. Management of the school is satisfactory but there is some lack of rigour in line management, which means that there are inconsistencies and weakness in some areas. Methods of self-evaluation are unsatisfactory because the school has not used its knowledge to consistently address weaknesses. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body supports the school well and contributes to shaping its direction for the future. However, governors have not ensured that the school meets all of its statutory requirements in providing acts of collective worship and child protection, although these are being addressed.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school. Most report that their children like school and have no significant concerns. Pupils like school and say teaching is good. They are very positive about their life at school. A very few of those who answered the questionnaire showed concerns about behaviour. These concerns are unjustified.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- ensure that evaluation of all aspects of the school is consistent and of high quality;
- introduce rigorous procedures to promote better attendance;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the school provides the required acts of collective worship;
- ensure that child protection procedures are complied with as planned.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The standards pupils obtain are **average** and achievement is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their time at school.
- Overall, standards in science, geography, modern foreign languages and music are above average.
- There are below average standards in Year 6 in design and technology and physical education.

#### Commentary

1. Pupils' attainment when they start school is generally below average. In Year 6, standards in tests and current standards are average overall. This indicates that pupils' achievement during their time in Years 5 and 6 is good. Standards by Year 8 are at the expected levels. This represents good achievement both for this age range and overall.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (26.1)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.1 (27.0)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.0 (29.6)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 161 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The school's results in tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated a little from year to year but, overall, the trend in results is similar to the rising national trend. Results in 2004 continued this general improvement. There were variations between standards in the three main subjects. In 2003, compared with national averages, science results were above average, mathematics results were broadly similar to the average and those in English were below average. Unvalidated 2004 results indicate that English standards improved and were average, those in mathematics were above average and those in science were well above average. When 2004 results are compared with these pupils' prior attainment in tests at the end of Year 2, results in science were well above average, English results were above average and mathematics results were average. These figures indicate generally good achievement for this group of pupils over Years 5 and 6. Girls' results in recent years differ from boys' in the same way that the national picture does.
3. Year 6 pupils' current standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science, geography, modern foreign languages and music. They are also at the nationally expected levels in ICT, art and design, history, religious education and citizenship. In design and technology and physical education they are below what is expected. The gains pupils make in their first two years provide a sound foundation for their continuing studies.
4. There are no national tests in Year 8 but current standards indicate that pupils' improvement continues throughout Years 7 and 8. The school's analysis of 'their' pupils' results in upper school Year 9 national tests support this conclusion. Achievement in Years 7 and 8 is good. Current standards in Year 8 are at expected levels, overall. They are better than expectations in science, geography, modern foreign languages and music. In all other subjects they are at the expected level.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains over time in relation to those areas of learning where they have the greatest difficulty. This is because teachers and learning support assistants work well together to meet pupils' individual needs. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. Gifted and talented pupils are recognised and a register is kept but the school has not yet evaluated provision.

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

The attitudes of pupils are **good**. The behaviour of pupils is **satisfactory**. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is **satisfactory**. The attendance of pupils is **unsatisfactory** and their punctuality is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attitudes of the majority of pupils towards school and their learning are good and relationships are positive.
- The poor attendance of a significant number of pupils reduces their educational opportunities and the procedures to monitor and improve attendance are unsatisfactory.
- The number of fixed term exclusions is too high and reintegration strategies ineffective.
- Opportunities for pupils to gain confidence and raise their self-esteem are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.

### **Commentary**

6. The attitudes of the majority of pupils towards school and their learning are good. Most work hard, take an active part in lessons, concentrate on their studies and enjoy their learning. Teachers have to work hard to motivate some pupils and stimulate in them a desire to learn. When teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are not high enough the attitudes and behaviour of pupils deteriorate and so does the progress in learning for all pupils in the class. This also occurs when the standard of work being presented is not well matched to pupils' needs.
7. The behaviour of pupils is satisfactory. A new system of behaviour management, based on points, has been introduced into Years 5 and 6 classes and early indications are that it has been successful. Pupils value the opportunity to win back points if they lose them. Behaviour management makes a significant contribution to their ability to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour and understanding the consequences of their actions, both negative and positive. Pupils interviewed said that bullying is not an issue and any incidents that do occur are effectively dealt with.
8. The number of fixed term exclusions is high. Twenty-four pupils were excluded during the last academic year, on 88 occasions, mostly in Years 7 and 8. Over half of those excluded had been identified as having special educational needs. The provision to support these pupils lacks an academic focus and barriers to learning still remain. Most have attendance levels below 90 per cent. Of the eight pupils excluded this term, four were also excluded last year.
9. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. It is not specifically planned for in all subjects. There are good opportunities for spiritual development in religious education, English and science. For example, poetry associated with the First World War gives pupils the opportunity to consider life and death. Moral and social development is good. Opportunities to represent the school in public speaking competitions, perform at arts events in the community and act as hosts to children from Chernobyl all have made a significant contribution towards their social development. Many subjects encourage pupils to consider moral issues. Visits to the wider community help to enrich pupils' multicultural awareness.

## Attendance

10. Attendance in 2002/03 was well below the national average for all schools. The figures reported for the year 2003/04 showed a small improvement; however, they are still well below the national average for all schools. Since the previous inspection attendance levels have improved. However, a significant number of pupils have attendance levels below 90 per cent. A number of parents condone their child's absence from school. There is a lack of rigour across the school in monitoring and promoting good attendance. This is due in part to the loss of a member of staff and reallocation of their duties. The local education authority is introducing new attendance management procedures in January 2005 that should support the school in this aspect of its work. Punctuality is satisfactory. A small number of pupils regularly arrive late at school for the start of the day.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.9	School data:	0.5
National data:	6.0	National data:	0.3

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

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	668	87	1
White – Irish	4	0	0
White – any other White background	15	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	1	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education that the school provides is **good**. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is **satisfactory**. The school provides **satisfactory** care for pupils. It has satisfactory links with parents and there are **very good** links with the local community and with other schools and colleges.

## Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and supported by good resources.
- Large numbers of support staff help pupils learn effectively.
- The school gathers assessment information well and uses it increasingly to promote achievement, but practice is inconsistent.
- Some teaching can be uninteresting and uninspiring.

### Commentary

11. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Seven out of ten lessons seen were good or better. In most subjects teaching is good or better and very few lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning in modern foreign languages in all years and in science in Years 5 and 6 are very good while in mathematics, design and technology, history, religious education and citizenship they are satisfactory. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are good.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 67 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	16 (24%)	31 (46%)	18 (27%)	2 (3 %)	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.*

12. Lessons are enhanced by the behaviour and consistently co-operative attitudes of pupils. The pupils listen well to their teachers and are keen to answer questions. They rarely need to be told twice and this means the pace of learning can be good. Pupils respond well to good quality lessons and this is a strong contributor to their good achievement.
13. Most lessons that are good or better are thoroughly planned and organised, with careful attention given to ensuring that all pupils have the correct degree of challenge. Pupils are encouraged and engaged and relationships in the classroom are constructive. Pupils are effectively managed by teachers who tend to have high expectations, which pupils strive to meet. However, they tend to lack independence in their learning; they are not confident when asked to undertake extended work or research and teaching does not do enough to promote their independence. Many lessons include a wide range of activities for pupils, which engage their interest, ensuring that concentration levels remain high.
14. Where teaching is satisfactory or, occasionally, unsatisfactory, lessons are sometimes dull and uninspiring, with routine activities, plodding along at too slow a pace and not permitting pupils to work independently. Questioning is limited and uninformative and such lessons pay very little attention to pupils' literacy needs, so pupils can struggle as they try to learn because they do not fully understand some of the language that they are called on to handle.
15. The school has developed good systems of assessment. Pupils take nationally recognised tests on entry to the school and at other times. The results of these tests are used to set targets for pupils to aim at as they progress through the school. Pupils know their targets, which are recorded in their journals and regularly referred to and updated. These goals are generally short-term in nature and give helpful information and guidance to pupils.

16. The setting of targets for pupils varies between subjects. While in areas like English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and design and technology pupils understand their current performance levels and what they need to do to improve, in others, such as geography and religious education, pupils receive only limited and occasional information which has very little impact on their learning. As a result, some subjects set targets and others do not, depending on the responsible teacher. The quality of the targets set is variable. Some indicate what level or grade pupils should aim at, but fail to indicate what pupils need to do to make the required improvements. Generally, the process is more effective in Year 6 where requirements of national tests give a sharper focus to advice to pupils on how to improve. The marking of pupils' work is similarly inconsistent. It varies from informative and encouraging comments to occasional notes that do too little to raise standards of pupils' work.
17. The teaching and learning of pupils with special education needs are very good when additional staff are used to support pupils' learning and when teachers make sure that pupils know what they are to do and therefore understand the purpose of the lesson. Overall, however, the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs across the school are good. Where learning support assistants are working with pupils they record pupils' progress to inform future work. Individual education plans are satisfactory overall. Some targets are clear, specific and measurable while others are very broad and so less easy to evaluate. It is commendable that the school has provided training for teachers to increase their repertoire of teaching techniques with a view to all pupils benefiting, including those with special educational needs.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The school provides a **good** range of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning outside the formal curriculum. The school's accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well prepared for later stages of education.
- The legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.
- Some pupils who are withdrawn from classes are not helped to catch up.
- The school provides a good range of visits, visitors to the school and extra-curricular activities, all of which enhance pupils' opportunities for learning.
- Insufficient resources for ICT in many subjects restrict pupils' opportunities to extend their learning.

## Commentary

18. The quality and range of the learning opportunities offered are satisfactory. The curriculum in physical education and modern foreign languages is good. The provision of drama and French from Year 5 and German from Year 8 is good as it provides greater breadth than the National Curriculum requires. All legal requirements are met apart from providing a daily act of collective worship.
19. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Some pupils are supported very well in classes by learning support assistants. Here, these staff work well because teachers are thorough in their briefing of support assistants about the lesson, the tasks to be done and what the pupils should achieve. A strength of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs lies in the school's willingness to respond flexibly to meet the differing needs of different groups of pupils. For example, the provision of the 'Positive Learning and Nurturing Environment' (PLANEt) for vulnerable pupils is valued by them and helps a significant minority of pupils to attend school who may otherwise be absent. Some pupils say that when withdrawn they never complete their class work for the subjects they are being taught. The school is right to be currently evaluating the way in which different groups of pupils are supported, for example, pupils who are at risk of underachieving or those with special educational needs.

20. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Careers education, sex and relationships and alcohol and drugs misuse are all covered. The teaching time allocated is short, half an hour in Years 5 and 6 and an hour in Years 7 and 8, but contributions from other subjects, such as science and citizenship, help ensure the curriculum is covered.
21. The timetable provides equal access to the curriculum for all pupils. The proportion of time allocated to most subjects is in line with national norms but the uneven distribution of time for design and technology is a problem and a limitation on pupils' achievement. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and provided with opportunities for further study.
22. A federation of local schools, including the local upper school, ensures good liaison and curriculum continuity and progression between schools. Arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils are properly inducted when they arrive at the upper school and more vulnerable pupils are given extra attention. Special efforts have been made to establish curricular continuity, for example, by agreeing what topics will be covered in science schemes of work in each school to avoid undue overlap or gaps. The strategies for promoting literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on teaching and developing literacy in Years 5 and 6.
23. The school provides many opportunities for enrichment beyond the normal curriculum, continuing the good provision noted at the time of the previous inspection. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, but also related to other subjects of the curriculum, such as English, art and design, ICT and design and technology. There are many opportunities to participate in sport, including representing the school in inter-school fixtures, an improvement since the previous inspection. There is also a wide range of musical activities, including the opportunity for pupils to have instrumental tuition on brass, woodwind, string and keyboard instruments. The choir of 60 pupils has a small, but growing, number of boys. Pupils' involvement in the arts is enhanced by the school's partnership with the local secondary college, which is a media arts centre. A good range of visits to places of interest and visitors into the school enhances learning in many subjects, although there is little enhancement of the curriculum in history. Residential visits for pupils in Years 6 and 8 continue to make an important contribution to pupils' personal development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to study outside normal lesson times, for example, through attendance at homework club or through access to the library and ICT facilities.
24. The school has a satisfactory number of appropriately qualified and experienced teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The expertise of an 'advanced skills teacher' is used very effectively within the modern foreign languages department and to establish good links with a wide range of feeder first schools. The school has sufficient technical support staff for subjects such as ICT and design and technology and a good number of teaching assistants. The assistants are deployed well and make a significant contribution to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in English. A very good system for liaising between subject teachers and teaching assistants ensures that assistants are well briefed and teachers receive helpful feedback about pupils' progress.
25. Accommodation is satisfactory. This situation is similar to that noted at the time of the previous inspection, although parents feel that the presentation of the accommodation has improved. Temporary accommodation for music and mathematics does not adversely affect pupils' learning other than in music where sound penetrating from one room to the next can be distracting. However, plans are in hand for new accommodation to be built for these departments. The accommodation for physical education and for special educational needs is good.
26. Resources are satisfactory. Many departments, such as English, science, physical education and modern foreign languages, have a good range of resources available. The enrichment centre ICT facilities are very good. Although an increasing number of interactive whiteboards

are available to staff, facilities for ICT are inadequate. Pupils have sufficient access to computers for ICT lessons, but too little opportunity to use these computers to enhance their learning in other subjects. This limitation particularly affects the range of opportunities which can be offered in subjects such as design and technology, geography, history, music, modern foreign languages and religious education.

### Care, guidance and support

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

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is strong commitment to ensuring pupils' individual needs are identified and met through good liaison with external agencies.
- Arrangements for Year 5 pupils coming into the school and for Year 8 moving to the upper school are good.
- Year and school councils give pupils good opportunities to express their views.
- The 'PLANEt unit', though providing a refuge for vulnerable pupils, lacks strategies to ensure that barriers to learning are effectively removed.
- Child protection procedures do not currently conform to statutory requirements but will do shortly.

### Commentary

27. The induction arrangements for pupils entering the school in Year 5 are good. Pupils are familiarised with the school by a taster day in the summer term. Units of study extend across first and middle schools to ensure that pupils continue to work at the correct level. The head of Year 5 closely tracks pupils' progress and quickly identifies any areas of concern. Pupils who are experiencing difficulty moving into the middle school, or identified as needing additional support, benefit from work with external agencies. Pupils who are underachieving are monitored by heads of year and supported well in lessons by learning support assistants. Transition to the upper school is good. Links between subject staff ensure curriculum continuity so the pace of learning is not affected. Vulnerable pupils benefit from a project organised by the 'phoenix centre' at the upper school that will help them settle quickly.
28. The 'PLANEt unit' provides a refuge for vulnerable pupils, particularly at break and lunchtimes. There is a lack of strategic planning to ensure that the educational needs of children are paramount at all times. Formal links with teaching staff are not well established to ensure this. Time frames are not in place for the reintegration of pupils back into all mainstream lessons.
29. Arrangements for health and safety are good and governors take their responsibilities seriously. The welfare needs of pupils are well catered for. Child protection procedures do not conform to statutory requirements because staff awareness in this area is not up-to-date, however, three staff were being trained in January 2005.
30. The arrangements to seek the views of pupils are good. Pupils value both the year and school councils as a forum to express their views. A member of the governing body attends meetings of the school council. Pupils are involved in monitoring their own academic progress. They are aware of the level that they are working at and what their targets are in many subject areas. However, the setting of targets varies between subject and year groups, being best in Year 6.
31. Pupils benefit from the good contact that the special educational needs co-ordinator and the higher level teaching assistant have with first schools. Care is taken to introduce pupils to the school gradually where this is helpful and a good amount of information is gathered and made available to both learning support assistants and teachers. There are occasions when learning support assistants receive particular training in readiness for dealing with an individual pupil's specific needs. These systems mean that the school is well prepared to welcome and support

individual pupils as soon as they arrive.

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

The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is **satisfactory**. The quality of the school's links with the community is **very good**. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

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

- Links with the community enrich the educational experience of pupils.
- Very effective partnerships with feeder first schools and the local upper school ensure no discontinuity in the educational experience of pupils.
- The 'Frome community learning partnership' and the 'Frome inclusion partnership' bring significant benefits to pupils through a range of initiatives.

#### **Commentary**

32. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents support the school well and are pleased with the education their children receive. Reports to parents are satisfactory and parents at the meeting prior to the inspection were happy with the information they received about the progress of their child. The annual consultation meeting gives parents the opportunity to discuss progress and set targets with staff based on current assessment information. The school has consulted its parents about its work and does take their responses seriously. However, some parents felt that their views were not always canvassed and taken into account. The parents and friends association actively support the school both by raising additional funds and supporting the school in other ways. Some parents listen to pupils read and accompany children on school trips. Newsletters keep parents informed about the activities and successes of the school.
33. The school's links with the community are very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to become involved with community arts and drama projects. The experience pupils bring back into school is shared with their peers. Some pupils perform in the Frome arts festival. The 'Frome inclusion partnership' involves representatives from a wide range of community organisations. All parties work together with the school to promote inclusion and good behaviour. Links with industry are beneficial to pupils and raise their awareness of the world of work. The community and citizenship day for Year 8 pupils helps them to understand what their local community can offer them.
34. There is a very good partnership with other schools and colleges. There are close, consultative, working relationships with both first schools and the local upper school. The mechanisms for the transfer of pupils are very good. Continuity of learning is ensured through regular meetings between heads of subject. The 'Frome community learning partnership' works very effectively with its schools to support them in all areas of their work.
35. Parents are suitably informed of the progress of their children with special educational needs and involved in the twice yearly reviews.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership is **satisfactory**. Management is **satisfactory**. Governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

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

- The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear sense of purpose and a desire for pupils to do well.
- Evaluation of the work of the school is not rigorous enough.



- Subject management varies in quality from very good to unsatisfactory.
- The school makes a good commitment to the professional development of staff.
- The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are good.

## Commentary

36. The headteacher, staff and governors share a common sense of purpose. They want pupils to achieve well and work hard to meet this aim. The leadership team is respected and has the capacity to effect change. Strategic planning is satisfactory and is based on staff and governors being involved in identifying priorities for improvement and planning action to bring this about. The school improvement plan is thorough, clear and a useful template for improvement.
37. In many aspects of their work, teachers support one another well. However, this is not always the case. In subject teaching, for example, teachers of modern foreign languages demonstrate excellent teamwork and very good teamwork is a feature of work in science. However, teachers of history, for example, do not work together well enough as a team and overall provision for this subject suffers as a consequence.
38. Leadership and management of the curriculum and teaching are inconsistent. Overall, subject leadership ranges from very good in modern foreign languages, science and physical education to satisfactory in most other subjects, whilst management of subjects ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. This variation stems from a lack of consistency, at senior management level, in the expectation of how subjects should be co-ordinated. In Years 5 and 6, particularly, some subjects are the responsibility of year teams of teachers, while others are the responsibility of whole-school subject co-ordinators and this leads to variable practice.
39. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and access is satisfactory. Careful attention is paid to monitoring the progress of each individual pupil and generally this means that pupils' needs are catered for.
40. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. The school is responding well to the requirements of the latest Code of Practice by increasingly involving pupils and parents in setting individual learning targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of different groups of pupils and as a member of the senior leadership team has contributed to valuable curriculum innovation and teaching developments. The group of very well-qualified learning support assistants are well briefed, supervised and supported. Paperwork is well organised and systems for teachers and learning support assistants sharing information work well. These strengths are a significant contributory factor to the good quality support that they offer pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good understanding of the existing strengths of the school's provision and priorities for its continued development. The governor for special educational needs, who is a teacher at the school, has a good awareness of the developmental needs to use the good skills of the learning support staff further and to more efficiently use the time of the two teachers. The accommodation for special educational needs is very good but it is inefficiently used as for much of the time only a small number of pupils have access.
41. Whole-school planning is based on review of what is happening in the school, but the school's evaluation of what is happening lacks the rigour necessary to identify in detail what needs to be done to bring about improvement. The school's self-evaluation was an identified weakness at the time of the previous inspection and, although improvements have been made, it still lacks the necessary rigour and thoroughness for it to be fully effective. Self-evaluation is a weakness at both whole school and subject level. The evaluation of the work in subjects, for example, ranges from very good in modern foreign languages to unsatisfactory in history. This variation is indicative of the lack of consistently good co-ordination and monitoring of the work of subject leaders by senior managers.

42. Satisfactory use is made of information about the performance of pupils, especially in providing pupils with targets for improvement. Again, however, there is considerable variation in the effectiveness with which teachers of different subjects are using this information as a means of helping pupils to do as well as they should.
43. The school makes a good contribution to the professional development of teachers and support staff. Its care for this aspect of its work has been acknowledged in the award of 'Investor in People' status. Performance management is becoming increasingly linked to school improvement planning, although some plans do not identify in enough detail what specific improvements are needed to guide staff training. Teachers are deployed effectively.
44. The management of resources is satisfactory and the school has a sound commitment to applying the principles of best value. Governors and senior staff take their responsibilities for producing a balanced budget seriously. They have taken effective measures over the past two years to reduce the small budget deficit, which resulted from changes in the arrangements for funding the school within the local education authority.

### Financial information

#### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,013,232	Balance from previous year	-18,042
Total expenditure	2,037,335	Balance carried forward to the next	-6,061
Expenditure per pupil	2,915		

45. Governance is satisfactory. Governors take an interest in the daily life of the school, with many making frequent visits. They are business-like in their decision-making. Governors ensure that a clear set of aims and policies inform the overall direction of the school. The governing body reviews information on the performance of pupils and is engaged in reviewing the annual plans for improvement in the school. They do not, however, question the headteacher and his colleagues with the rigour necessary to bring about effective improvement in the school. They ensure that most of their responsibilities are met but they have not ensured that the school has fully up-to-date child protection procedures, however, three staff trained in January 2005. Also, as at the time of the previous inspection, governors do not ensure that all pupils are able to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

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

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

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

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- The focus on improving pupils' writing has led to improved standards and pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and other targeted groups achieve well because of effective support from learning support assistants.
- Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy in their planning.
- Marking is not sufficiently linked to pupils' targets.

##### **Commentary**

46. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were average, an improvement over the previous two years. Girls performed better than boys, but the gender difference is less significant than in 2003, when it was wider than in most schools. Standards of work seen in Year 6 reflect the test results and are also average. As pupils' attainment when they enter the school at the beginning of Year 5 is below average this represents good achievement. Most pupils speak confidently. For example, most explain clearly what happens in a story they have read, although some try to include too much detail and consequently become confused. Most pupils read with understanding and expression. Even less able pupils read straightforward texts with little hesitation. More able pupils write well using complex structures, although there are spelling and punctuation weaknesses. Less able pupils find it difficult to write at any length, make many mistakes and their vocabulary is very limited.
47. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 7 and 8. Overall, standards are in line with national expectations with a significant proportion of pupils attaining standards that are well above average. In their prose writing, pupils combine a wide vocabulary with well-controlled sentence forms and technical accuracy. On the other hand, there are some pupils who struggle to write coherently when unaided. Pupils' oral skills are generally good. They readily explain and discuss what they have read. Most pupils are competent in using more advanced reading skills such as making sensible predictions based on their understanding of what they have read. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups achieve at the same rate as other pupils. Those with special needs benefit from a high level of

support from learning support assistants who know their individual needs very well. In addition, support assistants give effective extra help to lower attainers who do not have special educational needs. The targeting of this group is one of the reasons that standards are rising.

48. Pupils learn well because teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well, making good use of the National Literacy Strategy. The best lessons proceed at a very good pace with a high level of challenge for the pupils. In less successful lessons expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. Tasks of suitable levels of difficulty are provided to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to English, as can be seen by the care they take over the presentation of their written work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. There is a good system of tracking pupils' progress. Pupils know their target grades and have a good idea of what they need to do to achieve them. However, teachers do not link comments on their work closely enough to these targets.
49. Leadership is good. Leaders' commitment to raising standards is having its effect. They base their strategies on sound evaluation, for example, in deciding how to improve writing standards, particularly of boys. Management is satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not always identified weaknesses. There is no planning for the department's contribution to ICT, citizenship and pupils' personal development, although there are plenty of examples in practice. Development planning lacks sufficient detail. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards have improved because the teaching is better.

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

50. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are average, although there is a significant number of pupils whose standards are well above average. There is a sound whole-school literacy policy and there is a regular programme of in-service training. Provision is good. In all subjects teachers insist on pupils using the correct subject vocabulary. There is very good practice in science where pupils are shown clearly how to distinguish between fact and opinion. In geography, teachers use a variety of helpful methods to assist writing. In history and religious education, however, no particular help is given, although more able pupils produce some very good work because of their own ability. In the best lessons in mathematics pupils are encouraged to explain their ideas orally but too many questions require only one-word answers.

### **Modern foreign languages**

Provision in modern foreign languages is **very good**.

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

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are above average in Year 8.
- The head of department provides an excellent role model in her own teaching and leads and manages the department very well.
- Very good teaching includes a wide range of activities and makes very good use of resources.
- Pupils' achievement is restricted because they find it hard to remember words from one lesson to the next and some are reluctant to speak French in front of the whole class.

### **Commentary**

51. All pupils are taught French for an hour a week in Years 5 and 6. Because the lessons are taught very well and pupils enjoy their early experiences of a foreign language, they achieve well. Year 6 standards are at the expected level. Pupils of all abilities continue to achieve well in Years 7 and 8 and, by the time they leave the school, standards are above expectations. Pupils' listening and reading skills are stronger than their speaking and writing skills. Although there are differences in the attainment of the more and less able pupils, these differences are

not as marked as in many schools because the staff are very successful at keeping pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs well motivated.

52. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have very good command of the language, plan their lessons very well and use a very good variety of teaching methods and resources. All of the lessons observed during the inspection were characterised by good pace, lively interaction between teachers and pupils and sequences of short, but well-structured activities. These help pupils to establish understanding of key vocabulary and then to use the vocabulary in a range of contexts. Pupils' positive response in lessons contributes to good learning. They listen well and behave very well, although some pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, find it hard to concentrate for long. They enjoy collaborative work, in pairs or small groups, and teaching strategies which involve action. However, a significant proportion of pupils in most classes are reluctant to speak in French in front of the whole class, particularly in the early stages of a lesson and despite the teachers' encouragement, and this reluctance is another reason why pupils' achievement is not always as good as the quality of the teaching they receive. In some lessons, teaching assistants provide individual pupils with well-targeted support and the teachers provide different levels of challenge to ensure that pupils of all abilities are enabled to make good progress. Achievement in some lessons is very good, but is not sustained over time. This is because pupils only have two periods of French per week and they find it very hard to remember vocabulary and expressions between lessons. Consequently, teachers have to spend much time consolidating vocabulary and structures which have been taught in previous lessons, although they do this very well.
53. The subject is led and managed very well. The head of department is an excellent role model in terms of her own teaching skills and expectations and there is excellent teamwork within the department. The curriculum is well planned. All pupils in Year 8 study German in addition to French. This subject is taught well and pupils achieve well considering they only have one lesson a week. Very good assessment procedures give both teachers and pupils a very clear understanding of what level pupils are achieving in each of the four key skills. The department is very well organised and well resourced, although lack of access to computers makes it difficult for teachers to use new technology as a tool for teaching and learning. In her capacity as an 'advanced skills teacher', the head of department spends one day a week working with staff and pupils in first schools whose pupils later come to Oakfield. Her role as an ambassador for languages does much to foster the very good links which exist with other schools.
54. All of the good features mentioned in the previous inspection report, such as the pupils' good progress, the good support for pupils with special educational needs, the pupils' positive attitudes and the very good subject leadership, have been maintained. Teaching and standards have both improved since the previous inspection. Improvement is good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' knowledge and skills are better than their understanding of mathematical ideas.
- Occasionally teaching is exciting, but some mathematics lessons are dull and uncreative.
- Teaching does not cover the application and use of mathematics sufficiently.
- The evaluation of teaching and learning is not good enough to identify strengths and areas where improvement is needed.

### **Commentary**

55. Results in national tests in 2004 were average compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. These results were better than in 2003 and maintained improvement at about the same rate as improvement nationally in recent years. This represents satisfactory

achievement by these pupils, given their attainment in mathematics is average on entry to the school. Mathematics results in 2004, which met targets, were better than those in English but not as good as those in science. However, girls' results are better than those of boys.

56. Pupils currently in Years 6 and 8 are working at average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment is average in number, shape and space and data handling but below average in using and applying mathematics. This is because teachers do not give enough attention to the planning and teaching of this aspect of the subject. Consequently pupils' knowledge and skills are better than their understanding of the underlying mathematical ideas. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, partly because of the grouping arrangements that help teachers pitch work to meet pupils' needs and partly because of the support pupils receive from learning support assistants. Teachers track the progress of each individual pupil, but do not analyse the performance of groups of pupils such as those from minority ethnic backgrounds. However, these pupils are achieving satisfactorily.
57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The development of knowledge and skills is relatively good because pupils spend a considerable amount of time in lessons doing textbook and worksheet exercises. However, pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas is not well developed. The emphasis on practice in many lessons means that not enough attention is paid to engaging pupils in mathematical reasoning. Teaching and learning are occasionally very good. Pupils learn very well when the teacher involves them in the exploration of mathematical ideas through interesting and stimulating activities. In these lessons, teachers also use oral work and challenging questions, which make pupils think mathematically and require them to discuss their work in structured collaborative tasks. However, many lessons lack these characteristics. As a result, most pupils' thinking and reasoning skills are not as well developed as their basic skills.
58. Assessment is satisfactory. Some pupils' work is marked thoroughly, with teachers usually giving good feedback on how well pupils are doing. However, this is not always the case and pupils in some classes are not being helped to improve their work as much as others. Where teachers mark work carefully pupils present their work more neatly and work hard to correct their mistakes. Most assessment takes place at the end of topics or sequences of lessons and teachers do not use day-to-day assessment often enough to make sure that each lesson is well matched to pupils' needs. This is a further reason why pupils' achievement is no better than satisfactory.
59. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. However, there is considerable inconsistency in what pupils experience. This is because arrangements for evaluating the work of the many teachers who teach the subject are inadequate. The departmental plans for development are focused on raising standards but do not set out a programme to improve teaching and learning. Since the previous inspection standards have risen by about the same amount as they have nationally and improvement has been satisfactory.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

60. Standards of mathematics in other subjects are average. In subjects such as science, design and technology and geography, pupils use their calculation skills well in support of their learning. A useful guide has been provided for all departments, resulting in consistency in methods of calculation, graphing and tabulating that helps pupils consolidate their mathematics learning. Able pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities such as attendance at master-classes and taking part in a national mathematics challenge. There is no similar activity to help develop other pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics in the extra-curricular activities programme.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching and well-behaved pupils lead to good learning and achievement.
- Standards are above average at the end of Years 6 and 8.
- Very good leadership and management have improved standards and achievement.
- Access to data logging equipment is unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

61. In 2004, standards in the Year 6 tests were well above the national average and they have been at least above average for several years. Almost all pupils reached the expected level. Boys' and girls' results were similar.
62. Current standards in Year 6 and Year 8 are above national expectations. They achieve very well in Years 5 and 6 due to the very good teaching and standards improve from in line with national expectation on entry to the school to above them at the end of Year 6. Above average standards are sustained during Years 7 and 8, representing good achievement. This represents good achievement by pupils during their four years at the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the well-planned support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils from ethnic minorities achieve as well as others.
63. Teaching and learning are good. They are very good in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 uses a variety of methods that stimulates pupils' interest and increases their ability to learn by focusing on improving their literacy. Electronic whiteboards are very effectively used to provide stimulating displays which pupils can manipulate. Pupils were captivated in one lesson where they had to identify parts of a fish and suggest their function. Oral work is well used to develop pupils' understanding and to dispel their misconceptions. All pupils know the National Curriculum grade at which they are working and their target grade, but pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a much clearer idea of what they have to do to improve their work due to the presence of a list of areas on which to focus identified by teachers in their journals. The teaching in Years 7 and 8 makes good use of nationally recommended techniques to make good use of time, to involve all pupils and to make learning fun. Some elements of teaching in Years 5 and 6 are less enthusiastic. Special attention is given to teaching pupils the skills of scientific enquiry, such as evaluation and the drawing and interpretation of graphs. However, there is insufficient data logging equipment to allow pupils to use it themselves.
64. Science is very well led and managed by two co-ordinators, both of whom are keen to raise standards and achievement. The strength and weaknesses of the subject are identified by analysing the results and monitoring teaching and pupils' work. Action is taken where necessary. For example, increased attention is now being given to the teaching of the skills of scientific enquiry in Years 7 and 8. Staff are very well deployed in Years 5 and 6 by using a balance of specialist and general teachers to cover the programme of study. Close links with the local upper school ensure curricular continuity is good.
65. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Attainment at the end of Years 6 and 8 has improved from being similar to national expectations to above them and Year 6 test results have improved from below average to above average.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good.

- Pupils achieve well.
- There are no effective systems to monitor the use and impact of ICT for teaching and learning in other subjects.
- Subjects have insufficient access to ICT resources. However, there is good access to computers out of school hours.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use computers at lunchtimes and after school.

### **Commentary**

66. Pupils join the school with standards which are below expectations. Standards in Years 5, 7 and 8 are similar to expectations. Standards in Year 6 are above expectations. Pupils achieve well in acquiring subject knowledge, the development of skills and their application in order to solve problems and present findings. Pupils of all ages have the skills required in using the keyboard and mouse, in the navigation of the programs used and the saving and retrieving of work, resulting in effective use of lesson time.
67. Teaching and learning are good. Planning is good, with schemes of work based on the national schemes for Years 5 and 6 and the National Key Stage 3 Strategy guidelines in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are very positive. They actively engage in both practical work on the computers and whole-class teaching. They work independently and make good use of peer support without disrupting the lesson. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards for teaching and involving the whole class in the learning. Pupils' work is carefully assessed at the completion of each unit of work and marked against National Curriculum levels. These are shared with the pupils and, although targets are given for improvement, pupils are not always clear as to how to achieve the targets. There are good opportunities for pupils to use computers at lunchtimes and after school. These are well attended and allow pupils to extend their skills; for example, Year 8 pupils had made a film using a web cam at the after-school club.
68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The team responsible for delivering ICT to Years 5 to 8 works well together, ensuring good progression in learning. Good links with other middle schools ensure that standards in Year 8 are moderated so that there are effective transition arrangements for pupils to move on to their next school. The team makes good use of consultants in order to improve their teaching. Since the previous inspection the school has updated its computer systems and invested in a range of programs and resources to support a wider range of ICT opportunities for pupils. Improvement is satisfactory.

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

69. The provision of cross-curricular ICT is unsatisfactory. Limited access to resources has hampered the development of ICT to support teaching and learning in subject areas. Equipment required for data logging is inadequate for all pupils to have access in science lessons. Use of ICT in history and religious education is unsatisfactory. There are examples of good practice in physical education, music and modern foreign languages, but even these areas have problems with access to computers and other resources. A number of teaching rooms have an interactive whiteboard, which is used effectively for teaching and allowing the class to work interactively with the computer.
70. The newly appointed ICT co-ordinator has still to clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to the development of ICT across the curriculum. As a result, there are no systems to monitor how other subjects use ICT and this is unsatisfactory .

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History**



Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The co-ordination and review of the subject across Years 5 and 6 are unsatisfactory.
- Relationships are good.
- The good use of resources motivates pupils and assists their learning.
- Teaching, while satisfactory, does not meet the needs of all learners and there are weaknesses with the marking of pupils' work.
- Pupils study a narrow range of topics Years 5 to 8.

### **Commentary**

71. By the end of Year 6, standards are at expected levels. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the Tudors and Ancient Greece. Writing is satisfactory with good descriptions of events. In Years 5 and 6, historical skills are under-developed. By the end of Year 8, standards in history are also at expected levels. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics such as the Romans. Their skills with the analysis and interpretation of sources are below expectations. Achievement across Years 5 to 8 is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Boys and girls and pupils of all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. Higher attaining pupils have good literacy skills and express their ideas well. This enables them to achieve better than middle and lower attaining pupils.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Years 7 and 8 all teaching is by the subject specialist who uses his knowledge to engage pupils in their learning and teaching is better in these years. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is by non-specialist staff. Across Years 5 to 8 the good use of textbooks, photographs and video supports pupils' learning well. However, the use of computers is under-developed. Activities do not always challenge the more able pupils and middle and lower attaining pupils can occasionally have insufficient support. In Years 7 and 8 some teaching has overlong explanations with few opportunities for pupils to be actively engaged in their own learning. Marking is satisfactory but lacks guidance on how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. Good management of pupils' behaviour helps pupils to concentrate and work hard and good relationships motivate pupils to respond well to the subject and this benefits learning.
73. Leadership is satisfactory; management is unsatisfactory. Planning has identified a good set of priorities and activities to move the subject forward. However, teamwork is under-developed. Staff who teach the subject in Years 5 and 6 do not meet regularly and this is a barrier to effective co-ordination and development. Procedures for reviewing the work of the department in Years 5 and 6 are unsatisfactory. There are no formal programmes for scrutinising work or observing teaching and learning in history. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. Across Years 5 to 8 pupils study a narrow range of topics and there is insufficient attention to the development of their historical skills. Learning resources are good and meet the needs of the curriculum well.
74. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. There are still weaknesses with marking. Procedures to review the work of the department have not been implemented. The curriculum remains unbalanced.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are better than expectations and pupils achieve very well.
- Good leadership is moving the department forward.
- Teaching is good and the good use of resources motivates pupils and assists their learning.
- Marking gives insufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve.
- Procedures to review the work of the department in Years 5 and 6 are unsatisfactory.

### Commentary

75. By the end of Year 6, standards are above expectations. In Years 5 and 6 pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of weather and settlement. Map skills are good. Pupils use atlases and Ordnance Survey maps accurately to locate and describe places. By the end of Year 8, standards are above expectations. Pupils' writing is good, they accurately describe patterns and show an understanding of physical and human processes. Use of geographical language is good and written work is supported by good quality diagrams. Pupils are beginning to develop analytical skills, they draw and interpret climate graphs well and confidently undertake research on topics such as shopping in the local area.
76. Pupils enter the school with below average standards. Achievement across Years 5 to 8 is very good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Boys and girls of all capabilities and of all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally as well. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and the selection of interesting practical topics.
77. Teaching and learning are good. In Years 7 and 8 all teaching is by subject specialists, who use their subject knowledge well to plan lessons and set challenging activities. Explanations and questioning are good and enable pupils to learn well. Although in Years 5 and 6 teaching is by non-specialists, they are well supported by guidance from the head of department and pupils learn well. Across all years, pupils' learning is effectively developed through the use of a good range of teacher-produced resources, textbooks and video. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on shopping pupils were provided with colour photographs, maps and information booklets that interested them and supported their learning very well. However, there is insufficient use of computers. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and frequently, but do not provide enough guidance on what they need to do to improve. Good relationships between teachers and pupils motivate them to work hard and to display positive attitudes to their work.
78. Leadership is good; management is satisfactory. Planning has identified a good set of priorities and activities that are moving the department forward. Schemes of work are being revised with more guidance on what pupils need to learn. Co-ordination and planning of geography with the team of teachers working in Years 5 and 6 are satisfactory. However, the procedures for reviewing pupils' work and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching in Years 5 and 6 are unsatisfactory. Learning resources are good and meet the needs of the curriculum well. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of educational visits. In all years pupils undertake on-site fieldwork and in most years there are also fieldtrips to different places. This has a good impact on pupils' learning by supporting the development of skills and improving their understanding.
79. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Standards of pupils' work have improved. Fieldwork is now good across all years but revised assessment procedures are not yet fully implemented.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good use of artefacts, resources and visits motivates pupils and assists their learning.
- Teaching, while satisfactory, fails to meet the needs of all learners.

- Teachers' good relationships with pupils motivate them to work hard.
- The use of data is unsatisfactory and assessment procedures give insufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve.

### Commentary

80. By the end of Year 6, standards are similar to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 5 and 6 pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the Bible and have a basic understanding of symbolism and worship in the Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Islamic faiths. By the end of Year 8, standards are also similar to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Years 7 and 8 they develop a satisfactory knowledge of Christian, Sikh and Buddhist perspectives, but use of technical language is weak. A good understanding of spirituality is developed through studies of the beliefs of the native people of North America and Australia. Achievement across Years 5 to 8 is satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Boys and girls and pupils of all ethnic backgrounds achieve equally as well. Higher attaining pupils have good literacy skills and express their ideas well. This enables them to achieve better than middle and lower attaining pupils.
81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teaching of the subject is delivered by the specialist teacher who has a good knowledge of the subject. In many lessons the use of artefacts and other resources are good features that make learning interesting and assist understanding and progress. However, the use of computers to support pupils' learning is limited. A weakness in some teaching is the lack of challenge. Pupils are given low-level activities that fail to engage them and develop their learning. There are also weaknesses with teaching strategies that fail to meet the needs of all learners. For example, middle and lower attaining pupils have insufficient support with their writing. Good relationships between teachers and pupils motivate pupils to respond well to the subject. Across Years 5 to 8, pupils' learning in religious education makes a good contribution to their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development. Marking gives insufficient guidance on how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve.
82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordination of the work of other teachers is satisfactory. Schemes of work are being revised and now give better coverage of the subject. There is a good range of visits to places of worship and the use of visiting speakers makes learning interesting for the pupils. The use of data is unsatisfactory and there is no moderation or collation and analysis of teacher assessments. Resources are of good quality and meet the needs of the curriculum well. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils know what to do to improve their work and as a result they achieve well.
- The limited time available for the subject leads to lower standards.
- Pupils behave well and have good relationships with their teachers.
- Well-planned and challenging teaching engages pupils well.
- The quality of practical work in resistant materials holds back standards.

### Commentary

83. Pupils enter the school with below expected attainment and at the end of Year 6 standards are still below what is expected. By the end of Year 8 standards are at the expected levels. This represents good achievement. In Years 7 and 8 the work is better than expected in food and textiles but below expectations in resistant materials, which does not emphasise the quality of final products enough. Standards in all areas are limited by restrictions in the length of lesson time allocated to the subject. Pupils with special educational needs make as good progress as their peers in this subject. Girls' standards are higher than boys, although the focus on topics to engage boys is having some effect on the situation.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and in the good lessons brisk pace and challenging tasks ensure pupils are interested and focused on their work. However, in other lessons the lack of rigour and excitement fails to stimulate the interest of the pupils and the quality of work suffers. Some schemes of work are too mundane and do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils. In food and textiles the regular marking of pupils' work encourages them to make more effort to improve. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and design and technology is a popular subject. Teachers use correct technical language and therefore the pupils use the correct terminology. ICT is not used sufficiently and this affects the quality of pupils' presentation of their work. Computer-aided design and manufacture is used where facilities allow but is not given a high enough profile in schemes of work.
85. Leadership of the department is satisfactory. There is a determination to drive up standards and action is being taken to ensure that this occurs. Leadership provides a good role model for expertise in good teaching and classroom management. Management is satisfactory and the department runs smoothly. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is not accurate at the end of Year 8, which results in pupils not meeting targets set. Regular checking of standards of work in partnership with other schools is remedying this problem. All pupils have their progress checked regularly and are kept informed of their National Curriculum levels and how they can improve. Record cards are kept for each pupil which show their level at the end of each project over the years and these accompany them to their next school, enabling parents and pupils to see their progress. The part-time technician is well trained and used well to the benefit of the department.
86. The curriculum is enriched by lunchtime and after-school clubs and specialist technology weeks where there are in-depth investigations into such topics as 'smart' materials and methods for industrial production. The accommodation in the resistant materials workshop is unsatisfactory. Displays around the department and school are of a high quality and pupils receive acclaim for their achievements.
87. Progress since the previous inspection has been slow due to staffing and leadership absences but these difficulties have now been overcome. Some new equipment has been purchased for food and textiles, which broadens pupils' experiences in the subject. Improvement is satisfactory.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Drama**

88. Two lessons were seen during the inspection. Pupils' standards in performance and vocal skills are above average. Pupils learn well because teaching is good. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' personal and social development. For example, pupils criticise each other's work sensitively and constructively. Recent productions involving a large number of pupils have made a good contribution to the life of the school. The department also has good links with the community outside school.

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards their work.
- Assessment is insufficiently used to determine pupils' individual needs.
- The teacher in charge has good awareness of the subject's developmental needs.
- Provision for three-dimensional works has improved.

### **Commentary**

89. On entry to the school, pupils' standards are below average. By the end of Year 6 their standards are average, indicating that they achieve well. When they leave the school at the end of Year 8 their standards are still average and they achieve satisfactorily. Pupils are thoughtful about the quality and presentation of work and state clearly how their work has been influenced by the artists they study. Overall, standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Over their time in school, pupils achieve well.
90. Teaching and learning are good. During inspection, all the teaching seen was good. Marking rewards progress and usually states what pupils need to do to further progress the standard of their work. The use of literacy is satisfactory where pupils write about their work, justifying and evaluating its progress. They use computer software well for image development. The use of numeracy is under-developed. Pupils show good attitudes to their work, learning effectively with good levels of enthusiasm and motivation. Overall, assessment is satisfactory but insufficient attention is given to the recording and use of the specific skills individual pupils need to acquire. Most pupils know the target grades they are trying to achieve but are sometimes unsure what to do to achieve them.
91. The work across the school is led and managed satisfactorily by a newly qualified teacher. Her previous extensive experience in the commercial and business aspects of art and design is proving very beneficial and she has a good perception for the further development of the subject.
92. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection where the accommodation has improved and there are relevant plans to enlarge further the available space. There is now more three-dimensional work and resources have improved.

### **Music**

The provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are better than expected levels. Good monitoring of standards ensures that all pupils achieve well.
- Assessment data is used very effectively to help pupils know their targets.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and behaviour is well managed.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation affects the quality of learning in some lessons.
- Instrumental tuition successfully supports standards within the department.
- Homework is not set regularly in Years 7 and 8.

### **Commentary**

93. Standards by the end of Year 6 and Year 8 are above those expected nationally. Pupils apply knowledge and understanding successfully. Pupils sing very well in Years 5 and 6 but are more reluctant to use their voices in Year 8. Pupils perform well and in Year 8 some perform to a high standard. Composing skills are in line with national expectations at all ages. There is no significant difference between standards achieved by boys and girls. Given lower than expected standards at the start of Year 5, these standards represent good achievement.

94. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons use a clear structure and a wide range of activities. Lesson objectives are carefully planned to meet individual pupils' needs. Good use of questioning ensures that pupils play an active part in lessons and key words are displayed around teaching rooms and are referred to throughout lessons. Pupils' social skills are developed effectively through the use of paired and group activities. The teacher has very good subject knowledge. She provides a good role model for pupils and uses her skills to lead much of the practical activity. Very good use is made of assessment for learning where pupils evaluate their work and revise it as a consequence. Some use is made of ICT, although there is insufficient equipment for large classes, which impacts on pupils' learning in some lessons. Best use is made of accommodation that is unsatisfactory because there is considerable noise transference from practice rooms to classrooms.
95. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has a clear vision and the necessary management skills to transform the vision into reality. Effective monitoring of lessons takes place and the department makes good use of learning support assistants.
96. Progress since the previous inspection is good. High standards have been maintained and are consistent. The number of boys receiving instrumental tuition and participating in extra curricular activities has increased. Opportunities for pupils of all abilities to participate in public performances have increased, for example, through the recently established 'recital week'.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well.
- Leadership is very good and management good.
- The curriculum is good and encourages pupils' all-round development.
- The interpretation and analysis of performance data are not sufficiently rigorous.
- Teachers' subject knowledge across the year groups is not consistent.

### **Commentary**

97. Pupils enter school with standards below national expectations and at the end of Year 8 standards are at the expected levels. Pupils' achievement is good. Standards seen in Year 6 are below national expectations. In Year 8 there is a noticeable difference in the standards of boys and girls. Boys' standards are better than national expectations and girls' are just below. By Year 7 pupils can perform and combine skills with control and some fluency. They understand how to comment on their own and other's performance and explain the skills and techniques that contribute to success.
98. Teaching and learning overall are good and in Years 7 and 8 very good. Specialist teachers' subject knowledge is very good and their planning for lessons is very clearly focused on building and extending pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Effective grouping of pupils promotes good social integration and enables pupils of widely differing abilities to make very good progress in lessons. Assessment is good and there is a very effective system for recording and collating data, which has contributed to the successful adaptation of the curriculum level descriptors to inform curriculum planning and target setting.
99. The curriculum is good and provides pupils with a wide range of activities that help develop their social, evaluative and physical skills. There is a good extra-curricular programme of team fixtures and clubs that are supported by many pupils. Together with the inter-form

competitions, the fixtures and clubs provide pupils with opportunities to develop their leadership skills and take responsibility.

100. Leadership is very good. Strategic planning is very effective because it reflects the priorities that are relevant to improving the achievement of all pupils. These include the introduction of lap top computers and the need to increase opportunities for pupils to evaluate and analyse their own work. The vision and rationale for physical education are very clear and staff work together as an effective team. Management is good and self-evaluation is embedded in the work of the department. There is also a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Performance data are not yet used sufficiently rigorously to provide detailed analysis for different groups of pupils or comparison with national data. The subject knowledge of non-specialist staff is inconsistent between the teaching of Years 5 and 6 and the older year groups. There is a clear commitment to the support and development of newly qualified staff and their contributions to the enrichment of teaching and learning are valued.
101. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

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

Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good links are made between personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Procedures for and the use of assessment are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

102. Standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6 and when pupils leave the school in Year 8. Citizenship is satisfactorily taught alongside personal, social and health education and sufficient attention is given to both areas of learning. The subject is satisfactorily reported to parents who have children in Years 7 and 8. The achievement of pupils across the school is satisfactory. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to use their literacy skills.
103. Teaching and learning in all years are satisfactory. There is a suitable range and progression of learning opportunities supported by the use of relevant resources. Procedures for and the use of assessment are unsatisfactory. Pupils are not sufficiently informed of what they need to do to increase their knowledge and competencies.
104. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to become actively involved in what they have learnt. Here the school council, fund raising days, visitors who talk about their work and visits into the community actively prompt the practical application of the two subjects. The recent audit by all departments regarding how they cover the subjects is proving beneficial with an increasing number of subjects promoting its study within their area of work.
105. Leadership and management are good. The teacher in charge has developed a good scheme of work combining effectively both subjects. She has evaluated the audit completed by all subjects and clearly discerns where further developments are needed. She has insufficient time to evaluate the teaching of the subject in all departments. Personal, social and health education has remained satisfactory since the previous inspection and citizenship was not taught at the time of the previous inspection.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3



How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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).*