

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HEXHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Hexham

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122634

Headteacher: Mr D Boas

Lead inspector: Mrs G Salter-Smith

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 1 December 2004

Inspection number: 269105

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: 548

School address: Wanless Lane  
Hexham  
Northumberland  
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Telephone number: 01434 602 533  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr G Taylor

Date of previous inspection: 11 October 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hexham Middle School is situated in the market town of Hexham and takes children from the immediate town and from villages and the surrounding countryside. It includes Year groups 5, 6, 7 and 8 and, with 548 pupils, it is bigger than most middle schools. Numbers are decreasing due to demographic movements and there are fewer pupils in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 7 and 8. Staffing has been reduced and class sizes are getting larger. The re-organisation of schools across the county is currently under consultation.

There are more boys than girls, especially in Year 8, but in Years 7 there are more girls than boys. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds with a very small number of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average but increasing. Most of these pupils have needs associated with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning and physical difficulties. A smaller number have speech and communication or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at 6.5 per cent is below the national average and more pupils than usual come from advantaged backgrounds. However, the

intake of the school is comprehensive and includes a full range of social and economic circumstances. There are no children in public care or from Traveller families. The pupil population is stable with only small numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than the usual start in Year 5.

Based on the professional judgement of inspectors and optional standardised tests taken at the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment when they start school in Year 5 is broadly average, though standards in English and mathematics are higher.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8329	G Salter-Smith	Lead inspector	Physical education
13762	N Shelley	Lay inspector	
32113	J Byrom	Team inspector	Mathematics
27983	M Sewell	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
22985	J Sparkes	Team inspector	Science
27803	J Clark	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education
32329	A Stafford	Team inspector	Art and design
31963	M Padmore	Team inspector	Design and technology Special educational needs
32340	P McKay	Team inspector	Geography History Citizenship
33242	S Wall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
4697	R Black	Team inspector	Music

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Hexham Middle School is a good school** because pupils achieve well, reaching above average standards and they are well taught. The school helps pupils to develop into mature and confident young people who enjoy learning. The school is well led and managed. The school does a good job with well below average funding and **value for money is very good**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By Years 8 pupils achieve well and reach well above average standards in English, ICT (information and communication technology) history and geography; however, achievement in religious education throughout the school, and in mathematics, geography and art and design in Years 5 and 6, is satisfactory.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and middle managers are well focused on improvement and have created a school where pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school; there are more very good lessons in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are good; pupils are known as individuals and well cared for.
- Not all subjects use assessment well enough to help pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to improve.
- Checks on the quality of lessons are not frequent or rigorous enough to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching.
- Large class sizes and constraints of accommodation affect learning, especially in art and design and design and technology.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Above average standards have been maintained and pupils' achievement is now good. Teaching is still good overall and there are more good and very good lessons. Issues identified at the last inspection have been tackled, more rigorously since the building of a new leadership group, and provision is at least satisfactory in all areas.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Current standards of work are above average overall and pupils' achievement** (whether the standards pupils reach are high enough) **is good**. Current standards of work are above average in mathematics and science and well above average in English. In

English and science current standards in Year 6 are an improvement on the most recent test results taken by Year 6 pupils owing to improved quality of teaching. In mathematics current standards in Year 6 are similar to the most recent test results.



When compared with similar schools, the most recent test results suggest that pupils achieve satisfactorily over a four year period, only two of which were spent in Hexham Middle School. However, school records and inspection findings show that pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 in most subjects, including English and science.

Standards are well above average overall in ICT, and in geography and history in Year 8. Standards in religious education throughout the school and in geography and art and design in Years 5 and 6 are average. Pupils achieve very well in ICT in Years 7 and 8. In most other subjects achievement is good. In religious education across the school achievement is satisfactory, as it is in mathematics, geography and art and design in Years 5 and 6.

Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented are well supported and achieve well. There are no significant differences in achievement between girls and boys. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment do well overall but in some lessons in mathematics and French, higher attaining pupils are not fully challenged. Pupils' competence in using literacy and mathematics across subjects is good and their use of ICT is very good. **Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral and cultural development is good, though spiritual development is satisfactory.** Pupils arrive on time to school and lessons and attendance is good. Pupils behave well. They have very positive attitudes towards school and learning which helps them to achieve well.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good in all year groups.** There are more very good lessons in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is good in most subjects and very good in ICT and geography in Years 7 and 8. Planning is good so that pupils enjoy a variety of learning activities taught at a good pace, that are well matched to their needs. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' literacy, mathematical and ICT skills. Teaching is satisfactory in religious education overall and in mathematics, geography and art and design in Years 5 and 6. Lack of depth in learning, slow pace, insufficiently varied activities and limited challenge are features to improve in teaching that is satisfactory. Assessment, though good in some subjects, does not always give pupils enough indication of how well they are doing and what to do to improve. A broad curriculum provides well for pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is well supported by pupils. Pupils are well cared for. The school council provides good opportunities for decision making in the school. The school works well with parents and other schools. Partnerships with the community are very well established.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** Strong and effective leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and middle managers is well focused on improvement and has created a caring school where pupils achieve well. Governance is good, being supportive, well informed and holding the school to account. However, the statutory requirement to hold a daily collective act of worship is not met. Management is satisfactory though there are inconsistencies in assessment practice across subjects and checks on teaching and standards are not frequent or rigorous enough.

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

Parents and pupils are pleased with the education and care provided by the school. They are right to believe that teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Some parents are unhappy with the information they receive about pupils' progress. Inspectors judge that school reports provide a good range of information but they do not indicate, except in mathematics, how pupils are achieving

in relation to expectations for their ages. There are ample opportunities for parents to consult with staff about their children's progress. A minority of parents and pupils have concerns about harassment in school. Some bullying occurs and it is effectively dealt with, though not always to the satisfaction of a small number of parents.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- bring the achievement of pupils in religious education overall and in mathematics, geography and art and design in Years 5 and 6 to match that of other subjects;
- ensure that assessment is used consistently across all subjects to track pupils' progress and identify underachievement, and so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve;
- bring the proportion of very good lessons in Years 5 and 6 up to that found in Years 7 and 8;
- improve the rigour of checks carried out on teaching and standards so that best practice is identified and shared, and weaknesses of teaching are identified and improved;
- continue to find ways of overcoming the difficulties arising from large class sizes and restricted accommodation;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that a daily collective act of worship is held for all pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. There is no significant difference between the achievement of pupils of different abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs. Overall standards of work are above average in Years 6 and 8.

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

- Standards are well above average in English in all years, and in history, geography and ICT in Years 7 and 8.
- Pupils achieve well in most subjects and very well in ICT.
- Achievement is satisfactory in religious education overall, and in mathematics, art and design and geography in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils' competence in using literacy and numeracy across other subjects is above average and in ICT is well above average.

#### **Commentary**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (29.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.8 (28.5)	27.2 (26.8)
Science	29.3 (30.1)	28.9 (28.6)

*There were 137 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. Based on inspectors' professional judgements and optional standardised national tests taken in mathematics and English in Year 4, pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. It is average across most subjects and above average in English and mathematics, being slightly higher in mathematics than English. There are more higher attaining pupils in Year 8 than in Years 5, 6 and 7.
2. Pupils' results in national tests taken in 2004 were above the national average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Boys outperformed girls in mathematics and more boys than girls attained the higher levels in both mathematics and science. In English, boys performed better in reading; in writing, girls performed better overall, although there was no difference between higher attaining boys and girls. The 2004 results, although above average, were lower than in 2003, when they were well above average in all three subjects reflecting the higher prior attainment of that particular year group. Over time, the trend in results shows a similar improvement to that found nationally. Over the past four years there has been no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls and standards overall have been maintained at above average levels. This is consistent with current overall standards of work in Year 6, though in English pupils now reach well above average

standards because of improved teaching with greater focus on improving writing skills. In science standards are now above average due to improved teaching and better use of assessment.

3. When compared with similar schools, the 2004 results for Year 6 pupils reflect achievement that is in line with expectations over a four year period from the end of Year 2. However, just two years of this period were spent in Hexham Middle School. Based on inspection findings and school's recorded information pupils' achievement across all subjects is good.

4. Current standards of work are above average overall in Year 6 matching the most recent results in national tests. Current standards are well above average in English and above average in all other subjects except art, geography and religious education where they are average. Overall this represents good achievement in most subjects because pupils reach above average standards from a lower starting point. Though satisfactory, achievement is not as good as in other subjects in religious education across the school and in mathematics, art and design and geography in Years 5 and 6. In these subjects pupils make less progress in lessons when there is a lack of pace and challenge in the teaching and a lack of variety of activities. In art and design some class sizes are too large and pupils do not have enough space in which to work effectively. In religious education, a large team teaching the a newly introduce syllabus means that subject knowledge is not always secure, and learning activities do not always enable pupils to develop a depth of understanding. In some lessons in mathematics, the highest attaining pupils are not always fully challenged.
5. Current standards of work in Year 8 are above average or higher in all subjects except religious education where they are average; they are well above average in English, ICT, geography and history. Standards are average in religious education. Overall this represents good achievement in most subjects except in ICT and geography, where achievement is very good, and in religious education where achievement is satisfactory. Where pupils' achievement is good or very good it is in response to good teaching that is challenging, and matches tasks to pupils' different needs well. Activities are varied and stimulating and learning moves on at a rapid pace. In geography and ICT in Years 7 and 8 pupils are encouraged to work independently, develop investigative skills, thinking in depth about the subject.
6. Pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy is above average and in ICT is well above average. As a result pupils use these skills competently across subjects to help them to achieve well across the curriculum.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. Good links with the feeder first schools ensure that there is effective transfer of information about pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs have individual educational plans that clearly focus on areas for improvement and state targets to be achieved and pupils make good progress towards these targets. Good teaching of basic skills helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve well. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is also good, and in line with that of other pupils. In most subjects they are challenged in their learning and they are involved in a good range of extra activities that support their achievement.
8. The school, in consultation with the local education authority, sets ambitious targets for results in the national tests at the end of Year 6. In 2004, these targets were not achieved. This year the school is likely to do better and results are expected to be close to the school's targets. The individual progress of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is monitored closely but comparisons based on background are not made.

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

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and have a very positive attitude to learning. Their attendance is good and they are very punctual to school and lessons. Provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Attendance is consistently above average and pupils are very punctual.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn and do well.
- The pupils' school council is effective in improving the school environment.

- Pupils work well in pairs and groups and many are confident when talking about their work.
- Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within the school and take action to show that they consider and care about others.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall, being very good for their cultural development and satisfactory for their spiritual development.

## Commentary

9. Attendance was above the average in the previous and most recent reporting years and continues to be so during the current year. Unauthorised absence was very low. Pupils arrive on time for the start of school and lateness is unusual.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-4*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	Nil
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.*

10. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. They arrive with positive attitudes and are eager to learn. The school nurtures their keenness to learn, setting high expectations and providing many challenging and stimulating experiences that help them to achieve well. Many pupils take part in the broad range of extra-curricular activities offered and benefit from music, drama, sporting activities amongst many others. In lessons pupils concentrate well, work hard and conscientiously and they enjoy working in pairs and groups. They are confident when talking about their work and they enjoy working independently of the teachers on research or creative tasks.
11. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to take responsibility within the school. House captains and vice-captains regularly contribute to assemblies planning their own productions, not being afraid to tackle complex subjects such as festivals across a multitude of faiths. The school council is a well run and effective body, representing the views of pupils. It has made a difference to the way the canteen and playground areas are run and provided equipment for use at break times. Staff work sensitively with the council supporting where necessary but enabling pupils to make their own decisions about their own environment.
12. Pupils behave well in almost all lessons and around the school so that the corridors, the canteen and play areas are well organised, safe and orderly. Only very occasionally do pupils show a lack of maturity in lessons that are not well managed by the teachers and so the pace of learning slows. The school's clear positive behaviour management policy is used effectively and recognised as fair by most pupils. Pupils are very well prepared by the school to deal with harassment or bullying and there are few incidents. They are dealt with effectively, though not always to the full satisfaction of a small number of parents. Reasons for exclusions have been justified and involve a smaller number of pupils than is suggested by total number of exclusions.



## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Asian
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
542	11	3
1	1	0
1	0	0
4	0	0

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

## **Provision for pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

13. Opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually are satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided in Life Skills lessons, which include provision for religious education, for pupils to question, explore and reflect upon rules for living and to develop their own set of values and beliefs. Through this subject, pupils become aware of the work of major charity organisations, such as Christian Aid, and have many opportunities to reflect on third world inequality. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and, through activities such as making and selling cakes and non-uniform days, raise money to help people less well off than themselves. Assemblies offer opportunities for personal reflection, for example when considering the season of Advent pupils are asked to reflect on what they are waiting and hoping for in their lives. However, there is no whole school policy that defines where and how pupils' spiritual development will be promoted and what takes place is piecemeal and uncoordinated. Opportunities for spiritual reflection are not helped by the absence of a daily act of collective worship.
14. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are taught to recognise right from wrong and their good behaviour reflects the success of the school's policy in this area. Assemblies provide a focus for enhancing pupils' self-esteem and encouraging high standards of behaviour and consideration for others. Pupils have to sign anti-bullying and use of the Internet agreements. Pupils respond well to the good number of awards for achievement, effort and attendance and certificates for these are presented at assemblies. In Life Skills lessons pupils consider the implications of different moral codes in developing their own moral standards. In lessons generally, teachers ensure that pupils know the rules regarding movement in and around the classroom and the school's code of conduct is effectively enforced.
15. Pupils' social development is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility, for example as official monitors in ICT, art and design and music. In lessons pupils often work in groups where they learn the importance and value of teamwork. The Life Skills programme provides opportunities for pupils to understand and debate social issues such as drug and alcohol abuse. Pupils do a great deal of charity work, raising significant amounts of money for worthy causes.

16. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school makes a deliberate and successful effort to extend pupils' cultural horizons beyond its semi-rural location. There are a good number of trips and visits to local and regional places of interest, for example, to Hexham Abbey, the Tynedale Music Festival and the Queens Hall. There are trips abroad, for example to the Netherlands, ski-ing in the Alps and to France. Pupils take part in a wide range of inter-school competitions such as Reading Quizzes, sporting fixtures and "Maths"

challenges. There is a Year 8 residential to Ford Castle. Some subjects make a valuable contribution in promoting pupils' cultural development. In Life Skills lessons pupils develop an appreciation of religious beliefs and values of cultures other than their own, such as Hindu culture and Jewish culture. There are visits to Hindu Temples and Jewish Synagogues. There are trips to museums, theatres, castles and places of historical interest such as Holy Island.

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

The school provides a good quality of education. Good teaching results in pupils learning at a good rate and achieving well. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but there is inconsistent practice between subjects. The curriculum is good providing a broad range of learning opportunities that meets pupils' needs and helps pupils to develop into mature and responsible young people. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory overall. Though teachers are well qualified and experienced, class sizes are often very large. The care and support provided for pupils is good. Partnerships with parents and other schools are well developed and partnerships with the community are very good.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good overall and assessment, though strong in a number subjects, is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Though teaching is good across the school, there are more very good lessons in Years 7 and 8 than there are in Years 5 and 6.
- Lessons are very well planned and structured and include a good variety of activities well matched to needs so that pupils enjoy learning.
- The adoption of many of the features of the national strategy to raise standards has helped to improve the quality of teaching, including good attention to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, mathematics and ICT.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught.
- Large classes and restricted accommodation restrict the variety and approaches to teaching and learning that can be used in some subjects.
- Though improved, assessment practice is still inconsistent; marking is not consistently useful to pupils in helping them to know what to do to improve.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are not frequent or rigorous enough to identify the best practice and weaknesses.
- Parents find it difficult to track when homework is given and whether it is completed because there is no regular pattern to it.

### **Commentary**

17. The majority of lessons are good and result in good rates of learning. There is a high proportion of good lessons in both key stages (more than 75 per cent), but there are more very good lessons in Years 7 and 8 (over 30 per cent) than in Years 5 and 6 (11 per cent). Just one lesson was unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in most subjects. It is very good in ICT and geography in Years 7 and 8. Teaching is satisfactory in religious education overall and in mathematics, art and design and geography in Years 5 and 6.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 71 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	15 (21%)	40 (56%)	15 (21%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

18. The school has worked hard to embrace national strategies to improve teaching and learning. Despite limited financial support for professional development, the school has succeeded in ensuring that lessons are well structured, that good attention is paid to improving pupils' literacy, mathematical and ICT skills across subjects; that behaviour management for learning is effective and that assessment, though not yet consistently good, is on the way to becoming a strength. Performance management arrangements have been successful in improving teaching, helping teachers to focus on their own specific areas for improvement whilst being closely linked to the school's priorities. The senior leadership group carry out regular formal checks on the quality of lessons, as do subject co-ordinators. However, the rigour and frequency of these checks are inconsistent across subjects, often because of a shortage of management time to carry out this role. The checks do not always lead to identifying and sharing the best practice.
19. Very good planning is a strong feature of the teaching. Schemes of work serve as a secure foundation from which to plan lessons. Lessons are well structured with clear beginnings, middle parts for development and useful summaries when learning is reviewed and consolidated. Many lessons, especially in mathematics and design and technology, include stimulating, brisk starter activities that engage pupils and interest them from the very start. Learning objectives are identified for almost all lessons and shared with pupils so that lessons are well focused and purposeful and pupils know what is expected of them.
20. A good variety of activities is included in lessons so that pupils are well motivated and enjoy the work. Activities are mostly well planned to match pupils' differing levels of ability and pupils of all abilities are challenged, especially in Years 7 and 8, for example through additional targeted questioning that stretches higher attaining pupils. In some subjects, such as geography, English and design and technology, pupils are encouraged to work without the direct help of the teacher on planning and research and they gain independent learning skills. In many lessons pupils enjoy pair work and group work and they hone their very good speaking skills through much discussion of their work.
21. Teachers pay good attention to improving pupils' basic skills of literacy, mathematics and ICT across the subjects. Key technical vocabulary is explained and pupils become confident in its use, especially in mathematics, science and design and technology. Support for structuring writing has helped lower attaining pupils, especially boys, to improve. Teachers develop pupils' understanding through frequent good questioning that does not rely on short one word answers but demands complex and sometimes lengthy answers. Teachers' secure subject knowledge, especially in Years 7 and 8, is reflected in the way they can use questioning to probe and develop pupils' understanding, recognising how the children are thinking. In some subjects, such as

physical education, though pupils talk confidently to the teacher, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to talk to each other about their work.

22. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' conduct and learning, especially in Years 7 and 8. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils appreciate the help they get from their teachers. The vast majority of parents consider that the teaching in the school is good. A small number are concerned that higher attaining pupils are not always

challenged. Apart from in some mathematics and French lessons this was not found to be the case. Parents expressed concerns about the amount and type of homework. Inspectors found that homework was used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning, and that more homework is appropriately given in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

23. Effective teaching ensures that pupils with special educational needs learn and achieve well in all areas of the curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator involves classroom teachers appropriately in the process of generating individual educational plans. These plans clearly set out achievable targets and strategies for meeting individual needs. Teachers work well with these. They prepare teaching assistants well. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of individual pupils. Teaching and learning for gifted and talented pupils is good overall and very good in ICT and English. The level of challenge offered to pupils is good in all subjects except mathematics, French and religious education where it is satisfactory.
24. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils' immature behaviour was not managed well enough so the pace of learning slowed. In lessons that are satisfactory, found more in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 7 and 8, the pace of learning can be slow because of over-long explanations by teachers or because when pupils work on their own they do so at a slower pace, for example in art and design geography and mathematics. Higher attaining pupils are not always given challenging enough work, for example in French and mathematics. In some lessons the summary does not satisfactorily review what has been learnt, or questioning is superficial and does not allow pupils to think out their answers. In Years 5 and 6, for example in geography, some lessons lack variety of activities and opportunity to think independently. In religious education in Years 5 and 6, limited subject knowledge across a large team and a new syllabus leads to activities that do not allow pupils to develop a depth of understanding. Large classes and restricted accommodation in ICT, design and technology and art and design restricts the range and effectiveness of the teaching methods that can be used.

## **Assessment**

25. Inconsistency in the application of the school assessment policy was identified as a weakness in the last inspection report. The school has responded well to this issue and assessment is now satisfactory overall with some areas of strength.
26. A system which provides information for teachers on their pupils' prior attainment is used by most subjects to set targets for pupils and for the whole school. Pupils' progress is tracked and recorded in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in some, but not all of the other subjects. Assessment practice is very good in music and science overall and in geography in Years 7 to 8. It is good in design and technology and mathematics overall and in ICT in Years 7 and 8. In these subjects, pupils' progress is tracked through regular testing and good marking using clear criteria, often related directly to National Curriculum levels; pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In other subjects, for example, art and design, citizenship, French and physical education, pupils do not know what their targets are and they do not have a clear idea of how well they are

doing in relation to age related expectations. They do not always know what to do to improve because teachers' marking does not make this clear to pupils. In religious education assessment systems are not developed and are unsatisfactory. The school's marking policy for identifying weakness in spelling, punctuation and grammar is not used consistently across subject areas.

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a good range of learning opportunities that meets pupils' individual needs well. The opportunities for pupils to join in extra-curricular activities are good and contribute well to pupils' personal development. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, though some classes are very large.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal development and achievement are enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The school pays good attention to meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils.
- The national strategy for raising standards has been successfully introduced.
- The provision for personal, social and health education through the Life Skills course is good.
- Pupils have the benefits of specialist teaching in Years 5 and 6. They are taught French in Years 5 and 6.
- The statutory requirement to provide a daily collective act of worship is not met.

## Commentary

27. The curriculum is well planned offering a good breadth and balance of learning activities enabling pupils to achieve well. Planning is good and is reviewed regularly to ensure relevance. Curriculum arrangements cater well for pupils of all abilities and there is equality of access for all. There are additional benefits to primary aged pupils in that teaching of subjects in Years 5 and 6 is largely by specialists and French is a regular part of their curriculum. Consequently pupils have a good start to learning subjects such as design and technology, physical education and French when they move into Year 7. The curriculum broadly meets statutory requirements except that a daily act of collective worship is not provided. Assemblies on 3 days per week make a good contribution to pupils' personal development but on the other two days, though a theme for the week is identified, there is inconsistent practice across form groups in providing a collective act of worship.
28. Some problems are caused by overlarge class sizes especially in food technology, art and design and ICT where pupils' opportunities to do practical work are limited.
29. Pupils with special educational needs have equality of access to all areas of the curriculum including extra-curricular activities. The school successfully adapts its curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils. There are clear individual education plans, good planning and effective use of resources enabling pupils to work towards the targets set.
30. The national strategy for raising standards in Years 7 to 9 has been successfully introduced and is helping to raise standards by bringing a greater range, variety and challenge to the work offered to pupils. The school is developing its provision to include the teaching of thinking skills. This has brought benefits in a number of subjects including design and technology though the impact of this provision is patchy across the school. The school recognises the need to monitor and evaluate provision in this area to ensure that its benefits are shared with all.
31. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. It is well delivered through the Life Skills course and covers all the required areas such as sex and drugs education and careers awareness programmes. There is a full week in Year 8 dedicated to careers awareness and this is very successful in preparing pupils for the world of work. A good number of visitors come to the school to offer useful information about their particular occupations.
32. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities and other opportunities to learn beyond the school day. The music department runs an orchestra and two school choirs. A good number of visiting music teachers visit the school to teach pupils to play a good variety of instruments. The school production involves a very large number of the school community



once every other year. Well over a half of pupils are engaged in some capacity. The school also offers a number of opportunities for pupils to become more involved in sport.

33. The provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is very good in English and ICT. It is good in almost all subjects. The school has extended provision to include a good range of opportunities outside the curriculum to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils, for example, regional competitions in mathematics, and many musical, drama and sporting opportunities.

### **Staffing, accommodation and resources**

34. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory. There is effective specialist teaching in Years 7 and 8 and in most of Years 5 and 6 but there are some large class sizes that make practical work difficult in some subjects. There are adequate support staff overall, being very good in ICT, but there is insufficient time allocated to their work in science so that teachers have to carry out some of the preparation usually carried out by laboratory assistants.
35. Accommodation is satisfactory, although large class sizes in some subjects mean that it can be cramped, especially in food technology, art and design and ICT. There are two libraries, and both are well stocked and used well during lesson time but staffing and opening hours beyond lesson time are limited. One French classroom is designated a 'pilot classroom for the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. An interactive whiteboard and three computers are used effectively by teachers.
36. Resources are good in mathematics, ICT, geography, history, modern foreign languages, physical education and for pupils with special educational needs. They are satisfactory in science as there are insufficient data-loggers and books for Years 5 and 6 and the two departmental computers do not work. More modern singing materials are needed in music and the food room is unsatisfactory as there are insufficient cookers for the size of classes in Years 7 and 8. Resources and accommodation for pupils with special educational needs are good.

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

Pupils are well cared for. Guidance and support are satisfactory. The school actively seeks the views of pupils through a well run and effective school council.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pastoral care is very good.
- Induction arrangements are good.
- Assessment is not yet used consistently in all subjects to track pupils' progress and identify the need for support across all subjects.

### **Commentary**

37. The school works closely with its partner first schools to ensure that pupils transfer from them in a well-informed and confident manner. The induction process provides a warm welcome and newcomers are quickly integrated with older pupils. Thereafter, relationships between teachers and pupils become constructive and trusting. Pupils feel valued and safe because of the way they are treated. They are encouraged to contribute to the quality of school life

through the school council through which they are able to make their views known. The school does its best to meet the personal needs of pupils and to consult with parents promptly when the need arises. The arrangements for medical care are very good and all relevant specialist agencies provide useful services to the school. The procedures for health and safety, child protection and cared for children are satisfactorily in place overall, but training of all relevant personal in some procedures has yet to be undertaken. Risk assessments for trips out of school are an example of very good practice.

38. Teachers are readily accessible to pupils who require clarification about their work and extra help is available upon request for example at lunchtime. Revision sessions are arranged for Year 6 pupils prior to National Curriculum tests. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
39. Assessment and marking are used well in some subjects to inform pupils about their progress and how to improve. The school's assessment systems, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, have been used well to identify pupils who are underachieving, prompting the provision of support. However, there are inconsistencies across subjects in how well assessment is used to track pupils' progress and inform them of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils decide their own targets and have positive attitudes towards achieving them. They are entered in their planners that are checked by their form teachers.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents. Its links with other schools are good and with the community are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The home and school partnership group is particularly effective.
- A considerable number of parents are involved in the school.
- Use of the community enhances the quality of learning and personal development.
- Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed of their progress.
- Though the school provides good information for parents overall, reports do not clearly indicate how well pupils are attaining in relation to national age-related expectations.

### **Commentary**

40. Parents are satisfied with the quality of education and care that their children receive. They are right to believe that teaching is good and pupils make good progress. They are pleased with induction arrangements and how the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. One of every five parents who responded to the questionnaire is unhappy with the information received about pupils' progress. Inspectors judge that annual school reports provide a good range of information, for example, about what pupils have studied, what they understand, know and can do and a focus for improvement. They do not, however, clearly indicate, except in mathematics, how pupils are achieving in relation to expectations for their ages. There are adequate opportunities for parents to consult with staff about their children's progress. A minority of parents have concerns about harassment in school. Some bullying does occur, mostly of a minor order. Inspectors found that the school has good systems to dealing with bullying and it is almost always effectively dealt with, though not always to the satisfaction of a small number of parents. Though some parents would like assistance about how to more ably support their children with work at home, relevant workshops are not currently arranged.

41. General information is good. An annual newspaper, compiled by the pupils is very interesting and informative. An innovative parent e-mailing arrangement has recently started. Newsletters and curricular information are published each term. Parental attendance at meetings and reviews is good. A large number of parents voluntarily assist in school. The parents' and teachers' association raises considerable funds for the school. A group of parents produces the prospectus. A small home and school partnership group is very active. It investigates school issues and its views are valued and taken into account for planning and development purposes. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed about the progress their children make and are involved as and when appropriate in the review process.

42. The community is used well by several subject departments for field trips to augment lessons. Visits to places of interest, including abroad, also promote cultural awareness very well. Visitors to school contribute well to learning, for example a local historic society and a wildlife organisation. Charitable causes are very well supported. Local facilities such as an abbey and a swimming pool are well used. Pupils research the community, writing reports about their findings, and produce their own annual newspaper in conjunction with a local newspaper.

Links with first and upper schools are good for the purpose of transition. The local partnership of schools works closely to promote understanding of each other's phases and to promote continuity. Some joint activities are arranged such as dance and music festivals and through the School Sports Co-ordinators, physical education and sport related activities.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. Governance is good, as is the leadership of the headteacher and key staff. Management is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and other key leaders, including subject managers is well focused on raising standards.
- Detailed planning sets out the right priorities and is implemented rigorously by managers, although criteria for judging success are insufficiently precise.
- Governors are committed to knowing the school well, are very supportive and ensure that managers are held to account.
- Development of the role of middle management has led to improved analysis of pupils' performance and identification of underachievement but analysis of pupils' performance is less secure in subjects where assessment systems are not well developed.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed.
- Checks on the quality of lessons are not yet frequent or rigorous enough to identify where teaching needs to be improved, or identify best practice and ensure it is shared.
- Financial planning is good and a deficit budget is managed well.

### **Commentary**

#### **Governance**

43. Governance is good. Governors contribute well to the management of the school and the standards it achieves. They are very supportive and have a strong sense of commitment to ensuring good quality education for the pupils. They are suitably involved in the planning process and inform themselves of a range of relevant matters in order to more ably challenge the school and propose improvement. They initiate and undertake examinations of aspects of the school's operations, for example transition from first schools and funding. They are aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. They take account of parents' views mainly via the innovative parent partnership group. They successfully attract large numbers of parents to the annual governors' meeting. Though, almost all statutory requirements are met, the school does not meet the requirement to provide a daily collective act of worship for all pupils.

## **Leadership**

44. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He has established a school that is becoming increasingly known for its good standards of education and care. He provides a sense of stability and purpose and is committed to ensuring that the curriculum is broad and suits the needs of the pupils. He is not complacent and ensures that policies and practices are reviewed and evaluated and, where appropriate, change or development is planned and implemented. Whilst keeping a low profile, he is accessible and approachable. He has ensured that a competent team of senior and middle managers supports him. He strongly encourages the school's stakeholders to be involved in the work of the school.

45. The key managers of the school provide good leadership in their respective areas of responsibility. They lead effective teams, plan well and have a clear focus on sustaining or raising achievement in almost all subject departments. Their attitudes are positive, despite barely adequate staffing that is necessitated by the low level of funding.

## **Management**

46. Thorough analysis of pupils' performance in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science ensures that the school understands how well it is performing and this information informs the school's priorities for planning. For example, boys' writing was found to be weak but the school, through its effective policy for literacy across the subjects, has improved teaching of writing and there are currently no significant differences between the writing of boys and girls. Under performance of individual pupils is also identified and support offered to those in danger of under-performing. Analysis of pupils' performance across some subjects, for example, religious education, art and design and French, is less secure where assessment is not fully developed.
47. Self-evaluation by the leadership group takes good account of parents' and pupils' views through the parents' home-school partnership group and the pupils' school council, though surveys of parents and pupils' views from a wider base are not sought on a regular basis.
48. Checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' standards are carried out by senior leaders and heads of subjects. However, time for these activities is limited and few staff have received training in evaluating teaching and learning. Checks are not frequent or rigorous enough to ensure best practice is identified and shared; nor are weaknesses always identified and support provided. Consequently the very best practice in teaching, found in Years 7 and 8 is not found as often in Years 5 and 6.
49. Performance management is closely related to the schools' priorities as set out in the school development plan. Teachers work towards objectives which relate to this plan so that many are working on elements of behaviour for learning or assessment for learning. This has ensured that the school's policy for behaviour management is implemented well and that assessment for learning is improving.
50. The school's development plan sets out a suitable number of appropriate priorities for a three year period that are well focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Plans have tackled the issues arising from the previous inspection and overall the school has been successful in improving standards and the quality of teaching. Each senior leader has responsibility for a part of the plan and they are energetic in ensuring its implementation, often leading relevant in-house in-service training and giving much support to subject leaders. The success of the plan is evaluated by senior leaders and they report to the governing body on progress twice per year. Success criteria identified in the plan are not very specific or measurable and could be improved.
51. Though funding for professional development is very limited, the school has made the most of its partnerships with local schools and providers and produced much of its own in-service training to ensure that teaching has been supported and improved.



The national strategies for raising standards have been taken on well and have had an impact on raising standards across the school. A priority for the school has been to develop the role of middle managers. The focus has been on core subjects of English, mathematics and science and managers in these subjects have received training on assessment, analysis of data and self-evaluation. The role has clearly developed and there is now far more emphasis of being accountable for the standards of the work and the quality of the teaching across the school. Constraints on time and the multiple responsibilities of some leaders limit the amount and effectiveness of some of this monitoring activity.

52. The provision for special educational needs is well managed. There are effective systems in place to identify, assess and monitor the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Appropriate help is given to all pupils and the school complies fully with the Code of Practice. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is well led and managed. Policies and procedures are well informed and executed. They reflect best local and national practice.

## Financial management

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,284,190	Balance from previous year	(23,340)
Total expenditure	1,287,460	Balance carried forward to the next	(26,610)
Expenditure per pupil	2,178		

53. Financial management is good. Procedures for day-to-day management are robust, ably led by the business manager. Budget monitoring is carried out regularly by the senior staff and governors. Funding per pupil is well below the national average and this has made it very difficult to produce a balanced budget. Despite this, the school was only slightly overspent last year, and the budget for this year is on course to eradicate the overspend and break even. Financial planning includes long-term forecasting by the business manager. This has highlighted a worsening financial situation over the next three years, as a result of predicted falling rolls, which at present has not been resolved. Expenditure is closely linked to school priorities and monies allocated for specific purposes such as special educational needs are spent appropriately. The principles of best value are applied very effectively. The school compares its performance and expenditure with other schools within the local education authority and with similar schools throughout the country. It consults well with pupils, staff and parents: for example, the home-school partnership was involved in consultations about the breadth of the curriculum and the amount of teaching time spent on preparation for Key Stage 2 tests; pupils are consulted through the school council. The school explores alternatives to find the most effective way of addressing priorities: for example, whether to replace a deputy head with a business manager, and whether to carry out routine maintenance jobs in house; these are fully costed before a decision is taken. The school rigorously seeks best value for major purchases and follows the local education authority procedures for competitive tendering.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 and 3

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English and French are taught to pupils in all years groups across the school and both subjects were inspected in depth and are reported in full.

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and achievement is good.
- Leadership of the department provides clear guidance.
- Lesson planning is excellent and provides challenge for pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to their progress. The frequency and rigour of checks on the department's work are not consistent across the year groups.
- Assessment information is not used fully to help pupils learn.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Well above average	Well above average	Well above average
National test results for 2004	Above average	N/A	N/A
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Good		

#### Commentary

54. Attainment on entry is above average. In 2004 the national test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were above average and had dipped compared to the 2003 results which were well above average, and better than those gained by similar schools. Over the last three years results for both boys and girls have been above average.
55. Current standards in speaking and listening across the school are well above average largely as the result of drama being well integrated into the subject. Pupils confidently put forward their point of view, consider and discuss alternative views and ask and respond to questioning. Reading skills are above average, plenty of variety is offered

in lessons and these texts are frequently extended and supplemented by both libraries. The culture of reading is very good, pupils are keen to discuss their books and take part in reading challenges. More able pupils read and select appropriate information from texts to support their writing. Pupils of all ages have a very good understanding of writing for a range of

purposes; their writing repertoire is extended rapidly in Years 8 and 9. These mature pieces, although not always extended, demonstrate high quality writing. They are technically accurate and illustrate sensitive awareness of audience. Standards have risen rapidly as a result of improved and focused teaching strategies and pupils' positive attitudes. Boys have developed secure writing skills which are currently of a higher standard than the last test results indicate.

56. Excellent planning underpins all teaching and ensures that pupils of all levels of prior attainment achieve very well. The work provides challenge. In all lessons there is a clear sense of purpose and direction, learning objectives are made clear at the outset and pace remains brisk throughout. Pupils are frequently encouraged to carry out learning tasks independently of the teacher. In one such lesson on Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales', pupils' understanding was enriched by a secure knowledge of the historical background gained through independent research. Assessment practices, although rigorous, do not help pupils understand how well they are doing. Pupils are not fully aware of the criteria on which they are assessed or what they need to do to improve.
57. Priorities for development are very clear and work is in hand to ensure continuity and progression between Years 5 and 6 and Years 7 and 8. The team is enthusiastic about literature and this infectious enthusiasm combined with a dedication to raising standards is the key to the subject's success. However, the infrequency of whole team meetings and checks on the quality of lessons means that opportunities to recognise and share best practice are limited.
58. Since the previous inspection, teaching is more challenging and the use of information and communication technology has improved. Though improved, assessment procedures and checks on the work of the subject are not fully developed. Pupils with Special Educational Needs are well supported by classroom assistants and learn well.

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

59. The school has an effective policy for developing literacy skills and is focused on raising standards. Language and literacy are used well to promote learning in other subjects. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average with most subject areas encouraging high quality discussion in lessons. Standards in writing have improved as a direct result of a whole school policy on supporting writing in different ways and marking for literacy. Reading skills are good and pupils are able to read with understanding across subjects. This has been supported by focused teaching of technical vocabulary and by a whole school policy for marking literacy. In geography pupils produce poems, in history pupils keep diaries as if they were slaves. Further good examples were reported in design technology, where role play and other drama techniques helped pupils understand how elements worked, and in mathematics where subject specific vocabulary is well taught.

### **French**

Provision in French is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good because lessons are well prepared and a good variety of activities keeps pupils well motivated.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to do well.
- Teachers' competence in French provides a good role model for pupils and helps their listening skills.
- Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to do their very best.
- Pupils do not always know how well they are doing in relation to national expectations nor what they need to do to improve.

## Summary of key inspection judgements

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Satisfactory		

## Commentary

60. In Years 5 and 6 standards are above those expected for pupils at this age and pupils achieve well, especially taking into account the limited time of one lesson per week in which pupils are taught French. Pupils' vocabulary is growing well and they have good listening skills. Speaking skills are generally quite limited but pupils' pronunciation is good.
61. In Years 7 and 8 pupils receive 2 lessons per week. They achieve well, making good progress and reaching above average standards. Pupils have a solid range of vocabulary at their disposal. They are starting to express themselves in more extended sentences but they struggle for accuracy in their use of the present tense and in their spelling. Pupils speak with good pronunciation and are keen to join in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged in lessons because tasks are not always made harder or more challenging to match their needs. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and achieve well because teaching assistants work well alongside teachers to support their needs.
62. Teaching promotes good learning overall. Lessons are prepared in detail and contain a good variety of activities, such as taped listening exercises and games. The variety of tasks helps to keep pupils motivated and interested, though tasks are not always adapted to challenge higher attaining pupils. Teachers use French well in lessons to promote good listening skills and present a good role model to the pupils. Only occasionally is English used unnecessarily. Pupils enjoy learning French and come to lessons eager to learn and with positive attitudes and behaviour. Teaching is conducted at a good pace and pupils enjoy the humour employed by the teachers in lessons. The national strategy is evident in teaching; lesson objectives are clearly set and activities at the beginning of lessons get them off to a fast pace and pupils are interested and engaged from the start. However, activities to summarise what has been learnt are sometimes rushed. Pupils' work is not consistently linked to the national levels and pupils do not know clearly what they need to do to improve.
63. Leadership of the French department is committed, enthusiastic and concerned. There is good teamwork and leadership is ambitious for the future and keen to achieve its demanding goals which are well focused on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Useful, good quality schemes of work have recently been re-written.

High quality accommodation and good access to information communications and technology (ICT) provides a good working environment.



64. Since the previous inspection pupils continue to achieve well and standards have remained above average. There has been significant improvement to accommodation and facilities for language teaching but the lack of consistent challenge for the higher attaining pupils remains an issue to be addressed.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is good and there is a shared vision focussing clearly on raising attainment.
- Relationships are good and pupils are keen to do well.
- Assessment is used very well to inform teaching and learning, and to monitor pupils' progress, although the quality of marking is inconsistent.
- Lessons are well planned and use a good range of learning activities including ICT, but lack of pace limits progress in some lessons particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Achievement, teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6, though satisfactory, are not as good as in Years 7 and 8.
- Though higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily, they are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Monitoring of teachers' work is not yet rigorous enough to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
National test results for 2004	Above average	N/A	N/A
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Satisfactory		

### Commentary

65. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment in mathematics. In 2004, pupils' results in statutory tests taken in Year 6 were above the national average representing satisfactory achievement. Boys' attainment was higher than girls' in 2004. In 2003, results were well above the national average and there was no significant difference between boys and girls. Taken over a three year period pupils' performance in mathematics has been above average. The rate of improvement over the last four years is broadly in line with the national trend. Currently, overall standards in Year 6 are above average. This reflects satisfactory achievement from pupils' starting points. Boys and girls achieve similarly.

66. Standards in the current Years 7 and 8 are also above average. The school's monitoring data shows that in Years 7 and 8 pupils' rate of progress is above national expectations. The achievement of both boys and girls is good overall and is better in Year 8 than in Year 7.

67. Pupils in all year groups are articulate and confident in answering questions and explaining their answers. They are well motivated, they organise themselves sensibly for group work and work collaboratively, although the pace of work slows when they work individually, which limits their progress. They draw and measure accurately. Numeracy skills are good and pupils apply these well in mental activities. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of place value for whole numbers; they recognise simple equivalent fractions and decimals. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 plot and read co-ordinates in all four quadrants, although some have difficulty with drawing and labelling axes accurately. By Year 8, all pupils understand simple probabilities and can represent these on a number line. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 recognise equivalent linear equations and solve them intuitively, but some have difficulty setting solutions down logically on paper.
68. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in all four years. They make good progress because they are mainly taught in relatively small ability groups and the learning activities are carefully matched to their needs. Although gifted and talented pupils are identified, there is no additional provision for them in lessons above that for other higher attaining pupils. Extension work is available in classrooms, but in the lessons seen all pupils within an ability group followed the same work. As a result achievement of higher attaining pupils, though satisfactory overall, is sometimes below expectations.
69. Teaching and learning were at least satisfactory in all lessons and sometimes good or better. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because lessons are well structured. Occasionally higher attaining pupils in Years 6 and 8 are not sufficiently challenged; as a result, they make less progress than they should in those lessons. Pupils take part in a variety of short learning activities which keep pupils on task and make lessons fun so they learn in small steps. Lessons are usually well planned, with clear learning objectives but these are not always shared with the pupils. As a result pupils are not always clear where a particular activity is leading and are not fully involved in assessing their own progress. The national strategy to improve teaching and learning is used well, and pupils are expected to explain their methods and to use mathematical language accurately. Starter activities are used very well to get lessons off to a brisk and stimulating start, but there is often a loss of pace during the main activity, especially in Years 5 and 6. This is due to unclear or over-long explanations or due to a lack of urgency by pupils when working individually. End of lesson summaries are not always effective in consolidating and reviewing learning. Pupils' exercise books show an inconsistent approach to standards of presentation, particularly in Years 5, 6 and 7; in Year 8 the standard of presentation is good because pupils are expected to set their work out logically and to show their working out. The quality of pupils' written work is not as high as expected, particularly in Years 5 and 6, because marking is inconsistent. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their learning of mathematics are good overall, and very good in Year 7. Relationships are good and pupils feel confident to ask questions; they behave well and are keen to succeed.
70. Teachers work well together and share a commitment to raise standards, and they meet together to discuss pupils' progress after each assessment. A number of initiatives have been introduced to raise attainment, including the teaching of thinking skills and the use of ICT. The team have a good, up-to-date knowledge of their

subject and teaching methods. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are in place, but at present these are not rigorous enough to effect improvements. Assessment of pupils' work is used very well to inform planning and data is analysed well to measure pupils' progress. All pupils have very specific individual targets and they know what they need to do to achieve them.

71. Since the previous inspection above average standards, good numeracy skills and good teaching and pupils' progress in Years 7 and 8 have been maintained. The use of assessment is now a strength. ICT is used well to enhance pupils learning. The department now conducts an annual audit and review to inform development planning and identify staff development needs. There are still some inconsistencies in marking and standards of presentation.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

72. All teachers have received training for the teaching of mathematics across the curriculum and have a copy of the school's policy, which successfully promotes a common approach to calculations and graph work. Pupils' application of mathematics in other subjects is good. They use their graphical and measurement skills competently in science and design and technology. They apply scale and proportion, and use tessellations in art. In geography, pupils' understanding of co-ordinates and scale is applied to map reading, and they draw and interpret graphs. Other applications of mathematics include number patterns and sequences in music, Venn diagrams in English, number skills and measurement in physical education and spreadsheets in ICT.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, which leads to good achievement.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour during lessons are very good.
- Data-logging work by pupils is under-developed due to a lack of equipment.
- Resources are becoming depleted and there is a shortage of textbooks for Years 5 and 6.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
National test results for 2004	Above average	N/A	N/A
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership		Good	
Management of the department		Good	
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection		Good	

### Commentary

73. The national test results at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were average, and were not as good as those achieved in 2003 when they were well above average. There was no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Based on test results, higher attaining pupils do better than other pupils in science.

74. Standards of work are above average in all years. This is an improvement on the previous year's results and pupils' achievement is good, which is due to good teaching and the motivation of the pupils. The achievement of pupils with special educational

needs is also good due to the help that they receive from support staff and tasks that are carefully matched to pupils' individual needs. Lower and average attaining pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the topic of forces and are able to explain why things float in water, whilst higher attaining pupils explain the meaning of up-thrust. Year 8 pupils explain how heat travels and understand the difference between conductors and insulators. Higher attaining

pupils explain this in terms of particle theory. The investigative skills of all pupils are very good and they handle apparatus and chemicals with due care and respect. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils remain on task during written and practical work. They listen attentively and are keen to answer questions.

75. Teaching is good and pupils learn well because of this. Lessons are well prepared, have a brisk pace and contain a variety of activities, which maintains the interest of pupils. Work is carefully matched to pupils' varying abilities. For example, frameworks to support writing and exercises to identify missing words help pupils with lower levels of literacy skills to succeed. Number skills are successfully practised through measuring and the drawing of graphs appropriate to the science curriculum. Good attention is paid to literacy in lessons and teachers take care to emphasise new words. ICT is used in lessons but the use of data-loggers by pupils is under-developed because of a shortage of equipment so that pupils do not have enough opportunity to use the equipment themselves. Homework is set at appropriate times and is used to support learning. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress and record keeping are very good. Work is carefully marked on a regular basis and pupils are able to monitor their own progress through the use of target books.
76. There is a good team spirit and the staff is committed to the improvement of examination results. The subject is beginning to benefit from the recent appointment of the subject manager as a leading teacher in the authority, through the sharing of good practice and the promotion of new ideas. Teaching and learning are checked for quality regularly through lesson observation and book scrutiny. Assessment is very good and used to inform planning, teaching and learning. The accommodation is satisfactory and the interesting displays of pupils' work are informative and help to support learning. Resources are satisfactory but there is a shortage of textbooks for Years 5 and 6 so that pupils have to share in classes. The department receives some technical support but it is insufficient in time allocation so that teachers have to spend time on tasks which would normally be done by a laboratory assistant. There has been some fluctuation in results since the last inspection but improvement has been good overall and above average standards have been maintained. A new scheme of work has been introduced in Years 7 and 8 and assessment is more rigorous.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' use of ICT to present information is well above average.
- Teachers set interesting and challenging work which is very effective in helping pupils learn new skills and gain new understanding in the use of ICT.
- Large class sizes in Years 5 and 6 restrict the methods teachers can use to help pupils learn.
- Very good leadership and management in Years 7 and 8 are helping pupils reach well above average standards and achieve very well.

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students	Good	Very good	Very good

reach are as high as they should be			
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Well above average	Well above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Very good	Very good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good		
Management of the department	Very good		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Very good		



## Commentary

77. The presentation skills of pupils in Years 5 and 6 are well above average. They can create a slide show with text, animation and sound to a very high standard, with higher attaining pupils creating up to fourteen slides each. They have well-developed skills in design and can use the features of graphical design packages to very good effect. Their ability to work on their own is only average because large class sizes, sometimes of thirty-four pupils, restricts pupils to sharing one computer between two or three. In Years 7 and 8 pupils work at their own computer. This enables them to make rapid progress in developing and refining their basic skills and because they are taught very well, they learn very well and make very good progress. Control and measuring skills in particular are very well developed and the vast majority of pupils can use ICT systems to control events in a pre-determined manner. They understand how and where sensors are used, for example, in a fridge or burglar alarm.
78. In Years 5 and 6, teachers know their subject well and set tasks which help pupils learn quickly and effectively, for example, when teaching them how to use formulae in spreadsheets. They have very good management and organisational skills which enable them to manage large classes without any disruption to learning. When using questions to recapitulate previous work they do not always allow sufficient time for all pupils to make a considered response and take the first "hand up" answer and move quickly on. This discourages slower thinking pupils from attempting to answer questions. Teaching methods are restricted by the large group sizes; for example, it is virtually impossible to gather all pupils around the interactive whiteboard for demonstrations and explanations. In Years 7 and 8 teaching is very good. Informed, specialist teaching uses interesting and challenging methods of learning. For example, teachers use the interactive whiteboard to illustrate pupils' individual web page designs using different software packages, ensuring that pupils make very good progress in deepening their knowledge and understanding of ICT applications and systems. Teaching sets a cracking pace and pupils of all abilities learn rapidly and effectively, applying themselves wholeheartedly to the challenging tasks set by the teacher. In all years, pupils' learning is supported by their very positive attitudes. Pupils with special educational needs are well known by their teachers. They receive good support so that they achieve as well as other pupils.
79. In Years 5 and 6, checks on how well teachers are teaching the subject are not fully developed because time for this activity to be carried out is restricted. The small team teaching the subject in Years 5 and 6 are well supported with materials and advice so that standards continue to rise. Leadership and management of provision in Years 7 and 8 are very good. The ICT elements of the National Strategy for raising standards and improving teaching have been introduced successfully and are largely responsible for the very good improvement in the subject since the previous inspection. Now standards and achievement of pupils in Years 7 and 8 are higher and teaching and learning in these two year groups are better. Unlike at the previous inspection the subject now meets all statutory requirements. The quality of technician support is good.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Pupils have very good basic skills in ICT and use them effectively to support their learning in other subjects. In no subject is ICT not used at least satisfactorily. In mathematics, pupils use computers very effectively, for example, in creating spreadsheets from which they generate data for modelling through the use of formulae. In design technology very good use is made of computers to programme circuit boards and demonstrate how computers can help manage sensors and control machines. In geography pupils use computers very effectively, for example, to enter and manipulate data from fieldwork, producing graphs and pie charts to illustrate results. In music pupils print out their melody work. In English, science, art, history and French, computers are used for research, using the Internet, and presenting work using different software packages.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 achieve very well.
- ICT is used very effectively to enhance learning.
- Teaching and assessment procedures are less effective in Years 5 and 6 and so pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these years.
- Pupils display positive attitudes towards the subject.

#### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Very good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Average	Well above average	Well above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Satisfactory	Very good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Satisfactory	Very good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Good		

#### Commentary

81. Pupils enter the school with average attainment in geography. In Year 5 and 6 they begin to select information from text and graphical sources and use geographical vocabulary in simple descriptive writing. They develop factual knowledge of places and features, such as the rainforest ecosystem, without developing an understanding of important geographical ideas such as influences of human activity or climate. Basic skills, such as analysing a variety of sources of information, are underdeveloped, though pupils use a range of methods to present work, such as annotated diagrams, maps and graphs. Progress is restricted by teaching which on occasions lacks challenge and variety of methods. Pupils are not always aware of their learning targets and are not consistently given tasks that match their level of attainment. There are not enough activities which require them to think independently. Marking does not give them enough information on the standards reached or guidance on how to improve. The pace of learning is slow, which limits the quantity of work produced.
82. In Years 7 and 8 pupils make very rapid progress as a result of very good teaching. Expectations are high and teaching provides challenging activities at all levels and various styles of learning. Lessons have clear targets for learning and a good pace and momentum, with pupils constantly involved. There is more emphasis on the development of investigative skills than in Years 5 and 6, so pupils develop very good understanding of geographical features and processes through enquiry and research. Teachers and pupils use ICT very well. An interactive whiteboard is used very well both as a source of information and to demonstrate to pupils what they should be doing. Pupils are competent using ICT for research and presentation, evident in the quality of Year 7 projects on limestone landscapes. Pupils in Year 8 deepen their understanding of development issues through the 'President For a Day'

simulation, which requires them to reach and justify decisions about the best path to sustainable development. Good questioning probes pupils' knowledge and understanding,

though it could be better targeted to pupils who are less inclined to give answers. The great majority of pupils respond by working enthusiastically and productively and by behaving very well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to other pupils across all year groups. Teachers know their needs and pupils receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants.

83. The geography curriculum now offers very good opportunities for independent learning, the use of ICT and off-site fieldwork. Very good assessment procedures enable the tracking of pupils' progress against their targets. They receive detailed and precise guidance on what they need to do to improve. Evaluation and review of the department's performance drives planning, which maintains a clear focus on raising standards through improvements in teaching, curriculum and resources. The quality of teaching is monitored through observation and the sampling of work though there are few opportunities for other teachers of the subject to observe model lessons by the subject co-ordinator. Significant progress has been made in relation to all the issues raised in the previous inspection. The main area for development is the dissemination of the best aspects of teaching and assessment into Years 5 and 6.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 8 are well above average.
- Teaching sets demanding tasks for pupils of all abilities.
- Assessment procedures are not fully developed.
- Resources of the local area are used effectively.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Well above average	Well above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Good		

## Commentary

84. Pupils' previous experience of history on entry to the school is varied and overall their attainment is average. In Years 5 and 6 they progress well in broadening their factual knowledge and developing historical skills of chronology and the use of evidence. Pupils in Year 5, for example, can produce an annotated diagram of a 'bastle' (a 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17th century fortified farmhouse found in the Borders and north Pennines) by analysing picture and written sources. Middle and higher attaining pupils write persuasively and at length in support of one of the protagonists at the battle of

Bosworth. Writing of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is mainly factual and descriptive, with some use of historical terms but limited explanation. Pupils in Year 6 develop research skills well by selecting, collating and presenting information from a wide range of sources on Aztec civilisation.

85. In Years 7 and 8 pupils use historical vocabulary more frequently and accurately. They develop chronological skills in response to demanding sequencing exercises. There is much

more challenge to thinking and reasoning, so pupils develop the techniques of explanatory writing. Higher attaining pupils link and categorise the multiple causes of complex events such as the Civil War. They can make inferences from sources and begin to evaluate their usefulness and reliability. The achievement of pupils in all years is helped by their positive attitudes, hard work and the good relationships they form with teachers and with each other.

86. Good teaching provides challenge to all levels of attainment, with very good matching of tasks and materials to pupils' needs and capabilities. Those with special educational needs and those with weak literacy skills are well supported with aids to writing and organisation of work. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are clearly aware of their learning targets. Good questioning is used to probe and develop understanding. It is not always well targeted on those who are reluctant to participate orally. Local resources such as Aydon Castle, Tynedale Museum and Hexham library contribute to pupils' learning about important events and changes within a local context. Marking is more thorough in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. Inaccuracies and misunderstandings are corrected and additional questions and information for pupils to consider are provided. Marking does not do enough to inform pupils of the standards they attain or of what is needed to improve.
87. The process of evaluation and review is well established and leads to effective planning, with a clear focus on improvements in curriculum and teaching. Comprehensive schemes of work enable very good lesson planning and embrace effective strategies to meet the needs of all pupils. They have been particularly effective in raising the achievement of boys to match that of girls. The work of a large team of history teachers is checked by subject management and areas for improvement are identified, such as the development of thinking skills. However, lack of time limits the opportunities for sharing of best practice. Assessment tasks produce accurate results but procedures to use the information produced to track and monitor pupils' progress towards their targets are not fully developed. Since the previous inspection, standards and teaching have improved, there is more challenge for higher attaining pupils and requirements for ICT are met.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of Jewish laws and customs.
- The work set for pupils is sometimes not challenging enough.
- Artefacts and outside visits to local temples and synagogues are used well to help pupils learn.
- Teachers are good role models and set a good example to pupils.
- Pupils' work is not marked or assessed regularly enough.
- Teachers' knowledge of the subject limits the scope of the tasks they set pupils to do.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
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<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Average	Average	Average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory		
Management of the department	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Satisfactory		



## Commentary

88. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of aspects of Judaism, for example, Old Testament stories and Shabbat laws are above average. They recognise and identify Christian symbols and understand what it means to be a Christian. Their knowledge and understanding of the main features of the other two religions studied, Hinduism and Islam, are below average. By Year 8, pupils know the main events in the life of Jesus, particularly relating to His birth and death. They know about and understand the relevance of miracles and parables to Christians, for example, the feeding of the five thousand and the prodigal son. Their knowledge and understanding of other world religions remains below average.
89. Standards are not as high as in some other subjects because teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, is not good enough to enable pupils to learn more effectively. A great number of teachers teach religious education, not all of whom know enough about the subject to set interesting and challenging tasks that stretch pupils to the full. The focus of a minority of lessons involves pupils in an activity that is an end in itself, for example, writing a newspaper article on the life of Jesus, and does not lead pupils to further insights or wider knowledge and understanding of the topic. Where teaching is good the work set is challenging and interesting and helps pupils learn new facts and gain fresh insights, for example, when sharing Christian artefacts among groups and asking them to investigate, identify and discuss their relevance and meaning to Christian believers. In all classes relationships with pupils are very good and teachers are good role models for pupils, emphasising mutual respect and tolerance. Marking and assessment procedures are unsatisfactory because pupils' work is not always marked regularly enough and does not help pupils know what they have to do to improve. High attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils.
90. Management and leadership of the subject are new this term. A new scheme of work has already been written ensuring adequate coverage of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Curriculum development supports pupils' personal development well, for example, through visits to local Hindu Temples and Jewish Synagogues. Marking and assessment remain unsatisfactory and the programme of checks on the quality of teaching of all teachers is not yet in place.
91. Since the previous inspection the curriculum has improved and is now based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. All statutory requirements are now met. The quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

Provision in design technology is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in all years.
- Teaching is good across the materials areas.

- The challenge provided for Years 5 and 6 pupils is very good.
- Large class sizes in Years 7 and 8 and limited accommodation have an adverse impact on teaching and learning in food technology.
- The frequency and rigour of checks on teaching and learning are not sufficiently developed.

## Summary of key inspection judgements:

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good		
Management of the department	Good		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Good		

## Commentary

92. Pupils in all years reach above average standards in design technology. Achievement is good because pupils enter the school with average standards and leave with above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers.
93. In Year 6 in resistant materials, pupils successfully combine different media and gain an above average understanding of electrical circuits. They use ICT well to research the technological background to their projects. In textiles, pupils make good progress in developing designs for soft toys. Due to the increased challenge given by specialist teaching, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have an above average awareness of the design process, preparing them well for later learning.
94. In Year 8 in food technology, pupils have an above average knowledge of what constitutes a healthy meal, producing menu items for an imaginary restaurant. They demonstrate above average practical skills in preparing their products. Design skills are less well advanced because overlarge classes in a room designed to accommodate half that number force the teacher to concentrate on the supervision of the practical activity of around one half of the group, leaving the remainder to work at their own slower pace. Pupils in resistant materials achieve well, gaining good levels of knowledge and understanding of control technology. They do so by programming microchips to run routines with lights and motors. Teachers encourage independent learning well through good use of ICT.
95. Teaching is good overall. It is often very good in resistant materials. Lessons are well planned, largely practical and offer good challenge. They have a clear beginning, middle and end. Lesson objectives are shared to give pupils clear direction and context to their learning. Lessons begin with starter activities that are lively and engaging and which motivate pupils. Lessons end with sessions that recapitulate progress and celebrate individual or group achievement. Pupils act as demonstrators very well, giving them confidence in their ability to develop skills. Teaching promotes literacy well. There are good introductions of key terminology. Outline frameworks and prompts help pupils to develop their evaluative skills and write up their evaluations coherently. In addition teachers use question and answer well to test understanding as well as giving pupils the chance to demonstrate existing knowledge.

On occasion teachers do not allow sufficient time for the closing sessions and opportunities to celebrate progress are lost.

96. Subject leadership sets high standards and leads by example. Good links are well established with schools that make up the local Partnership, benefiting the school through, for example, the sharing of expensive resources. Good liaison work with the parent-teacher association has led to successful fund raising for the subject. The programme of monitoring and evaluation to improve teaching further is in an early stage of development and is not yet rigorous or systematic enough to ensure consistent improvement in teaching and learning.

## VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Art and design

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching demonstrates good specialist knowledge which is supporting improvement.
- Productive relationships established between teacher and pupils leads to good learning.
- The range of activities taught does not include aspects such as graphics and textiles.
- Pupils' progress is tracked but pupils do not have clear targets, nor do they always know what to do to improve.
- Though satisfactory, teaching, learning and achievement are not as good in Years 5 and 6 as in Years 7 and 8.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Satisfactory	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Average	Above average	Above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Satisfactory	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Satisfactory		
Management of the department	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Satisfactory		

### Commentary

97. Pupils join the school with a range of experiences of art and standards are around average. As a result of large class sizes in Year 5 both standards and achievement improve satisfactorily but at a slower rate than in Years 7 and 8. By Year 6, standards in art are average and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. In Year 6, most pupils acquire reasonable skills in observational drawing with pencil. Most add colour, texture and collage to make satisfactory changes to their work. Pupils were observed working in pairs cooperatively to produce the two sides of mobile low-relief sculptures. Lower attaining pupils struggle to mix paint well or apply it carefully and so make slower progress than the rest. Limited opportunity to work with a wide range of media such as graphics, textiles and sculpture, lessens achievement.
98. Standards improve in Years 7 and 8 and are above average; this represents good achievement for these pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of the proportions of the portrait and are able to draw the features well using pencil tone. Their preparation for doing a painted self-portrait shows that they have good understanding of the work of portrait artists such as Stanley Spencer and Frida Kahlo. This leads them to use colour experimentally to produce convincing outcomes. Most pupils achieve well because they enjoy the lessons and are well taught. Some lower attaining boys lack

the motivation to focus determinedly on the challenging work. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as the majority as a result of the effective individual tuition and support they receive from the teacher and learning support assistants. Good teamwork is evident when teaching assistants are in the classroom.

99. Lessons are well planned and pupils are told what it is they are to learn and so are purposeful and focused. Good teaching stems from good subject knowledge and expertise in how to apply it well in the teaching. Teaching breaks tasks into incremental steps that pupils are able to follow with ease. Pupils' learning builds well on what they know and can do already. Teacher and pupil relationships are strong, pupils are enthusiastic and learn well. In some lessons in Years 5 and 6, lengthy introductions reduce the amount of time for practical work. As a result, pupils do not cover as many topics or approaches that they might. There is good written evidence of extension work for the higher attaining pupils. This leads them to learn well, especially in Years 7 and 8. Sketch books are checked regularly but the marking and comments do not always help pupils know what they need to do to improve further.
100. Recently appointed subject leadership has clear priorities for improvement and there is a determination to drive up standards. The first priority has been the writing of a coherent scheme of work to include activities in a wider range of media such as graphics, textiles and sculpture. The provision of different opportunities and challenge for all pupils is beginning to result in rising standards. Pupils' progress is tracked and recorded during their four years in the school but pupils do not have clear achievable targets, as they move through Years 7 and 8, based on grades attained at the end of Year 6. The department runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not frequent enough to provide guidance on how it could be improved. Performance management requirements have not been fully met. Since the previous inspection standards have improved satisfactorily and new leadership is determined to drive up standards further.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The consistently good teaching is the outcome of very good planning and leads to good learning by the pupils.
- Pupils have an enthusiastic approach to learning, achieve well and standards are consistently above average.
- Opportunities for developing individual interests in instrumental music are very good.
- The teaching accommodates all ability groups very well.
- Singing is popular as a class activity but requires new resources to enable it to develop fully.

### Summary of key inspection judgements

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Very good	Very good	Very good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Very good		

Management of the department	Good
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Good



## Commentary

101. Pupils' standards in music are consistently above average. In Year 6 pupils show very good competence in using music software to compose their tunes. They use the facilities effectively. In Years 7 and 8 pupils play keyboards very competently, using good finger patterns and showing good knowledge of the layout of the notes. Year 8 pupils, using both keyboards and computers, are composing their own tunes, which show a good understanding of melody structure, and have good competence in using appropriate computer music notation programs. In all years, pupils readily express their good knowledge of musical terms. They talk about music very articulately and some more able pupils, particularly boys, write about their performances in a very mature style. Pupils' achievement is good, as, at all stages, standards are above expectation, although at entry to the school standards of attainment are only average. The more able pupils respond well to challenging work well matched to their capabilities and they achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving very well because they are very well motivated and fully involved in all tasks that support their needs very well.
102. The teaching is supported by good subject knowledge and very good class management, pupils' attitudes and behaviour being very good overall and often excellent. They show an enthusiasm for learning, work well and are very good at organising themselves. Lessons are productive; the teaching and learning are frequently challenging to the higher ability pupils, who respond with enthusiasm to the well structured activities. The teaching is also well attuned to the needs of less able pupils who enter into the spirit of lessons with considerable confidence. In class instrumental lessons, arrangements of varying degrees of difficulty of the musical pieces being learned are used. Consequently all pupils are effectively involved in performance. The use of electric keyboards is well structured to different paces of learning. A well planned rewards system encourages and motivates pupils. Planning is very thorough at all levels, particularly planning for assessment, and results in teaching and learning which is never less than good and sometimes very good.
103. The subject is very well led and is very inclusive in its outlook. It provides very well for pupils of all abilities. Management, of this essentially one person department, is good; the department is organised efficiently, ensuring that all runs smoothly day-to-day. Many pupils take advantage of the very good arrangements for individual instrumental tuition and also support the most efficient school orchestra. There are not enough scores suitable for class singing so that pupils' vocal experience, is not fully developed. However, singing is a very popular activity and the two school choirs are thriving.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy lessons and work hard maintaining good levels of physical activity.
- Standards in rugby are above average for boys and girls and pupils are confident in evaluating and talking about their own performance.
- Pupils' understanding of how activity can help achieve a healthy lifestyle is limited.

- A good range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils, including talented pupils, to do well, though more girls are involved than boys.
- The school works well with the local sports co-ordinators and local development officers to enhance the taught programme.
- Though teaching is good the start of some lessons is slow.

## Summary of key inspection judgements:

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Satisfactory		

## Commentary

104. Standards in rugby are above average in Year 6 and Year 8. Pupils work well in their teams to set up attack and defence lines and they understand how to make the attack tactics work effectively. In Year 8, girls and boys know how to make the defence line work and boys use tackles and 'rucks' in a small game successfully. In Year 6, standards in hockey are above average. Pupils demonstrate good control of the ball and understand and apply basic attack strategies to enable possession in a small game. Pupils in all years have a good understanding of games strategies and they evaluate their performance well. They talk confidently to the teacher about strategies and skills they use, identifying what they do well and what they need to do to improve. They are less confident about talking to each other about performance because there are fewer opportunities to do so. Pupils know how to warm up but rarely take responsibility for this part of the lesson for themselves. Though Year 8 pupils have a basic understanding of the need to exercise to maintain a healthy lifestyle they do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of how different activities might help them to keep fit and healthy.
105. Taking into account pupils' standards when they enter the school, pupils achieve well in all years mainly due to good specialist teaching. The programme of extra-curricular activities enables talented pupils to do well, especially in sports such as netball, hockey, rugby, basketball and football. Pupils with special educational needs are well known to teachers and do well making similar progress to other pupils. They achieve especially well when they are supported in class. Girls and boys achieve similarly.
106. Teachers' expectations of learning and behaviour are high, good relationships are well established and pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy the lessons. Well structured lessons with a good variety of activities taught at a good pace progressively build up skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils learn at a good rate and maintain good levels of physical activity. Pupils know what is expected of them and good on-going feedback to the classes helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what to do to improve. Good questioning, often demanding complex responses, ensures that pupils reflect on their own performance and talk to the teacher about the strengths and areas for improvement. In a Year 6 lesson on hockey, pupils described what they did well to keep possession of the ball. In rugby lessons pupils identify the aspects of their play they need to improve. Pupils are able to organise themselves into pair and group work well without the direct intervention of the teacher. The very few pupils who not able to take a physically active part in the lessons, are not fully involved in learning. They observe lessons and record what they see but are not often involved in answering questions and are sometimes peripheral to the lesson activity

107. In the small number of lessons that are satisfactory, pupil management is not secure and the pace of learning slows. In occasional unsatisfactory lessons not enough learning takes place because considerable time is lost in bringing pupils to order and the start of lessons lack urgency.

108. There is a focus on improving teaching though opportunities for in-service training have been limited. Checks on the quality of teaching have been carried out by the subject leader, but opportunities to share best practice are limited. Schemes of work are in the early stages of updating. A new assessment system has recently been introduced so pupils' progress is recorded, though pupils are not fully aware of how well they are doing in relation to national expectations or what they need to do to reach the next level. A department development plan identifies priorities but it is not closely focused on raising standards. Risk assessment is in place but is in need of updating and review. A broad range of extra-curricular activities are better supported by boys than girls. There are more activities for pupils in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. School sport co-ordinators and sports development officers regularly contribute to curricular and extra-curricular activities, helping to maintain good standards. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained since the last inspection and issues arising from the previous inspection are being tackled.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The main focus of the inspection was on citizenship. Personal, social and health education has a high profile within the school where it is combined with religious education and citizenship, and taught as a Life Skills course. No lessons of PSHE were taught or observed during the inspection week. From a scrutiny of work pupils have already done in their exercise books, standards are above average and pupils are achieving well. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. All the necessary policies, for example regarding sex, careers and drug education, are in place.

### Citizenship

Provision in Citizenship is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in all years.
- Learning is enhanced by frequent opportunities for discussion and role play.
- Though pupils are told how well they are doing, their progress in all elements of citizenship is not recorded well enough.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- Where citizenship is taught as part of other subjects it is not identified specifically enough.

### Summary of key inspection judgements:

Aspect	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 8	Overall
<b>Achievement:</b> whether the standards students reach are as high as they should be	Good	Good	Good
<b>Standards of work seen</b> in relation to national age-related expectations	Above average	Above average	Above average
<b>Attitudes</b> of pupils to their work	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Quality of learning</b>	Good	Good	Good
Quality of curriculum leadership	Good		
Management of the department	Satisfactory		
Changes in effectiveness since the last inspection	Not applicable		

## **Commentary**

109. Pupils enter the school with varied and often very limited formal experience of citizenship. Many are well informed and articulate in talking about topical issues and events. At this stage they are achieving in line with expectations. In the citizenship element of the school's Life

Skills programme they study a diverse range of topics. Pupils in Year 6 develop an understanding of the concept of environmental responsibility through looking at the practicalities of energy conservation in the home. In Year 7 pupils apply what they know about rights and responsibilities and the need for rules by designing a working game based on strategies to 'Beat the Bully'. In Year 8 they extend their understanding by drawing up a moral code and demonstrating a good awareness of the different influences on morality. They also acquire knowledge of the work of voluntary organisations in a global context by using the 'President For a Day' computer simulation in geography. They are required to consider the economic and political implications of their chosen route to sustainable development. Many pupils also demonstrate responsible participation in the extra-curricular activities available and through involvement in the democratic processes of the Student Council. In all years achievement is enhanced by the interest and enthusiasm shown by the vast majority of pupils.

110. The great strength of teaching is its inclusiveness in providing tasks and activities in which all pupils can achieve well. Pupils learn through debate and discussion, role-play and drama and working in groups and pairs. They communicate their learning as much through oral presentations, leaflets, posters, cartoons and charts as they do in writing. Teachers set high expectations for learning and behaviour and most pupils show a mature and sensible approach, co-operating well with each other and with teachers. Particularly impressive is the attention and respect they give to the views and opinions of others.
111. Good leadership of a large teaching team has resulted in the implementation of a stimulating curriculum to which pupils respond well. Improvements in teaching through monitoring and observation have been restricted through a lack of time. A detailed cross-curricular audit has identified the contribution of other subjects to citizenship. At present this is largely incidental, with little evidence that pupils are set specific citizenship objectives or even made aware of the particular link. Pupils are informed of how well they are doing mainly by verbal feedback from teachers but the system is not formalised and pupils' progress in all elements of citizenship is not fully recorded. The development of more specific objectives and expectations within schemes of work and a record of achievement is planned.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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