

INSPECTION REPORT

EMMANUEL CE (VA) MIDDLE SCHOOL

Verwood

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113894

Headteacher: Mrs. Christine Chisholm

Reporting inspector: Mr. J. M. R. Overend
12336

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th January 2000

Inspection number: 185052

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle, deemed secondary

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Howe Lane
Verwood
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Miss Janice Jeater

Date of previous inspection: 12th June 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
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			Partnership with parents and carers
G. Binks	Team inspector	English	Pupils' welfare, health and safety
A. Braithwaite	Team inspector	Art	
		Equality of opportunity	
		Physical education	
W. Burke	Team inspector	Design and technology	
R. J. Crocker	Team inspector	Information technology	
		Music	
P. J. Ingram	Team inspector	Science	Teaching and learning
M. Lafford	Team inspector	Geography	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Emmanuel Middle School is a Voluntary Aided, Church of England school for boys and girls aged 9 to 13. All children are welcome regardless of culture, religious belief or disability. Currently there are 467 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are of white ethnic origin. The school is larger than most other middle schools in England. Twenty seven pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number on the register of special educational needs is 131, seven pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils joining the school at age nine have achieved standards that are broadly equal to national averages for their age group. Currently the attainment of pupils when they leave the school is in line with or above national averages. The majority of pupils subsequently reach levels that are significantly above those achieved nationally by pupils at age 14. The school has close links with both feeder first schools and upper secondary schools through local pyramid arrangements. The school has close ties with the community, especially the parish church of St Michael's and the diocese of Salisbury.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards of achievement overall meet national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and are on line to meet or exceed national standards by the end of Key Stage 3. The quality of teaching is good and the school cares well for its pupils. It operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis but the management of teachers' time and long-term strategic management is not satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Teachers work hard to provide an education of good quality.
- Achieves good standards in English.
- Cares for pupils.
- Has a good Christian ethos.
- Pupils behave well and strive to succeed.
- Provides good opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility.
- Personal relationships are good.
- Is well managed on a daily basis.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved in mathematics.
- The consistent setting of short-term targets for pupils to achieve.
- Tracking and communicating progress to parents.
- The setting and use of homework.
- The amount of non-teaching time available for staff with responsibilities.
- Strategic management by the governors and senior staff.
- The use of a large carry forward in the school budget.
- The support provided for non-specialist teachers in Key Stage 2.
- Meet requirements for the marking of registers and communicating with parents.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1995. In response to the last inspection a new marking and assessment policy has been developed, attainment overall has been maintained at national averages though there has been a fall in the standards achieved when compared to similar schools. The work of the school is reviewed annually and the school day has been lengthened. The allocation of resources for learning per pupil has improved significantly. There has been little increase in the time available to managers to undertake their responsibilities, especially in respect of monitoring the work of pupils and supporting the work of colleagues. A brochure has been produced for temporary and supply teachers and pupils no longer mark registers. In the light of the significant changes mentioned above improvement has been satisfactory but there is now a growing awareness of what needs to be done to improve significantly in the near future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
End of Key Stage 2 tests	C	C	C	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards achieved by pupils at the age of 11 in National Curriculum tests are in line with national averages overall, though attainments in mathematics are below those achieved nationally. Results have been consistent over the past three years and have risen overall in line with national averages. In comparison with similar schools, however, results have fallen since the previous inspection. Although the school sets targets for national tests in English and mathematics the school does not yet set sufficient individual short-term targets for improvement. As a result of teaching of good quality the achievements of pupils are satisfactory. In some subjects those of pupils with special educational needs match and exceed those of other pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good; the majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. A very small minority disrupts some lessons through immature and inappropriate behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work and play well together and there is a good rapport between staff and pupils. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility in the school community.
Attendance	Attendance figures are broadly in line with national averages and similar to those at the last inspection. There is little unauthorised absence.

This area is a strength of the school. There are good relationships between pupils and

between pupils and teachers. Pupils work hard, they are keen to learn. They enjoy school and willingly undertake responsibility when requested.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 9-11 years	aged 11-14 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good, particularly at Key Stage 3. In both key stages the skills of communication and numeracy are well taught. Number work in science is good. The school meets the learning needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs. The latter have good in-class support but there is sometimes a weakness in the lack of suitable alternative materials for them. Gifted pupils have opportunities to extend their learning in open-ended projects in science and in response to a wide range of literature in English. In general, teaching ensures good standards in the acquisition of basic skills and an increase in knowledge in all subjects apart from music at Key Stage 2. Teaching is well planned, has high expectations, pupils are well managed and good use is made of time and resources. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons the teacher dominated the lesson and pupils did not concentrate or behave appropriately. The assessment of pupils' learning is inconsistent. They are not always given clear short-term targets for improvement. The setting of homework is inconsistent and is not sufficiently monitored by the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for pupils
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils make satisfactory progress overall but there is insufficient time for the coordinator to undertake the responsibilities of the role.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, but there are too few opportunities for spiritual development outside religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school knows its pupils well, recognises their needs and responds well to satisfying those needs.

The school provides a curriculum that is appropriate to the needs of its pupils and which meets all the statutory requirements. It has responded well to national strategies for literacy and numeracy. It offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities to pupils though local, competitive sporting activities for girls in winter are limited. The school cares well for pupils though it does not monitor pupils' progress and personal development or set challenging targets for the future frequently enough. Parents are encouraged to support the work of the school and do so through the home-school agreement, helping in school and raising funds for equipment and the millennium garden. A significant minority feels inadequately informed about the progress their children make, the way their concerns are handled and the reception they receive when visiting the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis but the lack of non-teaching time for key staff to carry out their responsibilities results in important management functions, such as monitoring progress and support for colleagues, not taking place often enough.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the work of the school but many recent changes to the governing body have left gaps in the exercise of their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Although the school reviews its performance annually and appraises the work of teachers, long term strategic evaluation is not yet fully developed.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources available for teaching, but the present allocation of teachers to classes, the high level of teaching time and the large amount of money carried forward is an inefficient use of resources.

The number of teaching staff employed at the school is not adequate, as limited non-teaching time for teachers in relation to their responsibilities, is a weakness of management. The amount of technician and administrative support is less than in other similar schools. Insufficient attention has been paid recently to strategic long-term management and planning. The accommodation is of good quality but as school numbers rise, the small size of several teaching areas is a concern. There are adequate resources for teaching and all purchases are subject to scrutiny for best value

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching • The school has high expectations • Children like coming to school • Children are helped to become mature and responsible • The way the school cares for pupils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework and the consistency with which it is set • Better communications, particularly about the progress of pupils • A wider range of extra-curricular activities • The reception they receive when visiting the school.

The quality of the teaching is good and the concern for the welfare of pupils is a feature of the school. Inspectors agree that homework is not sufficiently well used to support the work undertaken in lessons and that the lack of detailed monitoring of the progress of pupils reduces the effectiveness of reporting to parents. Communications through newsletters and other channels is good. The physical arrangements for entrance to the school do not encourage visitors and the concerns of a minority of parents are reducing the close working relationships between these parents and the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Insufficient evidence is available to fully assess the attainment of pupils on entry to the school at age nine. Tests conducted at the end of Year 4 for the first time in 1999 indicate that approximately two thirds of pupils reach level 3 of the national curriculum in English, writing, spelling and mathematics and that levels of attainment in reading are well above the national average. As the school increases in size more than the average number of pupils are being placed on the register of special educational needs in Key Stage 2. This represents an increase since the previous inspection and a reduction in the levels of achievement of pupils entering the school. The achievements of girls are higher than boys and standards in English better than those in mathematics. With the exception of recent developments in science, the school does not undertake any baseline testing of pupils on entry to the school which would provide a more accurate indication of achievements at age nine. There is, therefore, no firm foundation on which the progress of pupils can be measured as they move through the school.

2. By the end of Key Stage 2 achievements in English in recent national tests were above the average achieved nationally, in science they were close to national averages but in mathematics they were well below the national position. Over the last four years, following initial falls, achievements are rising in line with national averages in the core subjects at a rate that is broadly in line with the national trend. Although the performance of girls is better than that of boys there are variations both over time and between subjects. For example, boys achieve slightly better results in science than do girls, while the performance of girls exceeds that of boys in English, but boys outperform girls in mathematics. There were sharp declines in results in mathematics between 1996 and 1998 but results improved considerably in 1999, whereas results in English have continued to climb as have those in science from a low in 1997.

3. At the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999, the results of pupils who left the school at the end of Year 8 and proceeded to local upper secondary schools, were above the national averages in all core subjects. These results indicate that the school adds value to pupils' attainments in these subjects during the time they are pupils of the school.

4. In comparison with pupils in schools with similar pupils and backgrounds to that of Emmanuel Middle School, attainment in English is comparable at the end of Key Stage 2, in science it is below but in mathematics it is well below that achieved in other schools. The growing number of pupils who join the school from elsewhere during Year 6 as the community of Verwood grows, adversely affects these levels of attainment.

5. Achievements by these particular pupils in national tests at the end of Year 6 were lower than those of pupils who had attended the school from the beginning of the key stage by almost 20 per-cent in English and science, but by a much smaller margin in mathematics. With the exception of mathematics the achievements of pupils who have attended the school for a full two years is equal to that of similar schools.

6. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained, though not improved, achievement in English and science at average national levels but attainment has fallen in comparison with similar schools in all three core subjects overall.

7. During the inspection attainment was judged to be satisfactory in over four out of five lessons. Although in almost one third of lessons the standards achieved were good they were rarely very good, except in design and technology in Key Stage 3. Standards vary between subjects and key stages. They are highest in design and technology and modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3, where in some lessons they are very good. They are good in English and geography in Key Stage 3 and always at least satisfactory in art and information technology. Attainment in science is good at Key Stage 3, especially in investigative work, but less so at Key Stage 2. In music standards are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 but not always so in Key Stage 2 and least satisfactory, though improving, in mathematics in both key stages.

8. Most pupils have reading, speaking and listening skills that are above average for their age and although writing skills are often good, there is more variation in writing between groups taught by different teachers. Reading, speaking and listening skills are better developed for most pupils in Key Stage 2 than are writing skills. Regular reading practice is a particularly strong feature of the school curriculum at all stages and pupils read aloud well, both as individuals and in groups, as seen when reading from a translation of 'The Knight's Tale' by Chaucer. There is continued emphasis on regular reading and of the encouragement of a wide range of writing activities including poetry. Pupils write well in a variety of styles, including poetry, letters and descriptive accounts. Their writing is often perceptive and presentation, including the use of computers, is often good. Writing skills are good at all levels of attainment, including those of pupils with special educational needs. Much of the written work displayed is of a high standard. Pupils speak articulately and with a good range of vocabulary. This was particularly evident when discussing their views of the school with inspectors. In a similar way the curriculum in Year 7 makes demands on all pupils' ability and willingness to speak through discussions such as that on chivalry and courtesy as shown in the prologue to 'The Knight's Tale'

9. The school has made good progress to introduce the literacy hour into Years 5 and 6 in line with requirements of the national literacy strategy. The regular daily shared reading and the development of wider vocabulary and written language skills is of benefit to all pupils. In lessons other than English pupils read competently when researching information and particularly so in art, geography, history and religious education. Writing is completed satisfactorily when it is required in most subjects with good opportunities to develop writing skills in science to describe scientific principles and investigations. In most subjects spelling, punctuation and presentation of writing are at appropriate levels for the ages of pupils.

10. Individual plans for pupils with special educational needs concentrate on providing help to improve pupils' literacy skills so that they gain full access to the curriculum. The success of these elements of the plans is seen in the satisfactory and often good standards achieved by these pupils. For a number of pupils who underachieve, booster lessons after school are raising their levels of literacy.

11. On entry to the school pupils' standards of numeracy are variable with a significant number of pupils who do not know their basic tables and bonds. These standards hinder progress in all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum and clearly contribute to the poor results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is using the national numeracy strategy to try to raise standards and pupils are now placed in teaching groups according to their previous achievements in mathematics. These strategies are now working effectively in lessons at both key stages and helping to raise standards. Mathematical skills are used effectively in other areas of the curriculum. In science graphs are plotted accurately and calculations made efficiently, in design and technology weighing

and measurement are undertaken accurately and in geography good use is made of data handling skills.

12. In science pupils have good investigational and practical skills and are able to record their results in diagrammatic and written form. They make good progress with number skills for plotting graphs, making calculations and predictions. They investigate the formation and composition of different types of rocks, know how shadows vary with the height of the sun and why an electric current can flow along a circuit. Older pupils work well with densities, understand the relationship between pressure and forces and know the rates at which heat is conducted along bars of different types of metal.

13. Standards of achievement that match national averages at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave school at the end of Year 8, together with recent improvements in mathematics, are the result of careful planning by teachers, high expectations of pupils and lessons that are well managed with appropriate resources for all pupils. They are also the result of good relationships between teachers and pupils and the good atmosphere for learning created in classrooms. Pupils are given, and respond positively to, opportunities to work together in lessons and in the majority, good behaviour encourages learning.

14. Overall the progress made by pupils by the time they leave school at the end of Year 8 is better than made to the end of Key Stage 2 at age 11. This is a reflection of the greater amount of teaching that takes place by subject specialists. Conversely in Key Stage 2 more teachers are non-specialists and the amount of time available to subject coordinators to assist them in their work is insufficient to provide the support and guidance necessary to improve the quality of learning and teaching for pupils. In addition the schools' priorities for the in-service training of staff have not yet embraced the need to provide support in subjects for non-specialist teachers in areas other than literacy and numeracy.

15. The achievements of pupils are also affected by the lack of clear targets that would raise levels of attainment, would allow more effective monitoring of progress and the use of information thus gained to inform both teaching and programmes of work. Although teachers in most subject areas keep accurate records of the work undertaken and grades achieved, too little use is made of this existing information to provide greater challenge for pupils in their work. A new school marking and assessment policy is now in place following the key issue from the previous inspection, but this has not yet been universally adopted and there are often inconsistencies between teachers in the application of this policy. Although a programme for homework exists the setting of homework is inconsistent both between subjects and teachers, and overall, too little use is made of homework to further the achievements of pupils or to consolidate work done in school.

16. Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards that match or are sometimes above those of other pupils, for example in science. They work hard to maintain the same pace as their colleagues in their studies. The support provided by learning assistants enables them to work at the same rate as other pupils and provides help in understanding the work they are required to do. This is particularly the case in lessons in English and mathematics as targets in individual education plans are designed primarily to improve skills in literacy and numeracy. In other subjects, pupils also achieve well. In science, for example, Key Stage 2 pupils showed a very good understanding of the properties of different rocks and were able to spell accurately names such as 'haematite'. In English several pupils produced imaginative letters to people at home from convicts being transported to Australia with the first fleet, while in geography pupils from Key Stage 3 had

very good knowledge of the features of hurricanes. Overall, the school has maintained the position reported at the last inspection.

17. Pupils with special educational needs work conscientiously towards the targets set for literacy and numeracy in individual education plans. They are keen to match the progress of their peers in lessons and often more eager to respond to questions than some other pupils in the group. The targets set are often broad and only relate to matters of literacy and numeracy. They are not broken down into small achievable steps through which pupils can be challenged in the short-term or measure their success in meeting the targets set. There are few targets relating to learning in subjects in other areas of the curriculum or to the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills in those subjects. As a result progress towards these targets is not always a priority.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils show good attitudes to school. The majority work enthusiastically and settle quickly to the tasks set for them. For example in a literacy lesson, Year 5 pupils had to move tables and chairs before beginning group work. They did this sensibly and quickly, obviously eager to continue with their lesson. Most are interested and involved in what is being taught although concentration can wane if the pace of the lesson slows or, occasionally, if the lesson takes place over a double period in the afternoon. Pupils are keen to share what they have been doing with others. For example, volunteers demonstrated a country-dance routine to the rest of the class and in a mathematics lesson, pupils were eager to show what they knew about congruent shapes.

19. The great majority of pupils behave well both in the classroom and outside in the playground and standards of behaviour seen at the last inspection have been maintained. A small minority of boys show immature and inappropriate behaviour that can lead to disruption in lessons but otherwise pupils respond well to the positive approach staff take. There is an inconsistency in this approach, however, and pupils are aware that some staff handle discipline problems more effectively than others. This includes the way that any incidents of bullying are dealt with. There was no evidence of any oppressive behaviour during the inspection and pupils report that bullying is not a regular occurrence. A few pupils, however, stated that they did not feel problems would always be dealt with effectively and had had responses such as to ignore anyone giving them problems. A significant minority of parents has some concern about behaviour based on similar issues.

20. There have been six fixed term and no permanent exclusions from the school during the last reported 12 months. This is similar to the number at the last inspection. The school has appropriate procedures for dealing with exclusions.

21. Pupils have a good level of understanding about how their actions impact on others. As a result they listen patiently to teachers and peers and can offer constructive criticism in a sympathetic manner, such as how to improve a "mirroring" routine in a dance lesson. They are quick to praise others and are polite and friendly to visitors. They accept that others may have a different viewpoint to their own and are tolerant of this. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility on a day to day basis, such as handing out books in class, using computers unsupervised and helping at lunchtime. More formally, personal development is enhanced through participating in school council meetings and the recently formed Youth Action Group. In addition a range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime, such as the animation club and football, and after school, for example musical

activities, dance and gymnastics, gives further opportunities to participate together and learn new skills.

22. Personal development and relationships are good throughout the school and this has a positive impact on learning. By the time they leave the school they are confident, articulate and tolerant of the needs and views of others. In many lessons a very good rapport has developed over time, with teachers able to exercise control and keep an element of fun. Pupils respond very well to this and the air of mutual respect that is generated is also to be seen in their relationships with each other, regardless of background or ability.

23. Attendance at the school is similar to levels seen at the previous inspection and is broadly in line with national figures. The unauthorised absence rate is slightly lower.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 is good and is a strength of the school. Good teaching ensures that standards of achievement are maintained. During the inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in all but three lessons and good or better in 70 per cent of lessons. No teaching during the inspection was judged to be poor. Good teaching ensures that pupils' learning is at least satisfactory at Key

Stage 2 and good at Key Stage 3. At both key stages, teachers' knowledge and understanding are good. The teaching of basic skills is good in the majority of subjects and especially strong in information technology but is weak in music at Key Stage 2. In general, teaching and learning are stronger at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 2 due to the more effective deployment of specialist teachers at that key stage. Teaching ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met in all subjects.

25. Teaching is characterised by good planning, high expectations of pupils and good management of pupils in the great majority of lessons. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and the use of time and resources is effective. Subject matter in the great majority of lessons is related appropriately to the needs of pupils in the class. However, the use of homework in accordance with the school's homework policy is unsatisfactory in that its setting is too irregular and there is a lack of consistent monitoring of its effectiveness.

26. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good or better in two thirds of lessons. In only two lessons unsatisfactory. The national literacy policy is adopted at Key Stage 2 in English but not all teachers make the most effective use of the literacy hour. At Key Stage 3, a wide range of literature including the Canterbury Tales and Romeo and Juliet challenges and stimulates pupils. Their experiences include drama and opportunities to write poetry. Group discussions and attention to writing and grammatical skills enable pupils to make good progress in learning. In mathematics, mental tests are used to stimulate number skills, pupils use data from actual situations to solve problems and enjoy using computers to produce spread sheets and to plot pie charts. The national numeracy strategy provides a secure framework for non-specialist teachers to use. In mathematics, however, there is too narrow a range of teaching approaches, which do not always capture pupils' interest. Science teaching is committed to investigative methods of learning at both key stages that are designed to stimulate the interest of pupils. Pupils follow laboratory techniques properly and investigative work at Key Stage 3 is of a particularly high standard, providing opportunities for gifted pupils to extend themselves. Science provides wide opportunities for the successful deployment of number and graphical skills.

27. Teachers are aware of the presence of pupils with special educational needs in their classrooms and make good use of learning assistants, when available, to support the teaching and help pupils to cope well with the tasks and materials they provide. In most, but not all subjects, teachers plan their work to provide tasks that are appropriate to the achievements of pupils and to inform learning assistants of the support they will be required to give. Science resources give good access to teaching for pupils of all attainments. Physical education provides well for pupils with poor motor skills. Different strategies are used to ensure that all pupils are fully included in learning in information technology and appropriate tasks are set in music. In some lessons, such as modern languages and art, however, pupils undertake the same work as their colleagues and rely on additional support to enable them to make progress.

28. Teaching in many subjects contributes to the successful acquisition of skills and knowledge, and encourages deeper understanding by pupils and stimulates their interest and effort. Good pronunciation in French, with activities including songs; pace and challenge to pupils in information technology, the appropriate use of good resources in design and technology and science, probing questions in art and history, very good investigative approaches in geography, and the setting of personal targets in physical education, all contribute to this. The ongoing assessment of pupils' learning is good in English and science.

29. Some weaknesses in teaching, however, are apparent. Progress in music is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 because of the lack of the initial teaching of basic skills. Lessons in French are not always adapted to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Despite the provision of investigative work in geography there is a lack of extension tasks for higher attaining pupils. The ongoing assessment of pupils' learning is inconsistent, and therefore not satisfactory in some subjects, particularly in design and technology apart from Year 7, and in music.

30. Timetable arrangements include two-hour lessons in several subjects at Key Stage 3 and art at Key Stage 2. While it has been possible to adapt to this time allocation in science with varied and investigative activities, this arrangement is adversely affecting attainment in other subjects. For example in art and design and technology at Key Stage 2 teaching methods are not sufficiently varied to maintain the interest of pupils.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good across both key stages. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. The curriculum has good breadth, balance and relevance, is appropriate, and all pupils have equal access to it. There is good overall provision for pupils with special educational needs, who follow the same curriculum as other pupils, supported in lessons by learning assistants rather than being withdrawn from them. There are, however, occasions when extra help for individual pupils, arranged on a withdrawal basis, effectively assists them to improve their skills of communication. Although teachers cater for the needs of pupils with special educational needs in their lessons, too frequently schemes of work do not recognise, or cater for, the needs of these pupils and individual educational plans make insufficient provision for them in subjects other than English and mathematics.

32. The overall time allocation for teaching is longer than that suggested by national recommendations, but two-hour lessons in subjects such as art and design and technology cause a loss of concentration towards the end of the session. The school has good strategies in place for teaching literacy and numeracy, which meet the recommendations for pupils in Key Stage 2, though the additional curriculum time provided daily reduces the time available for other subjects such as art, design and technology and music.

33. The extra-curricular activities provided by the school are satisfactory. There are many opportunities for pupils to attend these activities connected with their studies. The school has a good provision of musical events, dance and drama. There are several visits run by subject areas, for example, local fieldwork in history and geography, a day visit to France and a four-day residential course in London in Year 8. There is a satisfactory range of sporting activity, including team sports. Local opportunities in competitive sport for girls, however, are limited.

34. The school's Christian ethos is written into all policies, but there are only limited signs of this about the school. The light-giving symbol of the candle is used in the school, especially to reward good effort and work. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Assemblies have appropriate spiritual themes, but little time is provided for reflection and few opportunities are provided in subjects other than religious education for pupils to develop a spiritual dimension to their lives. Good moral values are promoted, with a strong emphasis on distinguishing right from wrong. Social values are effectively encouraged. There are good relationships in the classroom and pupils work well together. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to exercise responsibility and in Year 8, assisted by councillors, there is the opportunity to use the East Dorset council chamber for an exercise in planning decisions, which provides valuable practice in citizenship. There has been an improvement in multi-cultural education since the last report, with the study of other religions and visits to places of worship. In Year 7, there are studies of the black peoples of America in history and of Dominica in geography.

35. There is a programme of personal, social and health education, which is taught in the weeks after the October and February half term breaks and was, therefore, not inspected. The documentation for this covers an appropriate number of topics and the school has a sex education policy in place. The school has good relationships with partner institutions, being an active member of the East Dorset 'pyramid' of first, middle and upper schools. Regular meetings are held and common policies are agreed and put into practice. Parents appreciate the transfer arrangements for pupils to move between schools. In particular the strong links with upper secondary schools ensures that the full National Curriculum is provided for pupils in Key Stage 3. Links with feeder first schools are less secure and do not always provide sufficient information about the achievements of pupils joining the school at age nine to enable an effective baseline to be established against which the future progress of pupils can be measured. The school has received good reports about the performance of its former pupils at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4.

36. Links with the local community are satisfactory, particularly with the diocese and through music, dance and drama. As required, pupils benefit from the services of a counsellor provided through a local medical practice and links with Bournemouth University are being developed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school shows a careful concern for all its pupils. Nevertheless, the arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety and well being in school are variable in quality. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to discuss with reasonable accuracy, their progress and development. The school is a safe community which pupils enjoy attending. Pupils with particular concerns benefit from the support of a school counsellor who makes weekly visits. Although pupils no longer mark registers, as at the last inspection, there are still some unsatisfactory practices in the marking of some class registers in that, on several occasions, no mark is inserted against a pupils' name. This is a breach of legal requirements.

38. The least satisfactory aspect of the school's responsibility for the welfare of pupils is that the coordinator does not have sufficient time to monitor of the progress of pupils with special educational needs nor the overall responsibility for creating individual educational plans for these pupils. These important responsibilities are shared to individual tutors. This leads to differing standards of professional oversight and variable levels of support. As a result the consistency with which the progress of these pupils is monitored is too variable and too long a period of time elapses between reviews. The targets set are too broad and do not incorporate short-term attainable targets that challenge pupils and can be reviewed more regularly. Targets are sometimes repeated from year to year and pupils and parents do not receive sufficient information, except at annual reviews, of the progress, which is at least satisfactory and sometimes good, being made. Equally pupils are not sufficiently aware of their success in meeting targets or what they need to do, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, to raise their levels of achievement.

39. Within the school day, heads of year and senior staff oversee pupils' behaviour appropriately both inside the school and in the playgrounds. Teachers supervising the playground have adequate sight and control of all areas. Clear policy documents are in place to guide pupils on the need for appropriate and helpful behaviour and a useful guide advises teachers on ways of promoting and maintaining good behaviour within the school. These helpful guidelines identify stages of unacceptable behaviour and give a list of suitable strategies to guide staff, particularly new or inexperienced staff, on how to deal with it. In practice the key senior staff have a good knowledge of the relatively few pupils who are likely to misbehave.

40. Heads of year and tutors have a good overall picture of the attainment of individual pupils, their behaviour and their backgrounds. Pupils generally receive good support. All members of staff receive useful guidance through the staff handbook on aspects of pastoral care and their teaching responsibilities. This includes a helpful summary of the school policy against bullying. Most parents and most pupils feel that bullying is not a problem, but a small number of pupils and parents feel that there is inconsistency by some teachers in dealing with oppressive behaviour when this occurs. Some parents also indicate concern about the theft of pupils' property in school and suggest that little is done to reduce its incidence and seek out the offenders.

41. The headteacher is the designated key person to deal with child protection matters. There is, however, no clear guidance available to other members of staff of procedures to follow should there be suspicion of child abuse or neglect either in or out of school. There has been no recent training in recognising signs and symptoms of child abuse nor has there been guidance on recognising evidence of substance misuse and of procedures to follow if this is suspected.

42. During the inspection no instances of unsafe procedures or equipment in any part of the school were observed. The school's health and safety policy has been updated recently. The premises committee of the governing body and the school health and safety officer, (also a governor), carry out 'walk through' procedures on the site to make safety checks on the premises and equipment. In recent years, however, no formal health and safety audit against the local education authority checklist has been carried out. This informal approach is not fully satisfactory. There are insufficient checks made to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are made in laboratories, workshops, and physical education areas where potentially dangerous activities may take place.

43. There has been an improvement in assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance since the last inspection. Simple and appropriate systems are in now in place, including a straightforward monitoring system in which teacher assessments are linked to the levels of the National Curriculum. Progress is being made by heads of year to collect the outcomes of tests and other assignments that indicate achievement in each subject set against the levels of the national curriculum throughout each year. Annual reports to parents indicate teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and effort in lessons. Although these arrangements are satisfactory, the process of collating records on to a central database is not fully complete for all subjects. As a result the coordinator for assessment has not yet been unable to analyse fully the progress of pupils using information technology or subsequently to make use of the information obtained to accurately report on the progress made by pupils or to inform future learning

44. The school has a policy on the marking of pupils' work but it does not check whether this is being carried out satisfactorily. As a result there are variations in practice between subjects and even within subjects in the regularity and the quality of the marking of written work. In some instances pupils do not rewrite incorrect spellings or inaccurate phrases when the work has been marked carefully.

45. The school does not receive sufficient information about the attainment of pupils entering Year 5 from its neighbouring first schools. This lack of 'base line' data has meant that the school does not have a measure of pupils' attainment on entry unless tests are carried out in departments such as science. The school is not, therefore, able to set individual targets for pupils against which future progress can be measured. In contrast the school receives valuable feedback from upper schools on pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and is able to discuss curricular continuity across the key stages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Most parents are satisfied with the education provided by the school but a significant minority justly feels that there are areas, particularly in relation to homework and communications about progress, that could be improved. This is an aspect that has deteriorated since the last inspection.

47. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and satisfied with the education provided for their children. Many support the school through the home-school agreement and by helping with activities. However, aspects of some of the links with some parents are currently unsatisfactory. Although the majority of parents are comfortable about approaching the school, others do not feel that teachers and senior management are accessible enough. The school makes it clear that parents can make appointments to see staff but this can formalise and delay discussion of what may be a minor matter. In addition, some parents feel intimidated by the security arrangements at the school entrance and see this as an additional barrier. Home-school logbooks are used for communication but

parents feel that corresponding by such means can be time-consuming and is not suitable for confidential matters.

48. The support received from the Parent Teacher Association, particularly financial support, is very good. Several fundraising events are arranged including a Summer Fair and this has led to substantial financial help for information technology equipment, which has had positive impact on pupils' learning. A number of parents help on a regular basis with reading and pupil transport and their assistance is welcomed and appreciated. Others, however, are becoming less supportive of the school and there is a growing reluctance on the part of parents to provide voluntary funding for school visits which has led to the cancellation of one.

49. The school has a home-school agreement in place but there is insufficient evidence as yet to show whether this has made a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The majority of parents sign their child's logbook on a regular basis, to show that they have checked that homework has been completed.

50. The information that the school provides about the progress of pupils is sometimes inconsistent and not fully understood. Inspection findings support the views of a significant minority of parents on this issue. Consultation evenings are arranged in the autumn term. These 'listening evenings' are for parents to tell teachers about their child rather than receive information from the school. A further meeting takes place following the issue of the annual report and the school makes strenuous efforts to speak to all parents on these two occasions. However, the annual report is produced in February and although for some subjects there is detailed information and targets, others give a very limited idea of progress and the target may be as basic as to keep up the good work. Similarly, the summer update does not always address the progress made towards meeting any targets set and in most cases consists of only a few lines in total which do not effectively communicate the position to parents. Some parents of pupils with special educational needs rightly feel they are not made fully aware of their child's progress on a regular basis.

51. A significant minority of parents expressed concern about the quality and timing of information they receive in respect of the progress of their children and the attention they are given when they try to resolve their concerns with the school. Inspectors agree that insufficient attention is currently paid to these matters and, bearing in mind the school's concern for the safety of pupils, support parents' views that the present arrangements when visiting the school are not sufficiently welcoming.

52. The general school newsletters and the year group information that is provided each term are good. The latter includes curriculum information as well as details about proposed visits and other matters of interest. However, the latest prospectus and governors' annual report do not have all the information required by statute.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school's Christian ethos and mission statement provide clear direction for the school and promote a high level of caring for pupils and an environment that encourages learning. Guided by clear aims and objectives, appropriate policies and effective procedures, the school is well managed on a day-to-day basis. Regular meetings of senior managers, year and departmental staff at all levels, are a feature of the organisation of the

school. These ensure that the school runs smoothly and that appropriate attention is paid to the welfare and achievements of pupils.

54. Recent, significant changes to both staff and governors, together with a growth in the number of pupils on roll, has highlighted deficiencies in long term strategic management that are currently adversely affecting the attainment of pupils and the work of teachers. Although school development planning is in place and there is an annual review of the work of the school, the current development plan is for one year only and is not effectively linked to the strategic financial planning which is available in the school. Overall monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by managers and governors is not satisfactory and although sub-committees of the governing body have been re-established and links are beginning to be made between governors and subject departments, long-term planning is insufficiently informed by the difficulties under which teachers operate. Governors are beginning to appreciate the need to tackle these issues and a 'strategy committee' has been established to undertake these tasks.

55. Teachers work very hard to ensure that pupils achieve good standards, that lessons are well planned and that the quality of teaching is good. As a result standards of achievement have been maintained. The management of teaching is generally sound and coordinators work hard to ensure that personal records of attainment are kept, schemes of work are appropriate and resources adequate. The allocation of non-teaching time to enable all teachers, but particularly those with management responsibilities, to undertake their work, is insufficient to carry out effective target setting, monitoring of progress, support for colleagues in the classroom or the monitoring of teaching. Too much time is spent teaching in the classroom by many staff. As a result there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the work of the pupils. They are not sufficiently challenged and levels of achievement are not rising above national averages. The school has insufficient baseline information about pupils when they enter the school and is currently not setting short-term targets against which progress can be measured for individual pupils or for the whole school.

56. The quality of teaching and learning and the achievements of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are adversely affected by current arrangements for the deployment of staff according to their subject specialisms. In seeking to balance the pastoral needs of younger pupils with more specialist teaching in Key Stage 3, several teachers are deployed to teach subjects outside their subject specialisms. Only limited support is available from subject coordinators, who lack sufficient non-teaching time to advise and assist non-specialist teachers and those recently appointed to the school, in their work. Opportunities for in-service training to enable non-specialist teachers to improve their knowledge of subjects and guidance for teaching are also too limited.

57. Until recently teaching in geography has also been adversely affected by the lack of a coordinator. Although the school has appointed a coordinator for special educational needs the responsibility for preparing individual education plans and for monitoring progress towards targets rests with class teachers. The non-teaching time allocated to the coordinator for special educational needs is not sufficient to undertake the responsibilities of the role. Finance for special educational needs is delegated to coordinators. Although sufficient funds are made available for appropriate levels of staffing and additional support, and sufficient resources are available, current systems do not allow effective tracking to ensure that the finance provided for special education is used to support the needs of this group of pupils.

58. Staff appraisal is in place through an individual annual review programme for members of staff but does not incorporate any observation of teaching. Coordinators may monitor teaching if non-teaching time allows. Staff development is linked to whole school needs as a priority over individual requirements. Job descriptions are in place for all teaching staff.

59. In the light of current numbers in the school and the amount of time required for managerial activities, the number of teaching staff currently employed is insufficient and detracts from the quality of education provided for pupils. As a result existing staff work very hard, but not always effectively, to carry out the responsibilities placed on them. The present policy of providing cover for absent colleagues for the first two days of absence further restricts the time available for monitoring the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. Good support is provided by a sufficient number of learning assistants to provide help in classrooms, especially for pupils with special educational needs and this helps them to make progress. The amount of administrative and technician support is below that of similar schools and places further demands on teachers. In the light of a large annual carry forward in the school's budget this position is not being satisfactorily addressed.

60. The work of the school and of pupils benefits from school buildings of good quality with sufficient specialist provision to meet the needs of all subjects. As class sizes, especially in Year 8 grow, however, some rooms are too small for the numbers they have to accommodate. In particular there is little room in information technology for large classes, one science laboratory is too small for groups of pupils over 30 and the arrangement whereby art is taught in a small practical area shared with design and technology limits the progress made by pupils. Although there is good provision of playing fields for physical education, changing areas remain small, as at the last inspection, and the height of the dual-purpose hall/gym restricts the provision of some physical education activities for pupils.

61. The accommodation is well cared for and provides an attractive environment for learning. It is enhanced by good displays of work and other stimulating material in corridors and classrooms that motivate pupils and helps to raise attainment. Corridors, however, are narrow and place some restriction on the movement of pupils and the storage of bags and outdoor clothing.

62. The provision of resources for learning is always adequate and often good. The allocation of money per pupil for resources for learning has improved considerably since the last inspection to £147 per pupil. Improvements to the quantity and quality of information technology equipment (provided with considerable support from parents) have been considerable since the previous inspection. There is a well stocked library with a good range of both fiction and non-fiction but its location in a corridor restricts both its use at lunchtimes and the potential for it to become a resource centre with a wider range of materials. The lack of furniture in rooms devoted to music often restricts the effectiveness of the lessons.

63. The school meets the majority of statutory requirements though there are breaches in the marking of registers and there are some omissions from the prospectus and the annual report of governors. In particular the prospectus does not include school holiday dates, sufficient information about the provision for disabled pupils or the effectiveness with which the needs of pupils with special educational needs are met. The annual report of the governors to parents does not include information on progress in meeting the action plan from the previous inspection, details of staff development, links with the community, the

work of the governors or the effectiveness with which special educational needs have been satisfied. All required policies are in place though the school curriculum policy, as expressed in the prospectus, is a statement of the curriculum offered rather than an effective policy for its organisation.

64. Overall arrangements for the administration of finances are good and there is an appropriate division of responsibility for the ordering and receipt of goods, though arrangements for the authorisation of orders and the signing of cheques are not fully secure. All expenditure is subject to checks for value for money. Current arrangements by which money for special educational needs is allocated to the literacy, rather than the special needs coordinator is not satisfactory. Budget holders and the governors' finance committee receive appropriate information on expenditure, monitor budgets on a regular basis and are able to contribute significantly to the setting of the annual budget. The recommendations of the last audit report for the school have been met. Long term financial planning is good but is currently insufficiently linked to development planning and the present large carry forward budget is an inefficient use of resources in the light of insufficient non-teaching time for staff and limited administrative support.

65. Although the attainment of pupils matches national averages and that of pupils who have been in the school since the beginning of Year 5 is in line with that of similar schools, levels of attainment have only been maintained since the last inspection. As a result the value for money provided by the school is satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. In order to raise the standards achieved by pupils in the school and to improve the quality of learning and provide support for the work of staff the governors and senior managers should:

- (1) Further improve the achievements of pupils in mathematics.
(Paragraphs: 2, 4, 74, 75, 77, 82)
- (2) Set appropriate short-term targets for both individual and whole school levels of achievement against which the progress of pupils and the performance of the school can be monitored and evaluated.
(Paragraphs: 15 – 17, 38, 45, 54, 55)
- (3) Ensure that homework is set more consistently and becomes a regular feature of the work of pupils.
(Paragraphs: 15, 25, 46, 78, 89, 109, 131)
- (4) Establish more effective ways of communicating the progress made by pupils to parents.
(Paragraphs: 46, 50, 51, 63)
- (5) Assist teachers with management responsibilities by providing more non-teaching time to help them monitor and evaluate the work of pupils and provide support for colleagues in their teaching.
(Paragraphs: 55 – 58, 64, 81, 90, 96, 111, 133)
- (6) Provide more subject specialist support for non-specialist teachers, particularly in Key Stage 2
(Paragraphs: 14, 56, 96, 135)
- (7) Plan for school development over a longer term, linking planning more closely to finance and finding appropriate ways to reduce the large amount of money carried forward.
(Paragraphs: 54, 57, 64)
- (8) Ensure that all the statutory information required by parents is included in the school prospectus and annual report of the governors and that registers are properly marked.
(Paragraphs: 52, 63)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	89
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	24.7	43.8	25.8	4.5	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	467
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	27

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	131

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	46
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	6.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	52	70	122

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	29	40
	Girls	64	42	57
	Total	97	71	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (74)	58 (53)	80 (73)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	29	38
	Girls	62	46	60
	Total	95	75	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (68)	61 (60)	80 (69)
	National	68 (N/A)	69 (N/A)	75 (N/A)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	467
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y5 - Y8

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	180

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	86.6
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Average teaching group size: Y5- Y8

Key Stage 2	24.1
Key Stage 3	28.2

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	813 891
Total expenditure	798 302
Expenditure per pupil	1 709
Balance brought forward from previous year	77 592
Balance carried forward to next year	93 181

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	467
Number of questionnaires returned	160

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	58	10	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	29	54	10	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	58	17	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	46	28	10	1
The teaching is good.	20	66	8	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	60	16	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	33	52	12	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	56	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	16	53	19	4	7
The school is well led and managed.	15	59	15	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	57	8	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	47	21	4	8

Other issues raised by parents

Although many parents feel able to approach the school they are unhappy about the physical accessibility of the building to visitors and the reception they sometimes receive. They are also concerned about the frequency and consistency with which the progress of pupils is reported to them and a large proportion are concerned about the setting and frequency of homework.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

67. The attainment of pupils in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was above the national average and was close to the average for similar schools. Pupils' scores in these tests at age eleven have improved in line with national trends since 1997. The achievement of girls has been consistently higher than that of boys in the last four years in a proportion similar to national trends. Attainment in English has been better than that in mathematics and science.

68. Pupils' attainment in lessons seen during the inspection was in line with the national averages in Years 5 and 6. Reading and speaking and listening skills are better developed for most pupils than are writing skills. Regular reading practice is a particularly strong feature of the school curriculum at all stages. All pupils have reading books available for silent individual reading. Much of the pupils' programme in English at Key Stage 2 is built around the literacy hour which provides useful practice daily for all pupils in shared reading and discussion tasks and in the practice of writing skills at different levels. During this time some children with low literacy skills receive intensive small group help. Good opportunities exist also for more exciting and imaginative oral and written work. For example in Year 5 pupils combine English and drama activities well to produce interesting writing in diary format within a topic, 'The Island'.

69. The overall attainment of pupils observed in Key Stage 3 is above the national average. In both Years 7 and Year 8 pupils follow a challenging English course which builds on existing skills and introduces a much more detailed focus on the reading, discussion and writing of literature. In Year 8, for example, near the start of their study of Romeo and Juliet, pupils have a sound understanding of the plot and knowledge of the main characters. During the inspection one group examined a key scene between Romeo and Friar Lawrence which involved reading the original text, using a drama technique to help interpret Friar Lawrence's role and making notes on what emerged. The writing produced showed a sensitive understanding of the characters involved and, in some cases, a clear understanding of the structure of the play. Writing is done well by pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. In a similar way the curriculum in Year 7 makes demands on all pupils. In one lesson seen pupils read aloud well in groups from a translation of 'The Knight's Tale' by Chaucer and then engaged perceptively in a discussion on whether the knight's actions in the story matched the description of chivalry and courtesy in Chaucer's prologue. Another group in a drama lesson linked to 'The Canterbury Tales', successfully and enthusiastically created groups of modern day travellers embarking on a journey. Most pupils show reading skills and speaking and listening skills above average for their age. There is some variation in the completed writing between the groups taught by different teachers. In the pupils' portfolios of writing, for example, there are anthologies of pupils' own poems showing skilful perceptive writing and excellent skills of presentation using computers. In other groups the writing is less well presented.

70. The teaching of English is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The standards of teaching seen in the inspection ranged from very high in over a third of lessons to unsatisfactory in just one lesson. Between these extremes a further third of lessons were good and just over a fifth were of a satisfactory standard. Lesson planning at both key stages is good with all teachers working within the revised schemes of work and the requirement of the national literacy strategy. In the most successful lessons teachers

use time very effectively changing activities skillfully to keep pupils fully involved. Their knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment is good and their control of groups and individuals is of a very high order. Most of the tasks set in lessons are of an intellectually challenging nature including, for example, preparing to write a Shakespearean sonnet in Year 8 and a discussion of moral and social issues in stories told by Chaucer's pilgrims in Year 7. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, this was due mainly to poor behaviour by a small number of disruptive pupils and inadequate teacher control. Although the assessment of the work of pupils is generally good, there is considerable variation between teachers in the attention given to the marking of writing. In some cases it is done thoroughly to guide pupils forward. In some books there are gaps where writing has not been checked for many weeks. Not all teachers follow the clear guidelines produced by the coordinator for literacy and learning.

71. The school has made good progress to introduce the literacy hour into Years 5 and 6 in line with requirements of the national literacy strategy. The regular daily shared reading and the development of wider vocabulary and written language skills is of benefit to all pupils. Some of the intentions of the literacy hour are not fully met in all lessons. In some lessons, for example, the initial whole class shared reading activity and interaction between class and teacher is not as effective as it should be because pupils are seated in normal class positions, sometimes not facing the teacher. The overall schemes of work for English are being carefully revised by the literacy coordinator to embrace fully the changes in emphasis in the National Curriculum. New literary texts are being introduced and drama activities have been devised to extend and support English teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good use of computers for word processing in Year 8, sometimes with, but often without the help of support assistants.

72. Several strengths of the English department were mentioned in the previous inspection report. These have not declined. There is continued emphasis on regular reading and of the encouragement of a wide range of writing activities including poetry. Much of the written work displayed is of a high standard.

73. The literacy and learning coordinator plans to develop a whole school literacy policy as a next stage of a whole school development plan. Already the reading of fiction and the collection of source material for topic work is encouraged by a comprehensive school library collection. The library is well organised, professionally maintained, and well used by pupils despite the disadvantage that the tables have to be used at lunchtimes for dining. It has a good collection of up to date books including popular fiction and non-fiction selected to support the full curriculum. In lessons other than English pupils read competently for information in all subjects particularly in finding information in art, geography, history and religious education. Writing is completed satisfactorily when it is required in most subjects. Good opportunities are provided to develop writing skills in science. All pupils are encouraged to describe scientific principles in single sentences and older pupils to describe investigations using extended writing. Examples were also seen of pupils being encouraged to develop speculative writing. In other areas such as design and technology pupils are generally asked to complete short written responses. In most subjects spelling, punctuation and presentation of writing are at appropriate levels for the ages of pupils. The school has recently started to provide 'booster' lessons after school to improve literacy skills for Year 6 pupils. Observations show that these offer valuable opportunities for about forty pupils to improve reading and writing skills at the end of the school day.

MATHEMATICS

74. At the end of Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests pupils attained well below the national average for level 4, but close to that for level 5. This represented a fall overall at level 4 (the national average) but a rise in attainment at the higher level. Results for boys and girls are similar though the girls results were a significant improvement on those achieved in 1998 and represented a return to the pattern of previous years. The results were very much below those for similar schools and were also significantly below those for the other core subjects of English and science.

75. The achievements of pupils when they enter the school at age nine is assessed as near national average, although recent end of Year 4 data suggests that the average attainment at entry has decreased. Nevertheless, the mathematics results at Key Stage 2 are below national averages and well below those of similar schools. The results in the 1999 Key Stage 3 national tests for former Emmanuel Middle School pupils are significant in that mathematics results are in line with the other core subjects and above those obtained nationally. The overall decline in results in mathematics since the last inspection are in part due to lower standards in basic mathematics of pupils entering the school at the beginning of Year 5, large movements of pupils into and out of the school during Years 5 and 6, staffing instability and a reduction in the quality of mathematics teaching. Nevertheless, the school has responded well to the challenge of raising standards with several positive initiatives. These include the introduction of new schemes of work, new resources for both key stages, booster lessons after school for underachieving pupils and routine monitoring of teaching.

76. Lessons observation and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that attainment is now nearer to national averages in all attainment targets of the National Curriculum at the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Year 8, when pupils leave the school, they are on target to achieve as expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 3. Thus standards are improving with pupils making appropriate progress during their time at school.

77. Pupils' standards of numeracy are variable on entry to the school with a significant proportion of pupils who do not know their basic tables and bonds. These standards clearly hinder progress in all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum and contribute to the poor results in the Key Stage 2 national tests. The school is successfully using the national numeracy strategy to try to raise standards at both key stages. Particularly good attainment was seen in a Year 8 lesson with lower attaining pupils involving data handling where the use of real data helped simulate interest. The short, sharp mental tests and games also are a successful innovation. Pupils enjoy working on investigations using real world data. Pupils use calculators appropriately and effectively in some lessons though there is also a sound emphasis on developing mental skills in all aspects of the subject. Mathematical skills are used to good effect in other areas of the curriculum. In science, graphs and calculations are used effectively, in design and technology weighing and measurement is used efficiently and in geography good use is made of data handling skills. Information communication technology skills are not used routinely in mathematics lessons though good use was seen in one lesson and in displays on corridor walls. There is, however, insufficient formal use of information technology in lessons or reference to its use in the schemes of work for mathematics.

78. Teaching at both key stages is almost always at least satisfactory and in almost a half of lessons good or very good. It is better in Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 2. Teachers are generally well prepared for lessons. They plan well and have a sound knowledge of their subject matter. The good pace to lessons generally keeps interest though on occasion

teachers go on talking for too long and lose pupil interest. They relate well to pupils and use praise well to motivate them. Assessment is used well in developing basic numeracy but is less well used generally. Homework is often used effectively to complement class work but the inspection of pupil diaries shows that it is not used consistently by all teachers. Teachers' expectations of their pupils in terms of work are variable. In the best lessons pupils are stretched but in less successful lessons pupils are allowed to work at a too leisurely pace.

79. The subject coordinator works very hard, within the time available, at helping non-specialist colleagues improve their mathematics teaching. At both key stages pupils' learning follows teaching closely. When teaching is good then learning is equally successful. Pupils enjoy well-paced stimulating lessons where they are challenged to use their skills. The short sharp mental sessions at the beginning or end of lessons work well in terms of creating interest. The national numeracy strategy lesson structure suits the majority of pupils in terms of maintaining and building interest in the subject. Teaching methods are often very traditional. Pupils enjoy using real world data and solving problems associated with reality. One group of Year 6 pupils successfully created problems involving their understanding of number bonds using mortality rates as part of the model. Pupils enjoy using information technology. This was illustrated in a successful Year 7 lesson using a spreadsheet to plot different pie charts. The setting arrangements for mathematics allow pupils with special educational needs to be taught in smaller groups and as a result they make appropriate progress in lessons.

80. Pupils are invariably well behaved in lessons. They respond well to good teaching and maintain interest throughout the hour-long lessons. Pupils enjoy explaining their understanding to the class and often enjoy working in groups. Sometimes pupils are particularly tolerant when the teaching is not very stimulating.

81. A dedicated hard working professional coordinates the subject well. The initiatives brought in to improve Key Stage 2 attainment are the result of much hard work and dedication of the mathematics team. However, the non-teaching time allocated to the post is inadequate to effectively monitor and develop the subject, support non-specialist teachers and measure the progress made by pupils.

82. Since the previous inspection the subject has made good progress in terms of raising standards of all pupils in mathematics but achievements in national tests at Key Stage 2 remain well below the standards achieved nationally or by pupils in similar schools.

SCIENCE

83. Attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was in line with national averages at level 4 but above them at level 5. Teacher assessment is consistent with the results in national tests. Between 1996 and 1998, attainment declined but rose again in 1999 in line with the rise in national averages. The achievements of boys are comparable with those of girls. As measured in national tests, standards in science are in line with those in English and above those in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, attainment was comparable in the three years 1996 to 1998 but fell well below in 1999. The rising number of pupils being admitted to the school at times other than the start of Year 5 reduces the achievements of pupils in science. The achievements of those pupils entering the school at the beginning of Year 5 were in line with that of pupils in similar schools in 1999.

Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates a higher standard is being achieved during the current year than the scores in national tests in 1999.

84. In Years 7 and 8, standards are above national averages with some pupils achieving well above. Some pupils with special educational needs are reaching standards of attainment approaching those of the national averages. These standards indicate that pupils are on course to achieve above those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 3. As in Key Stage 2, the achievements of boys are comparable with that of girls.

85. Pupils at both key stages successfully improve their learning by investigative methods in the laboratory. They follow correct laboratory techniques, which increase in difficulty as they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 2, the variation in temperature of liquids is measured and recorded and this is extended in Key Stage 3 to the plotting of line graphs of this type of observation. Results of investigating the properties of rocks are recorded in table form. The formation of sedimentary rocks and how particle sizes can vary is obtained by an extended observation of the deposition of soil from suspension in water. The importance of colour changes in testing for acids and alkalis, how shadows change with the height of the sun and the conditions for an electric current to flow in a circuit are part of a wide range of investigations. Pupils write about their results in single sentence or paragraph answers.

86. At Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress in the use of number skills. Results for the calculation of densities of common substances, pressures produced by different forces, the speeds of moving objects are tabulated and numerical values are substituted in appropriate formulae. Pupils successfully plot line graphs to indicate the extension of springs, how heat is conducted along different metal bars and for the motion of objects. Pie charts are used to describe distributions. High standards of extended investigations into food values and the strength of electromagnets in Year 8 offer opportunities for higher attaining pupils to extend their skills. Pupils predict possible answers and choose their own line of investigation. Boys and girls co-operate well in discussing and carrying out their work, which leads to good examples of extended writing.

87. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in class work. They receive good support from teachers and support assistants. There are weaknesses in the lack of support material that is especially suited to their needs and the lack of targets, which are specifically related to science, in their individual education plans.

88. Pupils' behaviour in the great majority of lessons is good. They respond well to their teachers, who use good questioning skills to introduce and re-enforce learning, with good listening and speaking skills. They listen to the answers of other pupils with respect. Pupils collect and put away apparatus in a responsible way. On the few occasions when behaviour is less satisfactory, this is due to the slow tempo of working and inappropriate planning.

89. Teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have high expectations and are determined that pupils succeed. It is satisfactory or better in all lessons and good or very good in seven out of ten of them. Teaching is based on sound subject knowledge, appropriate planning, and good class and time management in the great majority of lessons. Good use is made of the two-hour lessons provided at Key Stage 3 for investigations by pupils and motivation is enhanced by a variety of activities introduced by teachers. Pupils are encouraged to discover facts by their own observations. Pupils' routine work is marked, corrected and directive comments added, but no standard scores related to the levels of the national curriculum are used. Science makes full use of an appropriate

structure for more formal assessment of pupils' learning in which project and profile tests are marked against the levels of the National Curriculum, but opportunities for giving pupils frequent information about the progress of their learning in relation to national standards are missed. Homework is set on a regular basis at Key Stage 3 but infrequently at Key Stage 2 and this is a weakness in provision at that key stage.

90. Science has good, enthusiastic leadership and is well managed. The coordinator, however, lacks sufficient non-teaching time to fully monitor the work of the department particularly with respect to classroom observation. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and learning is enhanced by the use of information technology, although some classes have difficulty of access to computers. Teaching is given good support by a part-time technician and the subject is well resourced.

91. Since the last inspection, the subject has made good progress. New teachers have successfully joined the department and baseline tests have been introduced for pupils in Years 5 and 6. A monitoring and assessment policy has been implemented, a revised scheme of work has been produced for Year 5 and a greater challenge to higher attaining pupils provided at Key Stage 3. It is a good department with the capacity for further improvement.

ART

92. In Year 5 pupils effectively use colour and pattern as shown in work based on traditional aboriginal art. Others show good understanding of the work of Rousseau and are stimulated by discussion of his work when making observational drawings and experimenting with blending colour. They produce three-dimensional pieces showing lively use of colour glazes. Many Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of perspective and when making observational drawings of natural and man-made objects use shading to give their work depth and textural interest.

93. By the end of Year 8, when pupils leave the school, part way through Key Stage 3, the majority are working at a level broadly average for their age. Many have a good knowledge and understanding of a number of established artists and their work. They understand the techniques used by these artists and are influenced by them in their own work. For example their work on the Renaissance resulted in landscapes and portraits which combine their knowledge of perspective and proportion with use of watercolours. In Year 7 pupils produce self-portraits showing accurate use of line and tone. Pupils throughout the school make good use of sketchbooks to develop ideas, to practise skills and select and use appropriate equipment before producing their final pieces of work. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills and contribute well to class discussions. They are able to apply their skills of numeracy when measuring or working on shape and proportion. There is developing use of information technology as a tool in art.

94. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. A strong feature of the teaching is the planned units of work, which successfully combine the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of art as well as the necessary skills and techniques. The activities are well matched to the needs of all pupils. This level of planning provides good support for non-specialist teachers. Pupils experience a range of activities that build their skills as they move through the school. They enjoy lessons, they behave well, listen carefully and work hard at the tasks they are set. These good attitudes combined with the good planning and teaching enable pupils of all abilities to make progress. In a very good Year 5 lesson based on the work of Rousseau the teacher quickly moved from reviewing the work of the artist to looking at real flowers before producing ideas for pupil's own exotic

flowers. Teachers regularly review pupils' sketchbook work and are able to give good individual support and feedback to pupils based on knowledge of their ability. Teachers make good use of questions to encourage pupils to evaluate their own work. In a good Year 7 lesson on portraits, the teacher built on homework done in pupils' sketchbooks and asked probing questions to develop pupils' understanding of proportion and shading to define facial features.

95. A wide range of resources that arouse pupils' interest and illustrate important techniques enriches teaching. Displays of pupils' work about the school are good and these are used effectively by teachers to motivate pupils. In a Year 8 lesson on the Renaissance they considered a display of other pupils' work looking at important skills in the use of watercolours before starting their own work. In this discussion pupils were able to clearly express their ideas and opinions and use appropriate terminology.

96. The coordination of the art across the school is good. The coordinator works hard to ensure consistency of approach by all teachers through common planning and provision of very good resource packs. There is, however, no systematic monitoring of teaching; the coordinator has a heavy teaching commitment and too little time for the observation of the work of colleagues. There has been little recent in-service training for non-specialists. Art lessons are long and towards the end of the two-hour session the concentration of some pupils lapses. In addition art lessons are taken in a space shared with a design and technology group. This space is too small for both groups; pupils have to work in cramped conditions and despite the care taken by teachers any noise from one group intrudes on the other.

97. The good standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is average. The development of skills, knowledge and understanding of technological processes is higher in food than in the other areas studied. The majority of pupils have good ideas when designing or making, and speak well when discussing hygiene issues or healthy eating. Pupils with special educational needs often have poor spelling and presentational skills. Pupils are involved and enjoy the range and variety of activities offered to them. They work hard and behave well, although many of them are tired before the end of the two-hour afternoon session and concentration diminishes.

99. By the end of Year 8 attainment overall is average. Pupils generally understand the technological process, which underlies their studies in food, textiles and resistant materials. Overall levels of presentation are better than in the previous key stage. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. Pupils accurately estimate, measure and weigh. The low time provision for the subject, however, limits the acquisition of cutting, shaping and finishing skills in textiles and resistant materials. Insufficient use is made of information technology to improve the presentation of numerical information, for example the use of graphs. Cramped conditions in the shared art and design and technology studio do not help pupils, for example, to attain the best standards when they are cutting patterns or sewing wash bags. Pupils in this key stage are very tolerant of one another, behave well and act responsibly.

100. Teaching is always good and on occasions very good. The best teaching is directly related to the confidence of teachers to teach the subject, as well as good knowledge of the pupils being taught. Homework is planned for and set in accordance with the scheme of

work covered. Members of staff are well supported by the very good leadership of the subject coordinator. She ensures that the structured work not only meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but also takes account of the needs of pupils. There has, however, been no consistency in the team of teachers delivering design and technology and this affects the standards achieved by pupils. The coordinator does not have time to monitor colleagues' teaching and ensure a uniformity of approach; as a result marking practices, literacy support within lessons and reports to parents, though satisfactory overall, vary in their usefulness. Pupils with special educational literacy needs are well supported by the tasks set and the extra help provided by learning assistants, but there are missed opportunities for providing them with clear visual displays of technical words. Guidelines for written work are not being used. Opportunities for multicultural education are missed because of the low time provision in Key Stage 3, and spiritual development is not always considered, for example in the Year 7 candle holder project. Whilst information technology is a strength in the school it has not yet had an impact on pupils' learning within design and technology.

101. The school has made good progress in addressing those issues raised by the last inspection report, particularly in testing and evaluating products. There is currently no technical help for food, or resistant materials and this has an adverse effect on the coordinator's time for managing aspects of teaching and learning. Health and safety issues are addressed although there are no safety notices posted near electrical equipment. Curriculum requirements are met in conjunction with the upper school who teach aspects of electronics and control technology.

GEOGRAPHY

102. By the age of eleven pupils acquire sound knowledge and skills in geography. Most are able to use maps of different scales and can calculate and estimate distances using the scale. They have a good appreciation of map symbols and they are competent at using the key. Pupils develop a good understanding of natural processes such as coastal erosion and they successfully compare different settlements. Pupils demonstrate that they are familiar with the positions of the oceans, continents and key mountain ranges of the world. In Europe they have a good appreciation of the relative positions of the countries and the capital cities.

103. By the age of thirteen pupils achieve knowledge and skills in geography, which are above expected levels. Their work builds on the foundations laid in Key Stage 2. They apply the skills they have acquired when they study overseas locations such as Japan and Brazil. They use bar charts and line graphs to compare temperature and rainfall. Teachers expect pupils to use observation and enquiry and there is strong emphasis on individual research. Pupils produce a good deal of written work when they study Japan and when they consider the consequences of deforestation in Brazil. They express opinions on contentious environmental issues associated with the topics they are studying. Their learning is well supported by investigative fieldwork in both key stages. Since the last inspection the school has improved the challenge to both older and higher attaining pupils and has provided tasks of varying difficulty in some lessons so that those with special needs can make appropriate progress. Standards achieved have improved in Key Stage 3 since the last inspection.

104. Pupils' attitudes and responses to lessons are good. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and apply themselves well to the tasks. They are very keen to contribute to class discussions and express themselves well when giving answers or opinions. They also co-operate well in group work so that such sessions are very productive. Behaviour in lessons

is good overall and excellent in some senior classes. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the very strong learning ethos both contribute to the good progress pupils make in geography.

105. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. They have high expectations of their pupils. For example, when studying the ecosystem of the rainforest, pupils are expected to consider the social consequences of colonisation and the ecological outcomes of deforestation. Challenging questions encourage them to conduct their own research and express informed opinions. Pupils in both key stages are expected to use geographical terms. Very good planning ensures that lessons contain a sequence of varied tasks that usually contribute strongly to pupils' literacy skills and promote self-enquiry. Classes are well managed. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour and they enhance pupils' learning through their effective monitoring of activities. Development of numeracy skills is furthered when Year 5 pupils calculate distances from Paris as part of their comparative study of France and when those in Year 8 compare aspects of climate by drawing bar charts and lines graphs and interpreting the data. Teachers usually ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace so that productive use is made of the available time. Satisfactory use is made of information technology to promote learning in geography. There is sound provision for pupils with special needs. Teachers give them good support and usually ensure that their tasks are within their levels of attainment but sufficiently challenging.

106. The curriculum in geography is broad and balanced and the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. The schemes of work ensure that there is continuity across the year groups and key stages. The school has good links with feeder upper and first schools designed to maximise co-operation in the planning of the curriculum. The absence until recently of a subject manager for geography, however, has resulted in these contacts being neglected in recent years. The subject is now being effectively led. There are sufficient resources, including audio-visual aids and reprographic materials.

HISTORY

107. History, together with geography is taught within a programme of work for humanities. As a result, during the week of the inspection history was being taught only to pupils in Year 7 and no teaching was available to be seen in Key Stage 2, or in Year 8. The standards observed in lessons seen and from a scrutiny of the work of pupils show that they are working at levels that are mostly in line with national averages. Pupils have a good grasp of chronology and a satisfactory understanding of the links between cause and effect. They can select and use information well, as shown in a Year 7 lesson through a study of the claims to the throne in 1066.

108. The department continues to build on the good practice commended in the last inspection report. The purpose of teaching has been made clearer and tasks have been more closely matched to attainment. The application of historical skills, such as chronology in Key Stage 2, has been effectively developed. Assessment and marking policies have been revised, with an indication given to pupils of strengths and weaknesses in their work, but there is no clear link to the targets of the National Curriculum in Key Stage 3. There continue to be good examples of extended writing across both key stages, which were praised in the last report. These enhance literacy skills.

109. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is often good. It is securely based on the National Curriculum. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding and lessons are well planned. There are high expectations of pupils, with stimulating question work to challenge pupils to use historical skills well. Classroom control and relationships are good. Lessons move smoothly from class instruction to individual or group work. Teachers circulate effectively, giving support where required. There is good display work in the classrooms and a satisfactory use of resources, although there is only a small use of information technology through the internet, as departmental software is not compatible with the present school computers. This represents a missed opportunity to enrich learning. Books are regularly marked, although the quantity of work in some of them is limited. The amount of homework set is variable.

110. The attitudes of pupils to learning are good. They are positive in lessons, with good levels of interest and concentration. Classroom behaviour is good, with pupils remaining on task, both as a group and individually. They have gained good research skills in the use of historical knowledge and can reach effective conclusions, as shown by the extended work done in Year 8 on the Renaissance. The presentation of work is satisfactory and pupils work well together, respecting the views of others. Pupils with special educational needs have some tasks that are modified to meet their needs. Teachers are aware of individual education plans and consult them to monitor progress. They provide good support in the classroom, with limited extra support from learning assistants. Overall, these pupils make satisfactory progress.

111. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There are regular meetings for consultation in humanities, but very few solely for history. Lack of non-teaching time restricts development, reducing opportunities for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Appropriate extra-curricular activities are organised for every year group, ranging from a visit to Danebury Hill Fort in Year 5 to a four-day residential visit to London in Year 8. Overall, the work in the department is satisfactory, with many good practices on which to build.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in information technology are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2 and good for pupils when they leave the school at the end of Year 8. A significant minority of pupils exceeds the national expectation in handling and communicating information and modeling. At both key stages pupils use a word processor, desktop publisher, spreadsheets and a database effectively. They design web pages, import digital pictures, and use e-mail, drawing and simulation software consistently.

113. At Key Stage 2 some pupils can write lists of instructions to control an automatic door. In Year 5, literacy is enhanced by using a system which helps them to type more quickly and accurately. In Year 6, pupils write for a wide range of purposes including redrafting using word processors, a spell checker and different ways of presenting their work. Older pupils are able to interpret data and manipulate number when changing one figure in a list of solutions. Producing graphs from information on a spreadsheet by using short cuts is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving good standards and can log on to the network, retrieve their work and save it unaided. Pupils working below expectation at Key Stage 2 have spent less time reinforcing basic skills, such as finding ways to make short cuts using the keyboard and mouse or the reason for clicking on some boxes on the screen.

114. Improvement in standards increases faster at Key Stage 3 because pupils grasp

new ideas more quickly. Most pupils have well-honed skills of modeling and use drawing software and databases to support work in other areas of the curriculum. In work related to science, geography and graphic design pupils make good progress because of their understanding of the principles of placing one picture on top of another. In work supporting physical education and science, some pupils can design and initiate graphic realisations of a basketball travelling to the net and the direction of current in an electrical circuit. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving satisfactory standards. Pupils exceeding expectation at both key stages are provided with tasks appropriate to their achievements in database construction. Displays in corridors show that data handling and manipulation skills do not always need a computer.

115. Teaching and learning overall is good and very good in half the lessons. Good use is made of the computer network, pupil work databank, and a computer system that enables all pupils in the class to see the same screen from which the teacher is explaining new ideas. Teachers help pupils to understand when the use of information technology might not be appropriate. For example, when using a plan or bird's-eye view of a diagram. At Key Stage 2 a 'virtual rainforest', which is used to look at probability, and problem solving including control and measurement, is well matched to the age of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are able to engage in similar activities as other pupils because the software provides an appropriate range of challenge.

116. At Key Stage 3 pupils are always on task and respond quickly to clear instructions. They ask questions of the teacher who replies appropriately to groups, including those with special educational needs and those moving on to more difficult work. Pupils overall take ownership of their work, quickly learn new tasks, and are particularly adept at predicting the next stage in a sequence of actions. A system of monitoring and assessment sheets indicates the progression of pupils by showing the skills and knowledge required at each step in the task. The information technology suite is used for most of the week but some subjects find access difficult due to the restrictions of the timetable.

117. A review of the pupil-work databank shows satisfactory use of information technology in most curriculum areas except in design and technology, modern foreign languages and music. In other subjects pupils work very well with spreadsheets, charts, databases and web authoring tasks. Behaviour in lessons is always satisfactory and often very good. In some classes boys and girls sit separately but the pupils work in effective partnerships as organised by the teacher. Pupils are keen and nearly always concentrate well in class.

118. Other opportunities to use the network and exploit its potential before and after school and at lunchtime are unsatisfactory. This is due to the lack of time for supervision by an already heavily committed staff. The learning of some pupils who have to work in corridors due to insufficient space in the suite or other classrooms is satisfactory but stand-alone computers in other rooms are not in regular use for teaching or available for individual pupils. Parents are invited to sign a home-school agreement on the use of the internet at school. A large number of pupils benefit from having computers at home, particularly when programmes used at home are the same as at school. Regular activities include an animation club, the printing of previously saved work by pupils, and designing web pages for the school website and the intranet.

119. Since the last inspection the ratio of pupils to computers has fallen to 13:1 as a result of increasing pupil numbers and as the school changes to a new network system which is expanding to meet demand. Eleven hand held computers are available, however. Together with the network, the provision overall is good because of the variety of ways information is provided for pupils. Digital photography is a particular feature of information technology and pictures contribute to pupils understanding through helping them to modify and select ideas for different purposes. The coordinator has greatly influenced the development of the subject and has supported other staff well. Last year the Parent Teacher Association and the governors provided a large injection of funding, which together with a clear development plan for the subject, has ensured that the school will be able to take the full benefit from government funding allocated to the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

120. Almost all pupils are working at the standard expected nationally by the age of 13, and a significant proportion is achieving above this level. Overall the standards achieved are good. Pupils speak confidently in French and generally with good fluency and accuracy within familiar topics. They understand teachers' instructions well and extract details from tapes that contain three or four sentences of French spoken at a normal speed. Most pupils are able to read and understand short texts in which the content is restricted to the topic being studied. Pupils are less confident at reading longer texts and at understanding main points or themes. When writing, pupils are reasonably accurate and can write a paragraph on topics such as their leisure interests and what they did at the weekend. Higher achievers can do this from memory; lower attaining pupils are still dependent on the support of a model to produce accurate work.

121. Much of the teaching is good and all of it is at the very least, satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations in terms of the level of work and the accuracy required and this encourages pupils to perform well. For example, teachers expect good pronunciation and often require pupils to speak several sentences where they ask and answer questions, giving opinions when necessary. Pupils enjoy speaking French and use the language they have learnt spontaneously for many classroom requests and to say 'please', 'thank you' or 'sorry'. Pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and lessons are well planned, although they are occasionally dominated by the teacher and pupils are not given the opportunity to practise what they have learnt. Lessons often include games, songs and other activities designed to motivate and encourage pupils to participate even during the long, one-hour lessons. Pupils are expected to behave well at all times and do so willingly.

122. Teachers use a range of suitable resources and some of the reading tasks have been well designed to be accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs. Many of the writing tasks in Year 7 are restricted to copying and writing simple sentences, which pupils generally do well. During Year 8 the opportunities to extend this are much more frequent and pupils draft and redraft work, often correcting accuracy but not always increasing the length or improving the content. They only use computers infrequently, even when redrafting. Pupils are also encouraged to write creatively, including poetry, and they use dictionaries regularly to help with their work. Teachers mark work fairly regularly but comments rarely tell pupils what they need to do to improve. During lessons, however, pupils are given sensitive and careful feedback about their progress and there is judicious use of praise to encourage longer and more accurate performance in speaking.

123. By the end of Year 8, pupils with special educational needs have made satisfactory

progress and the higher achieving pupils have made good progress. Pupils with special educational needs do not always make as much progress as colleagues because there is not always sufficient additional support, especially when listening to tapes. Teachers sometimes find it difficult to meet the needs of all their pupils in the large mixed ability classes, particularly in Year 8.

124. There is good leadership in French. The coordinator has a clear sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and has concentrated on updating assessment arrangements, increasing the range of worksheets and support materials and expanding the range of activities in the classroom, especially the use of games and songs. There is, however, too little time available for the coordinator to fully monitor the effects of these changes, to draw conclusions about the results and use this information to plan future developments.

125. The high standards mentioned in the previous report have been maintained. There have been some improvements in assessment procedures, although the marking of written work is still not a strength, but there has been little improvement in the time available to the coordinator to monitor the work of the department or to enable the team to work together.

MUSIC

126. Standards at Key Stage 2 in composing and listening are on course for most pupils to meet national expectations by the end of the key stage. Some older pupils are working below expectation in singing and in the development of performing skills but this is not the case for composing and appraising. Literacy at Key Stage 2 is supported in music by providing time to introduce simple rules, new words and spelling. This is seen in pupils' work on poems or songs for composing activities. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good at Key Stage 2. Different activities in performing and composing are provided for some pupils who are achieving at a higher rate and completing work earlier than the rest of the class. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory except in Year 6 when a small number of boys behave poorly when not engaged on a task.

127. At Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils are on course to achieve the standards expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving satisfactory standards because of the helpful way group activities are organised. There is an improvement in singing and in composing for most pupils. Attitudes towards music are generally satisfactory except for a minority of pupils who find that they complete tasks quickly in the long afternoon sessions. All pupils leave the school with a good understanding of musical concepts, original compositions developed from a range of ideas, group-work, and performing as a member of a group. In extra-curricular activities and some instrumental lessons provided by visiting teachers, standards are satisfactory overall and sometimes good.

128. Teaching and learning overall is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses, especially at Key Stage 2 where there is little or no skills work in lessons, there is little consolidation of previous knowledge and some poor behaviour is not controlled. As a result teaching in Years 5 and 6 is not satisfactory. The additional activities in performing and composing provided for some pupils enable them to exceed expectations at both key stages. These include the use of instruments learned elsewhere. At Key Stage 2 learning is good when pupils are engaged in brisk skills sessions as warm-up singing activities; - in the "Johnson Boys", when each verse changes in pitch and loudness as directed by the teacher; and when giving performances to the whole class which are reviewed by the teacher.

129. Learning is unsatisfactory when the pace of lessons is slow and when the task lacks challenge or demand. In some of the few taped examples of pupils' work there is a lack of improvement over time and the use of some skills in performance. Support for pupils with special educational needs, by working to a previously planned programme discussed with the class teacher, is good.

130. At Key Stage 3 activities are mostly linked to prior learning. Pupils ask appropriate questions of each other and the teacher such as "Why is the keyboard not in tune with the xylophone?" or "What signals should we give to change details in the music?" At Key Stage 3 advances are made by all pupils in controlling sounds and writing compositions on instruments. This takes place when using a small group of notes on a medieval pattern to help understand melodic lines in different types of music; or songs such as, 'Achy Breaky Heart', to help understand shape and form in music. There are effective moments when pupils reflect on their work and the work of others. There is still not sufficient written analysis or taped work of pupils' strengths and weaknesses to support their learning.

131. Most pupils do not sing together for extended periods as a class or contribute individual pieces of work. Music is not on the school homework timetable and as a result some opportunities are missed for pupils to research, build on, or develop the work started in class. Some Year 8 pupils leave lessons without knowing the differences between styles of music; for example, 'Rock' and 'Country and Western'. In instrumental music lessons teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to very good. Some drum and flute lessons have effective short cuts to help pupils improve their rhythm skills. The use of information technology in music is unsatisfactory overall although the use of electronic keyboards is good. The music instrument stock is becoming too small for the rising number of pupils.

132. The range of extra-curricular music activities is good. These include choir, orchestra, brass and recorder groups and individual instrumental lessons, given by four peripatetic teachers and other members of staff. A small number of pupils participate in Local Education Authority music events and school music groups are chosen annually to support the 'Save the Children Wessex Walk' service in Salisbury Cathedral. These levels of involvement by pupils are the same or better than similar schools, especially local ones. The benefits of these activities to pupils are seen in class lessons when using their instrumental skills and when showing their talents in assemblies, school concerts and the annual summer music festival that is organised around class performances. The school has good support from a number of musicians from the local community. They assist the music coordinator in developing the school band and choir and help pupils to join in performances with external groups.

133. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the allocation of time for class music lessons and in staffing to assist the music coordinator, who has little non-teaching time. The Parent Teacher Association has further enhanced funding for the subject. The practice rooms lack display and, in some lessons, there is a significant minority of girls who do not participate in singing. The music studio and practice rooms are an excellent resource but there are no chairs or tables available. It is sometimes inappropriate for pupils to lie on the floor, thus making written work and playing keyboards difficult. The music coordinator provides expertise and a very high level of commitment to the busy department.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. In Key Stage 2 pupils attain good standards in physical education. In games they have well established basic skills and can use these effectively to play small-sided games.

In gymnastics and dance pupils can plan sequences showing a wide range of movements and perform these to a good standard. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8 they attain standards in line with pupils of a similar age. In gymnastics they have developed better control of their own movements and work imaginatively with others to devise more complex sequences of movement. In games they play small-sided games and understand the role of attack and defence in the game. They can act as officials and apply simple rules in a game. In dance some pupils demonstrate inventive sequences showing a wide range of movements performed with good control, however others are unable to refine their work sufficiently in order to produce finished pieces of work of this standard. Pupils throughout the school have good knowledge and understand how to prepare for activity and do this conscientiously. They have good skills of observation and use these to comment on work they see and how it can be improved. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills and respond positively in lessons.

135. The quality of teaching is good. There was a higher proportion of good teaching in Key Stage 2 and a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 3. Physical education throughout the school is taught by a specialist teacher and dance by a number of teachers including some non-specialists. As a result the quality of teaching in dance is more variable. In the main teachers have good subject knowledge and plan tasks that interest pupils and help them progress in their skills and understanding. Pupils contribute to their progress through the good attitudes the majority have to the subject. Pupils enjoy physical activity and behave well and concentrate in lessons. In a good Year 5 dance lesson the pupils were interested in, and stimulated by, a theme on the movement of water and their dances showed a good range of movement ideas and group patterns. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their own work and be fully involved in their own learning. In a very good Year 6 hockey lesson the teacher set a task for pupils to plan scoring systems for their own games to which they responded with energy and enthusiasm.

136. In most lessons teachers use a variety of methods to sustain the interest of pupils, they make well judged interventions to help pupils improve and sustain the pace of the lesson. In a few lessons the pace is slower when explanations are lengthy or the teacher allows the activity to go on too long. In these circumstances pupils lose concentration and become restless. In the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching tasks are not clearly set out and pupils are given too long before the teacher intervenes particularly with a few pupils who are noisy and not concentrating. Teachers usually give good individual support and feedback to pupils on their performance so pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs are able to make satisfactory progress.

137. The coordination of games and gymnastics across the school is good. However, the relationship of physical education lessons and dance lessons is unclear. There are good schemes of work for games and gymnastics but continuity and progress in dance is limited by the lack of a scheme of work covering the whole school. There is no monitoring of teaching particularly in dance, which is taught by a number of different teachers. The subject coordinator has a high teaching load and little time for monitoring. The school makes satisfactory provision for extra curricular clubs and appropriate provision for competitive sport for boys. There are, however, few local opportunities for girls to take part in competitions particularly in the winter season.

138. Since the last inspection improvement in physical education has been good. Standards have improved particularly in Key Stage 2 and for the planning and evaluating aspects of pupils' work. Schemes of work have been written for most activities and teaching has improved.

