

INSPECTION REPORT

RODBOROUGH SCHOOL

Milford, Godalming

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125260

Headteacher: Mr J. Latham

Reporting inspector: John Godwood
18242

Dates of inspection: 5th – 9th February 2001

Inspection number: 189631

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rake Lane
Milford
Godalming
Surrey

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs T. Turpin

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Godwood Registered inspector (OFSTED No: 18242)		What sort of school is it? How high are standards – the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Kenneth Parsons Lay inspector (OFSTED No: 9756)		How high are standards – pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Betty Barratt (OFSTED No: 2740)	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Andrew Bird (OFSTED No: 23528)	Mathematics	
Terry Chipp (OFSTED No: 21954)	Art and design	
Judy Evans (OFSTED No: 4647)	Physical education	
Roger Garrett (OFSTED No: 19913)	English Drama	
Keith Hopkins (OFSTED No: 10385)	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
Cheryl Jackson (OFSTED No: 2597)	English as an additional language GNVQ Equal Opportunities Special educational needs	
Ray Jardine (OFSTED No: 7428)	Science	
Anne Looney (OFSTED No: 12867)	Modern foreign languages	
Fred Peacock (OFSTED No: 8360)	Music	
Felicity Shuffle-Botham (OFSTED No: 30427)	History Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rodborough School is a community comprehensive school of average size with 940 pupils aged 11 to 16. It is a Beacon School, i.e. a school which has been identified as an example of good practice and which provides professional support to other schools. It serves a mixed urban and rural area including south-west Godalming and surrounding villages. The school is over-subscribed. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds, some of which are relatively favoured, but a significant minority of pupils come from less favoured and deprived backgrounds. Almost all pupils are of white UK heritage, with 7 pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and 14 pupils for whom English is an additional language. Six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. One hundred and sixty-nine pupils have special educational needs, of whom 18 have statements; this is about average. Of 33 pupils with more significant learning needs, half have emotional and behavioural difficulties, two are physically disabled and the rest have specific or moderate learning difficulties. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies year by year but is generally above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Rodborough School is a very good school with a very good ethos for learning and a focus on raising the achievement of all pupils. The school's values of striving for excellence and concern for others are widely shared and reflected in all its work. Standards of attainment and pupils' achievements are very good. Pupils value learning and relationships are excellent. Teaching is very good and staff are committed to continual improvement. Very strong leadership is effective in promoting high standards through the example set by the headteacher and senior staff and the interest shown in individuals. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are well above average and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, and they are able to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning when given the opportunity.
- Teaching is very good and excellent classroom management leads to mutual respect and excellent relationships.
- The school creates a climate for learning in which pupils want to learn.
- The curriculum is very well designed to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school cultivates good links with parents.
- The leadership is very good, with a clear educational direction and a drive towards continual improvement.

What could be improved

- Systematic planning for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in all subjects.
- The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and of the work of departments by the senior management team.

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 November 1996. Since then it has sustained and improved the previous high standards of attainment, both in GCSE examinations and at the end of Year 9. The quality of teaching has improved and the good ethos has been maintained. The accommodation has been significantly enhanced, partly through the school's own efforts, and provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved. The personal and social education programme has been improved and is now good. There has been satisfactory or good improvement on all other areas listed for development in the last report, except for the daily act of collective worship, which is still not in place. There have been considerable improvements to the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	B	A	B

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

GCSE results are well above average and above similar schools. They have improved over the last five years. The rate of improvement is below the national trend, but the average GCSE point score in 2000 was the highest on record. Until 1999, girls' results were better than boys' by a similar margin to that found nationally, but in 2000 boys and girls attained equally. The school met its targets for GCSE performance in 2000. It has set ambitious targets for 2001 but is on course to meet them. Pupils achieve particularly well in GCSE courses in geography, history, physics, chemistry and physical education.

Attainment at the end of Year 9 is well above average and well above similar schools. It is better in mathematics and science than in English. Year 9 results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend.

Pupils achieve very well throughout the school in most subjects. Some pupils develop particularly good skills of scientific enquiry. In modern foreign languages a minority of average and lower attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve less than they could, though higher attaining pupils make good progress. Pupils following the vocational courses in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress in learning skills and in their personal development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are proud to be members of the Rodborough community. They appreciate the quality of the education they are receiving and have a very positive attitude to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well and are fully aware of the school's expectations.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The school is successful in developing confident and responsible individuals, and mutual respect and partnership in learning underlie all the work of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is in line with the national average. There are no particular groups of pupils with unsatisfactory attendance records.

Pupils' attitudes to work are good or better in almost all lessons, and are often very good or excellent. Pupils respond well when directed to do something by an adult, but are equally capable of taking initiative and showing personal responsibility in their work and around the school. Year 11 prefects support younger pupils when they are new to the school and help them in organising their homework. The school council is impressively run by the pupil members themselves.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall 184	Very good	Very 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.

All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, 81% was good or better, and 37% was very good or excellent. Teaching is either good or very good in all subjects. In Years 7 to 9, it is good in mathematics and very good in English and science. In Years 10 and 11, it is good in English and mathematics and very good in science. Much teaching is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations, which combined with excellent management of pupils leads to a very good ethos for learning. Pupils make a very good effort and, when given the opportunity, are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning. This is promoted well in science, history, religious education, drama and the vocational courses, but less well in mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages.

The teaching of literacy is good and numeracy satisfactory, but both need to be co-ordinated better across the subjects. ICT is used very effectively in some subjects but is under-used in others. The school meets the needs of all pupils very well, through its wide-ranging curriculum and its emphasis on inclusiveness. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Curriculum planning is guided by a determination to meet the interests and learning requirements of each individual pupil through the range of courses offered.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and special educational needs staff work together to support pupils and meet individual needs. Some pupils' learning targets need to be more clearly defined.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils receive good support from the school and from fellow pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There is very good support for pupils' moral and social development and good support for cultural development. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. Staff make considerable efforts to address the welfare of individual pupils. There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

Parents' views of the school are very positive. The school cultivates good links with parents, who contribute very well to pupils' learning. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is particularly well designed to meet the needs of all pupils, with very good vocational courses and an extended GCSE pathway to challenge the high attainers. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except that the daily act of collective worship is not in place. The school is beginning to develop promising ways of involving pupils more in their own learning, including target setting and academic tutoring.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher sets a very clear educational direction, guided by a strong concern for excellence and for individual pupils. He leads by example and is ably supported by the deputy head.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors know the school well and are active and effective in determining the school's strategic direction and in monitoring outcomes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Examination results and school planning are evaluated regularly and appropriate action taken. Senior managers need to be more rigorous in their monitoring of the work of subject departments.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial systems are efficient and financial planning is linked to school priorities. Very good use is made of all existing funds and the school is creative in raising additional funding for school improvement.

There is a good match of teaching staff and support staff to the curriculum, although the school has difficulty recruiting teachers in mathematics, science and technology. Accommodation and learning resources are also good.

The reflection of the school's aims and values in all its work is excellent and there is a very strong commitment to improvement. The school applies the principles of best value well, through its constant endeavour to use all available resources in improving teaching and learning.

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 school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. ▪ The school is well led and managed. ▪ They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. ▪ The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. ▪ The school is helping children become mature and responsible. ▪ Children make good progress in school. ▪ The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information to parents about how their child is getting on. ▪ The amount of work children get to do at home. ▪ The progress of boys. ▪ The speed of response to some parents' concerns. ▪ Support for pupils who have special educational needs but do not have statements.

Parents are strongly supportive of the school and concerns were expressed by only a small minority. Inspectors agreed with parents' positive views. In investigating what parents would like to see improved, inspectors found that the information to parents is good, but reports need to contain more specific information on progress. Homework is set regularly but teachers do not always follow the homework timetable. The school is more successful than most in helping boys make progress, and boys make good progress in almost all subjects. Inspectors found that the school responds well to parents' concerns in almost all cases. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress, though in some cases their individual learning targets need to be clearer and more practical.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results in the 2000 national tests at the end of Year 9 were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, they were close to average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Results have improved over the last five years at a similar rate to that nationally. Girls achieve better results than boys in English, and boys a little better than girls in mathematics and science. In all three subjects, boys do a little better relative to girls than is the case nationally.
2. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 9 were well above average in mathematics, science, history, geography, art and design and drama. They were above average in English, modern foreign languages, design and technology and music. They were average in ICT, religious education and physical education.
3. GCSE results are well above average and above those of similar schools. Results have improved over the last five years, though at a rate below the national trend. However, the average GCSE point score in 2000 was the highest ever. Until 1999, girls' results were better than boys' by a similar margin to that found nationally. In 2000, boys and girls attained equally. Results in English, mathematics and science were well above average and above those of similar schools. Subjects in which pupils did particularly well, relative to their performance in other subjects, were geography, history, physical education, physics and chemistry. They did relatively less well in art and design, design and technology, drama, English, English literature, French, and mathematics.
4. In work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Year 11 were well above average in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art and design, music, GCSE religious education and GCSE physical education. They were above average in design and technology, drama, non-examination religious education and the vocational courses. They were average in modern foreign languages, non-examination physical education and ICT.
5. Pupils' achievements are very good overall in relation to their prior attainment. This is true at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. There is some variation in different subjects. Achievement is very good in mathematics, science, history, geography, art and design, drama, music, GCSE physical education and the vocational courses. It is good in English, design and technology, modern foreign languages, ICT and religious education. The only exception is in modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11, where it is satisfactory.
6. The proportion of pupils who gained at least one A* to G grades in GCSE in 2000 was above average and in line with similar schools. The school goes to great lengths to support pupils who find it difficult to cope with a full programme of GCSE courses. Strategies include offering vocational courses, in which many lower attaining pupils achieve very well, and arranging off-site courses to meet the needs of individual pupils. There was no evidence during the inspection of lower attaining pupils underachieving. One of the school's targets for 2001 is that all pupils should gain at least one GCSE.
7. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress and in some subjects they do particularly well. In science, higher attaining pupils develop very good skills of scientific enquiry through challenging teaching; lower attainers also achieve well but not so well. In geography, some pupils work at levels well above what is normally expected. There are good opportunities for talented pupils in extra-curricular sport. In mathematics, many pupils are expected to gain A* grades at GCSE, though their investigative skills are not developed beyond the needs of the examination. There is occasionally a lack of opportunity in art and design to extend higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9. In GCSE modern foreign languages, a significant minority of average and lower attaining pupils achieve less well than higher attainers. This is partly because of a lack of enthusiasm for languages and partly

because teaching does not always provide the support they need. In general, the good ethos in the school encourages pupils of all abilities to do well and be proud of their achievements.

8. In most subjects, boys and girls take part equally in lessons and achieve equally well. Teachers are conscious of the need to maintain and raise boys' achievement and they take steps to foster this. In English, boys have more weaknesses than girls in accurate writing, but the difference in boys' and girls' performance is less than that nationally. In modern foreign languages, boys and girls achieve equally up to Year 9, but in GCSE the average attaining boys fall behind. Boys achieve better than girls in mathematics. Overall, there is less underachievement by boys than in most schools.
9. The school's GCSE targets for 2000 for the percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A* to C grades and their average GCSE point score were both met. The targets set for 2001 are very ambitious but the evidence of the inspection suggests that good progress is being made towards meeting them.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. The small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported well by the school and through good relationships with other pupils; as a result they make very good progress in line with other pupils.
11. Many pupils write fluently and usually accurately. In Years 10 and 11, pupils write at length and with an appropriate style, though some boys have difficulties with clear expression, spelling and constructing sentences. The contribution of other subjects to standards of literacy is good overall. Pupils do well-structured extended writing in geography, for example. In science, pupils use and assimilate scientific vocabulary very well, but their extended writing is under-developed, as it is in mathematics. Speaking skills are particularly well developed in many areas and learning is considerably enhanced by pupils' good listening skills.
12. Pupils have good numeracy skills, which they apply and practise in a number of subjects. Standards in numeracy have improved at a faster rate than that nationally. In mathematics, pupils use mental arithmetic instead of calculators where this is appropriate. They apply many aspects of numeracy very well in science, including probability and algebra in GCSE courses. In geography also, their skills are applied well in calculations, measurement and the interpretation of data. They measure accurately in design and technology, and in ICT they analyse data and use spreadsheets.
13. Standards in ICT are well above average in some aspects of the subject, but average overall, because some skills are underdeveloped. Pupils have many opportunities to practise skills in communicating and handling information, and standards are very high in these. Teachers make particularly good use of the school's ICT resources, including its Intranet, in English, geography, religious education, music and the vocational courses. However, pupils get very little opportunity to develop control and measurement skills and ICT is under-used in mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils are proud to be members of the Rodborough community. They appreciate the quality of the education they are receiving and have a very positive attitude to learning. The stimulating learning environment and the way they themselves are valued ensures that they enjoy coming to school. They come to school ready to work and waste little time moving about the site to their various lessons. They are keen to learn and are attentive and conscientious in lessons. These positive attitudes are encouraged by the way the staff treat them. Teachers often share lesson objectives with the pupils and create a partnership of learning, with pupils expected to do their part, encouraging mature and productive attitudes. These contribute significantly towards pupils' learning and progress. This applies not just to high attaining pupils but also to lower attainers. For example, in a history lesson on the English Civil War with the lowest Year 8 set, the teacher skilfully encouraged pupils to put forward their own ideas on how its causes could be classified, whilst maintaining a clear factual framework. Pupils sustain interest in their studies and are keen to participate and to do well. This attitude starts with the youngest pupils, with Year 7 fully prepared to

contribute to their lessons. For example, Year 7 pupils in the first lesson of a study skills course taken by the headteacher were not overawed by the experience, and were very happy to put forward their ideas and experiences. Good teaching builds on and develops these positive attitudes. Pupils usually settle promptly to written work and are able to work in silence when required to do so. They respond positively to teachers who have high expectations of them in both work and behaviour. The level of support received by pupils with special educational needs contributes to the way they participate in class work. The few pupils from ethnic minorities show a very positive attitude to their work.

15. Pupils behave very well and are fully aware of the school's expectations. There is a minority of pupils for whom this does not always come naturally, and their behaviour reflects the skills and professionalism of most teachers in maintaining order and ensuring that time is used productively to further pupils' learning. Pupils are clear about the school's code of conduct and observe it very well. In the vast majority of lessons, behaviour is not a problem and little time is expended by teachers in maintaining order. When pupils are admonished, it is not uncommon for them immediately to apologise for their behaviour. The playground is an unthreatening environment. Wet lunchtimes are treated with stoicism and pupils behave very sensibly. Even pools of water on pathways during wet weather do not provoke silly behaviour. As in all schools, incidents of bullying do occasionally occur, but are not common. No sexist or racist incidents were seen during the inspection and these are rare. There have been a number of permanent and fixed term exclusions in the last year, for a variety of justified reasons. Pupils are very polite to each other and to adults. Nearly all parents believe that the school maintains good standards of behaviour, although a few parents expressed concerns about stealing in school. This does occur regretfully, though at a level that might be expected in a school of this type, and the school is quick to deal with the situation.
16. Most parents also hold the view that the school is successful in developing confident and responsible individuals, and in fact pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. The school has a large number of personable and mature young people whom it is a real pleasure to meet. They respond well when directed to do something by an adult, but are equally capable of taking initiative and showing personal responsibility in their work and around the school. For example, during a lunchtime a small group of Year 10 pupils took the initiative to escort a lost and somewhat inebriated visitor to the school office, dealing with the situation in a tactful and pleasant way. This maturity helps pupils' learning. In a Year 11 PSE lesson, for example, the teacher delivered a well-crafted lesson that built on pupils' confidence in themselves and each other to enable a powerful message on personal relationships to emerge from the pupils themselves, despite the potential for embarrassment in the topic. The school provides opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities, particularly in Year 11. Prefects devote considerable time to supporting younger pupils, particularly in their first few weeks in Year 7, but also in a wider role, for example helping them with their pupil planners. The school council is very well run by the pupil members themselves, with a sensible level of debate and very impressive officers. The encouragement of personal responsibility starts in Year 7 and builds through the school.
17. Relationships in the school are excellent, based on the idea that mutual respect and partnership in learning underlies all the work of the school. Pupils have this type of productive relationship with many of their teachers and with senior managers. This is clearly a major strength of the school and impacts on many aspects of its work. For example, it enabled a teacher to motivate a Year 10 GNVQ business class to participate in a lesson making paper vans in groups; an exercise illustrating the production process which could easily be seen in the short term as futile by those participating. The strong relationship between the class and the teacher, with a leavening of good humour on both sides, ensured that the experience was productive. Pupils value each other as individuals and they understand the impact of their actions on others. In group work, they can share resources and co-operate with each other. In a Year 11 mathematics class, for example, they helped each other identify and overcome their personal weaknesses highlighted in their mock GCSE paper. Pupils respect each other's beliefs. Low and high attaining pupils are able to work together constructively. They show respect for the school's property and are trusted by teachers to use resources and facilities; there is no graffiti around the school. They display common courtesies, such as holding a door for somebody following them through it. Boys and girls usually work together unselfconsciously.

18. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, being in line with the national average. There are no particular groups of pupils with unsatisfactory attendance records, although there are a few specific pupils across the school who show particularly high rates of absence. There are numerous unauthorised absences recorded in the attendance registers, and these are running well above the national average. This is because lateness is a particular problem, caused largely by the late arrival of buses and trains. The school is more diligent than most similar schools in recording lateness accurately. The level of lateness clearly has some effect on the start of the school day and the education of the individuals concerned.
19. The high standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have been maintained since the last inspection of the school. The problem of bus punctuality was noted in the last report, though responsibility for this does not lie with the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is very good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Of the 184 lessons seen, 81% were good or better, 37% were very good or better and 5% were excellent. This is an improvement on the good teaching that was reported in the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good in all year groups.
21. Teaching is either good or very good in all subjects. It is very good in science, history, geography, design and technology, music, drama and the vocational courses. It is also very good in personal and social education. It is good in English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, ICT, physical education, religious education and art and design.
22. A particular strength in teaching common to all subjects is teachers' subject knowledge, which is often very good. This is almost always combined with very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and excellent classroom management, which together lead to very good attitudes. Teachers create a very good climate for learning. They usually use questioning well to challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils are stimulated by teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects.
23. Planning is often very good. In art and design, this leads to pupils being able to work independently, and in geography, lessons are designed to build upon earlier learning, with teachers giving good support to individual pupils. Lessons are also particularly well planned in history and the vocational courses. In science, modern foreign languages and religious education, learning is assisted by the lesson objectives being shared with pupils, though this is not often done in mathematics. A relative weakness in some subjects is that lessons do not often end with a plenary session where pupils are involved in summarising their learning, though this happens effectively in history, religious education and often in English.
24. Pupils' skills as independent learners are fostered very well in some subjects and they rise well to the challenge offered. In science, for example, they engage in mature discussion and are encouraged to find things out for themselves, and in drama they learn to manage their group presentations and evaluate their own work. Pupils are encouraged to work independently in music and trusted to work in groups. In the vocational courses, skilful teaching leads them to become increasingly self-reliant in acquiring evidence and organising their work. In religious education, pupils learn to think for themselves and listen to the views of others. In mathematics and geography, on the other hand, there are not enough times when pupils can show initiative in organising larger pieces of work. In modern foreign languages, pupils respond well when given the chance to work more independently or in groups, but this doesn't happen enough. In physical education, pupils work well together, but there are too few opportunities for them to take responsibility because games are often teacher-directed.
25. Teachers often use interesting methods which stimulate pupils and enable all to learn well. In music, for example, teaching is aimed at inclusiveness and the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, show commitment and make good progress. In English, teachers use

imaginative ways to help pupils develop understanding of important concepts in literature. Games are used well to support the learning of foreign languages. In science, class discussions are focused and well-paced, but occasionally extended too long without checking pupils' understanding. In art and design, teachers are aware of pupils' individual needs and modify their delivery accordingly, though occasionally higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged. Mathematics teachers use explanations and questions well but not enough extension work for higher attaining pupils.

26. Teachers make a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills, though there is variation in the emphasis given to the different aspects of literacy. Opportunities for reading are frequent, though the range of reading is limited in design and technology and music. Pupils practise writing skills in a variety of ways in most subjects, with good opportunities in music and very good development of writing in geography. In science pupils use vocabulary very well, but their use of extended writing is less well developed. In mathematics, no extended writing takes place except what is required for GCSE coursework. Continued development of literacy skills across the school is needed to support pupils' technical accuracy in writing. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to take part in question and answer, class discussion and group activities. Music and modern foreign languages could, however, do more in this respect. Pupils' ability to learn is considerably enhanced by the emphasis given to listening, and this is a strong feature of the school's continuing work to develop the literacy skills of all pupils.
27. While there is currently no policy to co-ordinate the teaching of numeracy within all subjects, pupils' skills are fostered in some subjects. In geography there are planned opportunities to apply spatial concepts and present data in bar and pie charts. Many aspects of numeracy are applied very well in science. In one Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils investigated effects on the rate of dissolving sugar of variables such as temperature, particle size, surface area and time. Results were tabulated and illustrated using graphs. In a GCSE English lesson, pupils analysed statistical information about the incidence of murder in a debate on capital punishment. In design and technology, pupils use numerical skills in measuring and weighing materials, calculating ratios and using spreadsheets and charts. In ICT much use is made of data analysis and spreadsheets. Further co-ordination is needed, however, of the teaching of numeracy across the school.
28. Teachers' management of pupils and the relationships that result are excellent. Teachers treat pupils with respect and value what they have to say. This contributes to the good learning ethos. In many lessons, teachers follow the school policy of seating boys and girls alternately. This results in boys and girls working well together and making equal contributions to the lesson. In one Year 9 sex education lesson, for example, it enabled boys and girls to discuss sensitive issues maturely and with little embarrassment.
29. Resources are used well. Modern language teaching, for example, is enhanced by the use of range of high quality resources. ICT is used very effectively in some subjects but is under-used in some other subjects. Geography and the vocational courses make excellent use of ICT. In one geography lesson, Year 7 pupils did their own research into severe weather using the Internet and the school's Intranet. English and religious education have also taken advantage of the school's Intranet to create their own ICT resources. In history, pupils are encouraged to use ICT to find and present information. Pupils compose and record their work on computers in music, and older pupils use sophisticated music technology. ICT is used to some degree in science, mathematics, art and design, modern foreign languages and design and technology, but in these subjects there is considerable scope for further development. Its use is also under-developed in physical education.
30. Marking is always satisfactory and often good, but the quality varies somewhat. It gives pupils useful feedback in science and history, whereas in mathematics and geography there is not enough guidance to help pupils improve their work. In the vocational courses, assessment is thorough and accurate and gives pupils useful feedback on their progress. In design and technology and history, while assessment is effective in tracking progress, pupils' knowledge of their own progress is limited because they are not told what National Curriculum level they are working towards. Marking is encouraging in religious education and modern foreign languages, but not consistent between teachers of the same subject.

31. Special educational needs teachers are capable in the teaching of basic skills, and this leads to confident teaching which earns the respect of pupils. Whilst the concentration spans of many pupils with special educational needs are low, in the best lessons this is well managed by skilful variation of pupil activity in lessons. Individual Education Plans are in place for all pupils at Stages 2 to 5 of the Code of Practice, but not all the targets on these are sufficiently practical for teachers to implement when support staff are not present.
32. Homework is set regularly as an appropriate extension to classwork, though teachers do not always follow the homework timetable and as a result, pupils are at times put under pressure. In science and geography, homework is used particularly effectively to extend learning from the lessons. In design and technology it is set regularly and helps to extend the curriculum time, which is too short to cover the course in detail.
33. Through the school's ethos of treating pupils as individuals, teachers are successful in meeting the needs of all pupils. Boys and girls contribute equally in lessons and, in most subjects, make similar progress. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive support provided by the school and good peer support. Pupils with special educational needs generally make progress in line with their peers. Because of the very good teaching and pupils' very good attitudes, which are supported by the ethos and values of the school, pupils' learning is very good.

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

34. Curriculum planning is strongly guided by a very clear vision and a determination that the interests and learning requirements of each individual should be met by the subjects and courses offered. Pupils' very good achievement and personal development shows that this challenging objective is met in practice. Throughout their time in school all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, have very good access to a broad and well-balanced range of learning experiences.
35. In Years 7 to 9, pupils follow all the subjects of the National Curriculum, and also courses in drama, personal and social education and a programme of study skills. From Year 8 onwards they are able to study two modern foreign languages. Their learning is further enhanced by an annual activities week, which is designed imaginatively to enrich and extend pupils' learning experiences through a wide range of focused visits and activities. Activities are carefully planned to ensure that they are accessible to all pupils and especially that none is barred by cost.
36. In Years 10 and 11, an imaginative approach consisting of three pathways to learning – Core, Extended and Vocational – is designed to promote high achievement through a range of opportunities which are well matched to pupils' aptitudes and interests. These include GCSE courses in all the National Curriculum subjects, religious education, drama and business studies; and courses leading to the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) Part One in business studies, leisure and tourism and in health and social care. The Extended Pathway provides appropriate challenge for higher attaining pupils through opportunities to study three separate sciences, two humanities subjects, and two modern foreign languages. The Vocational Pathway succeeds in providing opportunities which enable pupils whose needs may not be met by academic courses to achieve well. In addition to GCSE and GNVQ courses, there are opportunities for pupils to choose from a number of Royal Society of Arts (RSA) initial awards, to benefit from link courses at local colleges of further education, and to undertake a structured programme of work experience in Years 10 and 11.
37. Very detailed curriculum planning results in statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education being fully met. However, the effort to ensure flexibility in timetabling to meet individual needs creates difficulties in the organisation of some subjects. In design and technology, for example, timetabling arrangements in Year 10 result in pupils leaving their design and technology lesson half way through to study other subjects, and returning later to resume their work. The time allocated to design and technology is below average and this results in some key elements of the

subject being given insufficient emphasis. Other areas of difficulty arise in ICT and physical education in Year 11, where pupils on the Extended Pathway do not have access to ICT lessons and to only one of two lessons in physical education. These difficulties do affect standards in these subjects.

38. There is good curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs. The support provided is flexible enough to meet individual needs, and subject, pastoral and special educational needs staff work together to establish continuity throughout the school. The special educational needs department supports pupils with statements of special educational need by providing in-class support and the school meets all statutory requirements as outlined in the statements. The school is supportive of Surrey County Council's policy on inclusion and the site is fully adapted for wheelchair access. All pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. They are encouraged to participate in all extra-curricular activities, hold prefect responsibilities, represent the school at sport and participate in all school productions.
39. Pupils' special educational needs are generally addressed effectively by their Individual Education Plans. However, targets on these plans are not always clear enough to be readily achievable, easily assessed, and understood by the pupil, parents and teachers. Currently a large number of staff, 28 in total, are involved in the creation of pupils' individual targets on Individual Education Plans. Not all of these staff are sufficiently well trained in the writing of suitable targets and there is a lack of consistency across different subjects. Some pupils have highly appropriate and relevant targets, whilst others have an appropriate number, but their targets are not specific enough to meet their needs properly.
40. The contribution of other subjects to standards of literacy is good overall. The school's literacy policy is clear about what should be done to develop literacy skills. Good practice exists in many areas of the school, though there is variation in the emphasis given to the individual aspects of literacy and further development is needed to create a consistency of approach. Opportunities for reading are frequent and pupils practise writing skills in a variety of ways in most areas. Extended writing is good in geography but needs further development in science and mathematics. Speaking skills are particularly well developed in many areas, with a wide range of opportunities being provided for pupils to take part in question and answer, class discussion and group activities. A strong emphasis is also given to listening. The school has run a literacy summer school for some new pupils prior to their joining the school.
41. Satisfactory provision is made for the teaching of numeracy. There is at present no whole school numeracy policy, though the school is committed to securing a higher standard of numeracy in response to the National Numeracy Strategy. The recently established school numeracy team is researching the numeracy needs of all subjects and planning guidance and training for teachers. The mathematics department delivers a numeracy programme of mental tests and is developing further approaches. Throughout the school, mathematics teachers develop pupils' mental arithmetic skills and calculators are used constructively to aid learning. Other subjects which make good use of numeracy and have a planned numeracy policy are history, geography, science, design and technology and ICT. Further opportunities to promote numeracy throughout the school are still to be developed.
42. ICT is taught partly in specific computer lessons and partly through its application to the learning of other subjects. Pupils have considerable experience in communicating information through word processing and desktop publishing and in handling information from a very wide range of electronic sources, including the Internet. Pupils make very good progress in these areas of the subject. However, other than in short modules of work in ICT lessons, pupils have very little opportunity to develop skills in using computers to control and measure, resulting in less than satisfactory progress in these specific strands. As a result, standards reached in ICT are average overall.
43. There are very good links with the local community. The school makes use of its local environment and community to support the curriculum and involves pupils in wider issues. One example is the survey carried out by pupils on plans for pedestrianising parts of Godalming, which provided practical

and purposeful work in geography and ICT. The school supports local disabled and senior citizens' organisations. The local schools' policeman visits regularly and the school co-operates closely with the police in order to support pupils who are at risk of breaking the law. There is very good support from local businesses in terms of sponsorship and provision of work shadowing and work experience placements for pupils. The school supports various charities, with pupils fully involved in deciding which to support and how they are to be helped. Good links were forged with many local schools by the school's "Best-Practice Conference", which it organised as a Beacon School. A second conference was being planned at the time of the inspection.

44. Liaison with the main local colleges and the careers service is very good, enabling Year 11 pupils to transfer to the next phase of education or training with confidence. The school has very good links with its feeder primary schools. The headteacher and other staff visit them, the head taking assemblies as a way of becoming known to the children, and induction procedures are effective in ensuring that the big step from primary to secondary education is as smooth as possible.
45. All pupils benefit from a careers education and guidance programme of very high quality from Year 7 onwards. The programme is well structured, and is planned to develop pupils' self-knowledge and self-esteem, as well as decision-making skills and skills in career-planning and career-management. The programme benefits from very good links with local businesses and incorporates well-planned opportunities for work experience.
46. The careers education and guidance programme forms part of the wider provision for personal and social education. Since the last inspection, when the provision for personal and social education was identified as an area for development, much attention has been given to ensuring its improvement. This has resulted in a good programme which is kept under systematic review. Pupils' personal development is well supported by opportunities for them to discuss, and be informed about, a wide range of topics of immediate relevance, including sex education and drugs education. ICT is used effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and enhance their learning, and the programme also benefits from being linked to the Surrey Healthy Schools Award.
47. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very well supported, and this is stronger than the support for their spiritual development.
48. Moral and social development are fostered very well by the strong moral and social codes which underpin and permeate the life and work of the school. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Adults are very good role models and there are very high expectations that pupils should treat others with respect and interact positively with adults and each other. Excellent classroom relationships encourage mutual support, respect and co-operation. For example, each tutor group has a weekly seminar, in which pupils share their opinions on a range of topics and listen sensibly to the views of others. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to take initiative and responsibility. Examples of these include the prefect system, the school council, helping in the library, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and work with the local community. Two pupils attend each governing body meeting as observers.
49. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture is well supported in many facets of the school's life and work. There are examples in English literature, art and design and music, in the study of history and geography, and through visits to museums and art galleries. Preparation for life in a multi-cultural society is less strong, although the school takes this very seriously and seeks to raise pupils' awareness about other cultures as much as possible. Religious education makes an important contribution, through the study of other faiths and traditions, as does the charity work, where pupils support children in need in other parts of the world.
50. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development are supported well by school assemblies, but provision for spiritual development in assemblies is weaker. Few assemblies provide an act of worship or sufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect on the meaning and relevance of topics for themselves. As at the last inspection, the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils is not met. The school has a policy for spiritual development but the lack of guidance

for its implementation results in missed opportunities in most subjects. The two exceptions are religious education, where spiritual development is well supported as an intrinsic part of the programmes of study, and personal and social education, which includes a module specifically focusing on spiritual development.

51. Learning in lessons is complemented and strengthened by a very wide range of learning experiences in clubs and out-of-lesson activities. Pupils have good access to many sports and games, and to musical activities which include vocal groups, an orchestra and music technology. Other extensive opportunities range from public speaking, creative writing and street dance to archaeology, jazz and the video club. There also many subject specific clubs such as the Latin, history, design and technology, drama and art clubs, as well as a Christian Union. Fieldwork plays a central role in the study of some subjects, such as geography, and there very good opportunities for pupils' learning of modern foreign languages to be significantly enriched through exchange visits.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The school is a very caring and supportive environment in which pupils feel safe and valued. Teachers and senior staff make considerable efforts to address the welfare of individual pupils when they need it, and this is something that is noted and much appreciated by both parents and pupils. Support and guidance are very effective in raising pupils' achievements and supporting their personal development.
53. Procedures for child protection are good. The teacher responsible has received appropriate training and liaises with the local social services department as necessary. Staff are made aware of their child protection responsibilities on a regular basis and appropriate records are kept. Pupils are helped to take responsibility for their own safety through the personal and social education provision, although this aspect is not fully developed.
54. The school has routine health and safety procedures and testing in place and the school generally provides a safe environment. There is a health and safety policy, but this is a very limited document that does not allocate responsibilities in sufficient detail. Governors carry out termly in-depth risk assessments of small parts of the site and act on their findings. Despite the fact that the policy recognises the need for more general surveys, these are not carried out. For this reason, health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory overall. It is vital that regular, formal risk assessment reviews covering the whole premises are carried out. New procedures, involving teaching staff more fully in the process, particularly in higher risk areas such as physical education and science, need to be implemented to ensure that practice complies with the school's own policy. The design and technology department is already doing this work. No unsafe practice was seen in lessons during the inspection.
55. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Assessment was an issue for improvement in the last inspection report and the school has made significant progress in developing its procedures both at a whole school and department level. Procedures contained in the school policy are sound and provide clear guidance for departments. The school is taking steps to ensure that the policy is successfully adopted by departments. At whole school level, National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades are used to give pupils, parents and teachers a clear indication of progress and to set targets in each subject. At department level, subjects demonstrate some independence in assessment and recording which requires monitoring by the senior management team. Efforts to relate half-yearly assessments in subjects to National Curriculum levels of attainment are at an early stage of development. Whole school assessment data is accurate and up-to-date, collated centrally and accessible to teachers. Examples of good progress in assessment procedures exist in history, geography, design and technology, mathematics and the vocational courses.
56. The use of assessment information to guide planning at a whole school level is good. It has been used, for example, to review the curriculum in Year 8 to cater for increasing numbers of higher attaining pupils. Improved results in Year 9 tests have led to new courses in Year 10 such as

additional science, modern foreign languages and humanities, as well as the introduction of vocational courses. Assessment information is used to monitor the progress of boys and girls and to check for underachievement of pupils preparing for GCSE, resulting in formal mentoring procedures for Year 11 pupils. The school has recently provided in-service training for teachers on the interpretation of assessment data and in predicting examination performance. However, subject departments vary in their use of assessment data to guide planning. Several subjects need to analyse data in more depth to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of groups of pupils and to guide appropriate areas for development.

57. One of the school's current priorities is to improve pupils' involvement in and understanding of their own learning process. This is promoted by the very good climate for learning and the respect which is shown to pupils' own views in, for example, the seminar sessions and the school council. Pupils are involved in the annual reporting process with agreed target statements included for all subjects. Academic tutoring, in which each pupil has an individual review of his or her performance and targets, has been recently introduced, but the school recognises that more time needs to be allocated to this. The pupil planner is a very well designed document with the potential to help pupils record their progress in learning key skills and reaching their targets. At present pupils use their planners to record homework, but the other sections are not in general use. Strengthening the assessment procedures in subjects would give pupils more knowledge of their own progress.
58. The school's arrangements for identifying pupils with special educational needs pay due regard to the procedures recommended in the Code of Practice. Tests used are culturally neutral and are suitable for a range of ethnic groups. The school cares for pupils who need particular attention by ensuring that the provision outlined in their statements of special educational need is implemented. For all statemented pupils, assessment, recording and reporting meet statutory requirements. Individual Educational Plans are in place for all pupils at Stages 2 to 5 of the Code of Practice register and are readily available to all staff.
59. Staff are active in the pastoral care of their pupils. Form tutors and class teachers know their pupils well and are effective in meeting their individual needs. Year heads provide very good support when it is needed, with weekly year group meetings used to highlight problems and successes, and regular meetings where a child is causing concern. Year heads and other senior staff spend considerable amounts of their own time helping a small number of pupils in each year group who experience problems. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, with perceptive comments often appearing in the annual report to parents, showing how teachers treat each pupil as an individual. The school employs a counsellor to provide additional personal support for pupils when this is needed – an excellent facility. The personal and social education lessons contribute to pupils' development. Careers guidance, special educational needs support and pastoral guidance are brought together by a pastoral committee that meets each half term. The school is particularly active in helping pupils settle into the school when they first arrive and helping their transition following GCSE examinations.
60. The school has effective procedures to monitor attendance and encourage pupils to attend regularly. There are appropriate systems in place to identify and follow up attendance problems, involving external agencies as necessary. Parent volunteers provide a "First Day Response Team" during the first three weeks of term, when phone calls are made to parents of pupils not in school on the first morning of absence. This establishes the school's expectations right from the start.
61. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are very good. The whole school community is aware of the rewards and sanctions and how they will be applied, although the high standard of behaviour achieved owes as much to the relationships and personal attitudes in the school as it does to more formal approaches. The school's formal behaviour and anti-bullying policies provide a suitable framework, with the school deploying a very good range of rewards and sanctions. There is a very clear policy of involving parents early on if a pupil is having difficulty with behaviour. On the positive side, the award of school colours for a range of positive work and personal outcomes is much valued by pupils.

62. The high quality of the school's provision for the care of its pupils has improved still further since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

63. A significant proportion of parents took the opportunity to express their views of the school through the parents' questionnaire and the parents' meeting. The vast majority of views were positive about all aspects of the school. Parents appreciate the quality and effectiveness of the education the school provides for their children. In particular, they believe that the school is well led, that teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. There is a minority of parents who are dissatisfied on a number of matters, including homework, information on pupils' progress, and the school's efforts to work with parents. Overall, parents' views of the school are very positive.

64. The information the school provides for parents is good. There are three written reports each year on pupils' progress, the major one being sent to parents in the summer term. These reports generally provide good subject-based information on personal development, the effort pupils put in, and what they need to do to improve – many targets set are useful to the pupils. However, there is insufficient information and comment on attainment and what pupils can do; this is sometimes limited to an examination percentage against an average figure. In this regard, inspectors agree with those parents who felt that they receive too little information on their child's progress. The school provides meetings for parents to come in and discuss these reports with the teachers; these are well attended. There is a good regular newsletter on the life of the school, the Rodborough Chronicles. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both well-written documents that give a good flavour of the school. There are very good study booklets outlining the curriculum for parents of pupils in Years 7 and 8, and an equally useful booklet "The Way Ahead" outlining upper school courses for Year 9 parents. The school's pupil planner has further scope for development as a two-way communication with parents. The school is quick to contact and involve parents if pupils have problems at school. Home visits are arranged if parents are reluctant to visit the school.

65. Links with parents contribute very well to pupils' learning. The home-school agreement outlines the school's values and clearly sets out the responsibilities of the school, parents and pupil. Most parents support their children by encouraging them and checking their homework. Parents of GCSE pupils who receive additional mentoring are invited into school to learn how they can support their children. There is a strong school association, the Friends of Rodborough School, that organises social and fund-raising events. There are regular parents' working parties to effect repairs or redecorate areas of the school. Parent volunteers assist in monitoring and supporting attendance. Many governors are parents and these provide good communication with other parents. Most parents feel that they can contact the school with questions and that they will be listened to.

66. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are always invited to attend the regular review of their child's progress and to make a written comment on individual education plans. Some parents, however, are reluctant to visit the school and do not attend review meetings. Because of this, parents of pupils with special educational needs do not yet fully contribute to their child's learning.

67. The strong partnership with parents has been maintained since the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The leadership and management of the school are very good. There is a very clear educational direction set by the headteacher and deputy head. This direction includes high aspirations for educational attainment, but with a commitment to high standards for all pupils and a concern for pupils as individuals. This is reflected in a very good ethos for learning and the very good curriculum, which is designed to meet as far as possible the learning needs of each pupil.

69. A notable strength of the school is that its aims and values are reflected in all its work. The school's commitment to excellence, caring for the individual and the community are clearly displayed in the prospectus and around the school. The headteacher is very visible around the school and sets a

very good example, reinforcing the school's values in words and action at all times. As a result the values are shared by all staff, governors and by the great majority of pupils, leading to high expectations, very good attitudes and mutual respect between pupils and teachers.

70. The governors are very supportive of the school and provide a good range of expertise and contacts with the community. They are active and effective in determining the school's strategic direction and in monitoring outcomes. The governing body fulfils almost all its statutory duties, with the exceptions that the daily act of collective worship is not in place, and health and safety procedures need to be implemented more rigorously. Governors know the school well and some visit the school frequently. Business is carried out efficiently in full governing body meetings and in a series of committees covering all aspects of school life. Governors monitor the performance of the school by reviewing examination results, by involvement in the development planning process and through each governor being linked to a specific subject department. Governors are consulted fully on all major initiatives. They have held one meeting to focus specifically on strategic planning and further such meetings are planned.
71. The governors fulfil their statutory duties with regard to special educational needs provision though information included in the school prospectus and the Annual Report to parents needs to be more detailed to comply fully with legal requirements. The school has a conscientious special educational needs co-ordinator, a talented assistant special educational needs co-ordinator, and able part-time teachers and assistants. Support assistants understand their role well.
72. There is strong support for teaching and the development of teaching. Leadership of subject departments is in all cases either good or very good. A current school priority is to become a "self-evaluating school". This is well supported by the ethos established by the senior management team, which is self-critical and committed to improvement. Several teams of teachers have been established to develop the curriculum in areas such as literacy, numeracy, citizenship and extending more able pupils. These teams provide good opportunities for professional development and curriculum innovation. However, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and the work of departments are not done systematically. The work of department heads is monitored through performance management, but the links between senior and middle managers need to be more clearly defined. The senior management team is very effective in establishing values and enthusiasm and through these introducing new ideas and achieving high standards. The current structure of the team is not, however, well suited to building well-defined communication links and procedures for monitoring and evaluation. The management structure was in the process of being reviewed at the time of the inspection. Consideration needs to be given to incorporating responsibilities for the oversight of departments into the new structure of the senior management team.
73. The process of setting targets is thorough and accurate. Development planning is well established and departments and teams set priorities which are soundly based on whole school priorities. Progress is reviewed accordingly to a clear annual cycle. Assessment data is used well to analyse trends as well as the progress of individual pupils. It has begun to be used to analyse strengths and weaknesses of groups of pupils but this is not yet fully in place. Heads of department have received some training in such analysis but the effectiveness of the training needs to be monitored.
74. Financial management is very good. All recommendations of the auditor's report have been implemented. Systems of financial control are clear and thorough and staff and governors receive very good information to plan and monitor expenditure. Governors are fully involved in financial planning, which is closely linked to school development priorities.
75. Very good use is made of all available funds to improve school facilities, and the school and governors are very creative in raising additional funds to augment what is provided by the LEA. Through this creative and careful approach to the use of funds, the school implements the principles of best value. One example of this is the significant improvement in ICT facilities that has been achieved. The computers are leased so that there is no capital expenditure and the equipment is updated at regular intervals. The parent teacher association also raises money to help pay for resources. The school began the current financial year with a deficit of £10,000 but plans to finish

the year with a surplus of £2,000. Unit costs are about average and the school provides very good value for money.

76. Effective use is made of new technology to maintain financial records and a database of pupils' details and assessment records, and there are plans to computerise the school timetable. The expenditure of specific government grants allocated, for example, for staff training and for the Beacon School initiative is carefully planned and monitored and grants are used to good effect.
77. The match of qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good overall, though the school experiences some difficulties recruiting teachers. Most subjects have sufficient well-qualified and experienced teachers. In science, however, recruitment difficulties result in some Year 8 classes being taught by non-specialists and some classes having fewer science lessons. In design and technology, staffing difficulties have prevented electronics or textiles being offered as GCSE options. There has been a satisfactory improvement in staffing for physical education, which was an issue in the last inspection. The quality of technician support is very good in design and technology and ICT and excellent in science. The administrative support provided by the office staff is very efficient.
78. The induction of new staff is well organised and effective. Continuing professional development of staff is well organised and is made available for both teaching and non-teaching staff. The school is an effective provider of initial teacher training. In its role as a Beacon School, the school organised a "Best Practice Conference" which provided good opportunities for staff to participate in and provide training. Performance management is in place, with arrangements for appraising teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff appraisal was an issue for improvement in the last inspection and since then good progress has been made.
79. The accommodation is good overall and meets the needs of the curriculum. The school makes good use of its accommodation. The accommodation in design and technology and music is very good. However in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages, rooms are not all arranged in subject suites. Two science laboratories are awaiting refurbishment and a number of science lessons have to be taught in classrooms. In art and design there is insufficient space when three classes are timetabled simultaneously. All departments have offices and displays around the school are very effective in celebrating pupils' achievements. The school benefits from a caretaker and maintenance assistant who ensure the site, grounds and buildings are kept clean, free from litter and well maintained. They are well supported by a group of parents who regularly assists with the general upkeep of the school.
80. The school has made significant improvements to its accommodation since the last inspection. Credit is due to an efficient and effective bursar who has developed a long-term building asset development plan. Progress is thoroughly monitored and reviewed. The school has addressed the previous issue of safety in physical education through a major refurbishment of the sports hall. Physical education facilities have been enhanced by the resurfacing of the floodlit courts and provision for basketball. There are now three ICT rooms and funds have been allocated for a fourth. Other areas that have been refurbished include the administrative block and entrance to the main building, the dining hall, design and technology, the staff room, the provision of two religious education rooms funded by the school and a room for vocational courses. Improved disabled access is an ongoing programme, along with interior and exterior decoration and maintenance of the buildings. Areas identified for future development include the refurbishment of the boys' toilets, resurfacing of the playground and improving the paving and ramps around the school. However the hall continues to be used as a gymnasium and this limits the amount of time allocated to gymnastics and dance.
81. The school is justly proud of the Dodman Centre, which houses the library and ICT resources. The library is well stocked with a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction books. The library is very well used at lunchtime by pupils of all ages who spend time doing research and homework in a very calm working environment. There are additional study areas in the gallery above, which also houses an up-to-date careers section and careers advice room.

82. As mentioned above, there has been a big development in the provision for ICT, which was an issue for improvement in the last inspection. In addition to the new teaching rooms, which are fully equipped with the latest computers, the school has 15 laptop computers with radio links that allow them to be used in virtually any area of the school. The school has its own website and subject areas are developing interactive learning resources on the school's Intranet. All pupils have their own email address and file space on the Intranet.
83. Subject departments have a good selection of learning resources with the exception of religious education and physical education. There are insufficient textbooks in religious education to cater for the full GCSE course and the physical education department has yet to develop ICT and other learning resources to support theory work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards further, the governors and senior management team should:

- (1) Introduce more consistent arrangements for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in all subjects*.
(Paragraphs 26, 27, 40, 41, 92)

- (2) Implement more rigorous procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and of departmental work by:
 - Incorporating responsibilities for the oversight of departments into the structure of the senior management team.
 - Establishing clearly defined links between the senior management team and department heads.
 - Developing further the use of assessment data to monitor the progress of groups of pupils.
(Paragraphs 56, 72, 73)

In addition to the above issues for action, the school should give consideration to:

- Developing more rigorous health and safety risk assessment procedures.
(Paragraphs 54, 70)
- Improving the breadth of the curriculum in design and technology.
(Paragraphs 37, 118)
- Enabling pupils on the Extended Pathway to have their full entitlement in ICT and physical education.
(Paragraphs 37, 137, 161)
- Widening the range of subjects which make full use of ICT*.
(Paragraphs 29, 42, 138)
- Implementing a daily act of collective worship.
(Paragraphs 50, 70)

**These issues are already identified as priorities in the school's planning.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	184
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	32	44	19	0	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	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	940
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	56

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	202

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8
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 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	92	95	187

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	69	74	69
	Girls	81	74	67
	Total	150	148	136
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	81 (79)	80 (82)	74 (82)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	37 (32)	58 (59)	50 (51)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	73	77	72
	Girls	83	82	72
	Total	156	159	144
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (78)	86 (86)	78 (84)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (60)	58 (61)	51 (53)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	92	89	181

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	56	88	90
	Girls	53	85	86
	Total	109	173	176
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	60 (63)	96 (95)	97 (97)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	44.2 (42.7)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	31	87
	National		

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	933
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	44	3
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: Y7– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 - Y11

Total number of education support staff	15.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	343

Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 - Y11

Key Stage 3	23.2
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2333693
Total expenditure	2351546
Expenditure per pupil	2502
Balance brought forward from previous year	8015
Balance carried forward to next year	-9838

Key Stage 4	21.1
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Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	940
Number of questionnaires returned	459

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	33	55	9	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	60	7	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	57	14	2	2
The teaching is good.	37	58	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	48	14	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	38	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	50	9	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	47	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	38	3	2	3

Other issues raised by parents

In the parents' meeting, most parents were pleased with the high standards achieved by the school. Their views reflected those expressed in the questionnaire. In addition they felt that pupils are respected by staff and by each other and that the school has a good ethos. A small number of parents had a concern over the progress of boys, though others felt that boys make good progress. A small number of parents of children who have special educational needs but not a Statement considered that their children do not receive enough support. A few parents reported a poor response to a query, though many other parents felt the school responds well.

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

ENGLISH

84. Standards of attainment in English are above average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils' achievements are good throughout all years. This is because of the quality of teaching, which is good overall, and the good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils.
85. In 2000, pupils' performance in national tests at the age of 14 was above the national average and close to the average for similar schools. Their performance in English was not as high as in mathematics and science. The trend of improvement for English over the last five years is broadly in line with the national trend. Teacher assessments in 1999 and 2000 have tended to overestimate the number of pupils attaining Level 6 and above.
86. 2000 results for A* to C grades in GCSE English were well above average, as they have been for the past three years. Results for A* to G grades were just above average. Pupils made good progress in relation to their attainment at age 14. Results for A* to C grades in GCSE English Literature were well above the national average, and above the national average for A* to G grades. However, fewer pupils took this examination. Although girls performed better than boys in both examinations, the difference in performance was less than occurred nationally.
87. In work seen during the inspection, the standard of attainment at age 14 was above average. The standard represents good achievement, because attainment spans a wide range in Years 7 to 9. Pupils have many opportunities to practise the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing in different ways and for different audiences. As a result many pupils can write fluently and usually accurately. Lower attainers can write at reasonable length but their work is more likely to lack accuracy and clarity of expression. They are more confident and accurate in speech than in writing. In fact speaking and listening skills are above average in the age group as a whole. Higher attainers can also read aloud with confidence, clarity and often with expression. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of texts is above average even among lower attainers as a result of the emphasis given to text analysis, particularly Shakespeare, with obvious benefits when these pupils move on to GCSE work.
88. In work seen during the inspection, the standard of attainment was well above average at the age of 16. This represents good achievement. Higher attainers can write at length, use information effectively, and adapt their language style appropriately to suit the context. Their personal or creative writing is often lively and imaginative. Their writing about Shakespeare texts shows above average knowledge and understanding as a result of the extensive experience they have been given of this author's work. Their written work, though pleasingly thorough and conscientious, lacks concision. It would benefit from a focus on key points or issues when pupils are analysing a text or constructing an essay, rather than attempting to cover all possible contingencies. Lower attainers are able to write at some length and choose an appropriate style. Boys particularly have difficulties, however, with sustaining clear expression and with spelling and sentencing. These weaknesses also appear in the work of higher attaining pupils and depress standards of attainment overall.
89. The contribution of other subjects to standards of literacy is good overall. The school's literacy policy is clear about what should be done to develop literacy skills. Good practice exists in many areas of the school, though there is variation in the emphasis given to the individual aspects of literacy. Opportunities for reading are frequent, though the range is limited in design and technology and music. Pupils practise writing skills in a variety of ways in most areas, with good opportunities in science, music and design and technology, and very good development of well structured extended writing in geography. In maths, on the other hand, little extended writing takes place except through what is required for GCSE coursework. Speaking skills are particularly well developed in many areas, with a wide range of opportunities being provided for pupils to take part in

question and answer, class discussion and group activities. Music and modern foreign languages could, however, do more in this respect. Pupils' ability to learn is considerably enhanced by the emphasis given to listening, and this is a strong feature of the school's continuing work to develop the literacy skills of all pupils.

90. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good overall. Standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils usually listen with interest, participate well in group activities and work hard. They respond particularly well when teachers provide opportunities for them to contribute actively to the lesson and expect high standards. This was the case, for example, in a Year 11 class when pupils shared information about their reading, trusted each other to get the information right, made good notes and worked hard in silence in response to their teacher's expectations. Most pupils in a Year 10 class wanted to contribute ideas and suggestions about Roald Dahl's short story 'Lamb to the Slaughter' in response to their teacher's urgent questioning and expectation of rapid results. A Year 7 class responded with lively interest and enthusiasm to their teacher's choice of a news report and interviews through which pupils could show their understanding of and empathy with David in the novel 'I am David'. A Year 8 class maintained interest and involvement throughout the lesson as a result of the teacher's lively and interesting delivery about the Polish background to 'The Silver Sword' and by the expectations she created about future class work on the subject. Such responses and others also revealed the very good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils.
91. Teaching is good overall and is very good in Years 7 to 9. This difference arises from there being more frequent occasions in the teaching of the younger pupils when active involvement in demanding activities produced a strong response and resulted in very good learning. Teaching nevertheless has several strong features which appear across the age range. There is very good management of pupils and the expectation that pupils will learn, resulting in positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour. Teachers choose interesting and varied activities which involve pupils and provide concrete ways in which they can develop understanding of important concepts. For example, a tower built from beakers, topped by a crown and wrapped round with a cardboard sign depicting 'morality' helped a Year 9 class understand the Elizabethan concept of social order and its relevance to their study of 'Macbeth'. Pupils in a Year 10 class developed understanding beyond what might have been expected of Carol Ann Duffy's poem 'Valentine' because their teacher vividly illustrated the central metaphor of the poem by having pupils peel the layers from an onion as the various 'layers' of the poem were revealed. Teachers' questioning of pupils effectively probes what pupils know and understand, and teachers often use comments from pupils themselves to take questioning further. They listen to pupils and treat their contributions with respect, thus fostering good relationships. Unusually, teachers make praiseworthy use of ICT in English work. Minor weaknesses in teaching appeared from time to time. Occasionally a lack of flexibility in planning affected the timing of a lesson and what was achieved in it, and the opportunity for evaluation or review was lost. Occasionally the logic of the sequence of activities in a lesson was missing or confusing. As a result, the pace of learning was slowed.
92. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The positive features of the last report remain valid. Examination results have improved in English and English literature. The department has recognised the significance of developments in ICT and taken full advantage of the school's ICT resources by developing its own Intranet and Internet pages. It continues to make a strong contribution to the cultural life of the school. A literacy summer school has been introduced. While recognising the strength of the department's Shakespeare work, it is important that the choice of material for study is consistently challenging, and that the written work of higher attainers has greater focus on key points. Some technical weaknesses in writing (particularly among boys) persist. Marking does not always draw attention to this or provide targets for improvement. Continued work on the development of literacy skills across the school would support the department in this respect. Leadership of the department is good and the commitment of its staff is such that the capacity for further improvement is excellent.

MATHEMATICS

93. Standards in Year 9 national tests in 2000 were well above average and well above those of similar schools. Results have been well above average since the last inspection and have improved in line with the national trend, with boys performing better than girls. Pupils' achievements are very good. In 2000 GCSE results, the proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades was well above average and above similar schools, with boys performing significantly better than girls. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to G grades was broadly average. GCSE results have been well above average for several years. Work seen during the inspection confirms that these high standards are being maintained and that pupils' achievements are very good in relation to their prior attainment.
94. In the work seen during the inspection, standards achieved by the end of Year 9 are well above average. Pupils develop strategies for solving problems and conduct investigations through planned exercises. For example, when Year 7 pupils investigated patterns in shapes, they displayed their findings clearly and interpreted them in the light of an initial hypothesis. Pupils' numerical skills are good and the use of the calculator is discouraged where mental skills can be applied. A programme of mental arithmetic tests is included in the Year 7 scheme of work. High and average attaining pupils understand the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages well, while low attaining pupils use simple fractions and work out how to read scales. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. In Year 8, pupils use the rules of algebra to solve simple linear equations and substitute numerical values into algebraic expressions. Pupils demonstrate key algebraic methods to others in the class, using the correct terminology. In Year 9, pupils understand and apply equations of straight-line graphs. They have a good understanding of shape, space and measurement, and use correct units. Pupils understand the different forms of average in common usage and apply a variety of statistical methods, which provides good practice in using number.
95. In work seen, standards at the end of Year 11 are also well above average. Pupils reach a good standard in GCSE coursework, for example forming a mathematical model of the spread and effect of a forest fire or investigating the sequence of a number pattern. Year 10 pupils use algebra as a tool, from formulating simple algebraic expressions to solving simultaneous and quadratic equations. High attaining pupils in Year 11 solve complex equations containing fractional terms, applying appropriate skills for checking and interpreting results. The lowest attaining pupils can draw straight-line graphs from given numerical functions. All pupils continue to develop a good understanding of shape, space and measurement, with the lowest attaining pupils able to classify quadrilaterals according to their properties. Pupils of average attainment apply Pythagoras' Theorem and solve problems involving trigonometry. The level of attainment when handling data is good. Pupils compare experimental and theoretical probability applied to real information. High attaining pupils can distinguish between discrete and continuous data when using cumulative frequency. Low attaining pupils develop good skills in reading and interpreting real-life data in a variety of straightforward formats, making appropriate calculations where necessary.
96. Pupils cope well with the numeracy demands of other subjects and apply their skills in history, geography, science, design and technology and ICT. They apply many aspects of numeracy very well in science, including probability and algebra in GCSE courses. In one Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils investigated effects on the rate of dissolving sugar of variables such as temperature, particle size, surface area and time. Results were tabulated and illustrated using graphs. In geography also, their skills are applied well in calculations, measurement and the interpretation of data. They measure accurately in design and technology, and in ICT they analyse data and use spreadsheets. In a GCSE English lesson, pupils analysed statistical information about the incidence of murder in a debate on capital punishment. There is at present no whole school numeracy policy but there are plans to develop this.
97. Teaching is good throughout, leading to good quality learning by pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to teach in a confident manner, interacting well with pupils with questions and discussion. This motivates pupils and helps them to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils understand new concepts from clear explanations and they have well-organised opportunities for practising newly taught skills. Opportunities for their personal development, however, by taking responsibility for their own learning, are limited. Teachers use time

effectively, when, for example, the lowest attaining pupils are assisted in their concentration by work being broken down into “bite-size” activities. ICT is used from time to time in all years to support the learning of mathematics, though this is not formally included in the current schemes of work. Teachers have very good skills in encouraging pupils to take an active part in lessons, resulting in a positive, brisk pace. They observe pupils carefully and intervene well with questions that engage and deepen their understanding. They manage pupils very well, with clear expectations of high standards and good behaviour, leading to a clear focus on work. Where lessons were less successful, it was sometimes due to a lack of experience. Occasionally, for example, opportunities were missed to make use of newly taught skills. On another occasion pupils’ progress with an investigation was slowed because the teacher did not anticipate the possible outcomes. Lesson objectives are not often shared with pupils at the start of lessons and little time is devoted at the end of lessons to identify what has been achieved. Because of this, pupils are not as actively involved in their own learning as they could be. Gifted and talented pupils need more opportunities to extend their thinking beyond the requirements of the examination syllabus. Homework is generally an extension of classwork but it is not set according to the homework timetable. Marking follows the department policy, but written comments to help pupils understand how to improve their work are not common. There have been some good developments in assessment procedures, though further work is needed to standardise it across the department, and to use the results to identify pupils’ strengths and weaknesses.

98. Pupils’ attitudes and response to mathematics are very good, leading to very good progress being made. Work begins promptly and pupils respond well to teachers’ questions. Pupils listen attentively and relationships between the pupils themselves and with their teachers are very good. The school seating plan policy with boys and girls seated together is adhered to across the department and supports pupils’ existing good behaviour. Pupils have an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Opportunities for pupils personal development through group work, open ended tasks, discussion and the use of everyday reference points are limited however. Provision for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning, establish and test hypotheses and pose questions in lessons are few. For example, an opportunity to estimate the likely outcome of an investigation on probability was omitted before conducting the exercise. This pattern is consistent in all year groups. Pupils’ take a pride in their work, which is maintained to a very high standard, with accurate diagrams, detailed examples and full exercises aiding understanding and progress.
99. Accommodation is adequate though the department lacks a suite of rooms large enough to accommodate all the teaching. The use of temporary classrooms affects standards, since it limits the resources that can be used to support teaching. Teachers’ qualifications and experience are satisfactory but the absence of a second in charge of the department and the fact that some teachers have whole-school responsibilities limit the development of the subject.
100. The department works well together and there is a strong commitment to raising standards. Leadership and management are good, providing clear educational direction and support. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and standards of attainment have improved. Aspects that require further attention include the addition of ICT and a policy for literacy into the scheme of work. Pupils’ performance needs to be monitored, particularly the standards reached by girls, and teaching methods need to be evaluated, with opportunities developed to share good practice within the department.

SCIENCE

101. Standards in the 2000 national tests for 14-year-old pupils were well above both national averages and those of similar schools. Pupils achieved very well, especially higher attaining pupils, and there were no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. This high standard has been maintained over several years. At GCSE, the picture is similar. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades was well above both national averages and those of similar schools. Higher attaining pupils, including those who took 3 separate science GCSEs, achieved particularly well. Overall, boys and girls achieved equally well, although significantly more boys took 3 separate science

GCSEs than girls did. Inspection evidence confirms that these standards are being maintained throughout and particularly so for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively so that they make good progress. Both boys and girls achieve very well because teachers ensure they are equally engaged in lessons.

102. The majority of pupils acquire a very good understanding of key principles across all the disciplines of science and many apply their learning to speculate and to explain. Their teachers' very good subject knowledge is a major contributory factor to these high standards. They introduce new models and theories clearly. Class discussions are often very effective because teachers choose examples that bring the science to life as they develop key ideas with pupils. In a demanding Year 9 lesson about chemical bonding, the teacher discussed the nature of bonds using well-chosen examples of simple substances. Pupils were challenged to draw on their very good knowledge of atomic structure to speculate about the structure of other, more complex materials and to discuss their likely properties. They responded very well to these high expectations with some excellently reasoned answers.
103. Pupils' skills of enquiry are generally developed very well as they progress through the school. Pupils from Year 7 learn to use routine laboratory equipment safely, they observe, measure and record carefully and can plan fair tests well to investigate questions they have posed. Occasionally, younger pupils' strategies for their investigations become confused when they do not undertake a trial experiment to explore the most important variables first and do not write their questions for investigation clearly as part of their plan. Older pupils acquire an excellent understanding of error in experiments. Through some excellent teaching, some higher attaining Year 10 pupils considered the limits of accurate measurement and their effect on errors. They measured the weight of a metre rule using a balancing technique. Pupils contrasted a single measure chosen to minimise error with a graphical method for averaging several measures. As a result, these pupils learned how to take account of error in deciding on their practical strategy and in tempering their conclusions.
104. Pupils apply many aspects of numeracy very well in their science. For example, by Year 11, higher attaining pupils calculate probability in inherited disease, apply algebra well in physics and calculate chemical formulas from experimental evidence. While pupils assimilate and use scientific vocabulary very well, other aspects of pupils' literacy, such as the use of extended writing for a range of purposes and audiences, are developed less well, especially where worksheets containing too many sentence completion tasks are used. Pupils sometimes use computers in their science, for example, to process information using spreadsheets and databases. However, there are insufficient opportunities provided, especially to gather data in experiments with data-loggers. This is partly because there are few up-to-date computers within the science department and teachers rely mainly on access to computers elsewhere in the school.
105. Pupils like science. They have very positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is very good. Most pupils sustain their concentration throughout lessons. Many are eager to respond to their teacher's questions and they listen attentively to the views of other pupils. Many practical sessions feature some very mature discussions between pupils about their work. In one Year 11 class, pupils who were absent in the previous lesson were very well tutored by others in the class during a practical task so that they were able to understand and take a full part in the next stage of their learning. Pupils are also encouraged to find out for themselves. A Year 7 middle ability class learning about elements and compounds used the school's library to very good effect in preparing their presentations on the features of an element each had researched.
106. Teaching throughout is very good and for higher attaining pupils, it is sometimes excellent. Teachers create a very good climate for learning, presenting demanding lessons, expecting high standards and supporting and encouraging their pupils to succeed. Relationships throughout are excellent. Learning objectives for lessons are clear and usually shared with pupils. Lessons begin very well with whole class discussions to elicit from pupils what they know. Teachers use open questions well to challenge pupils to think, to explain and to make connections. Occasionally, opportunities for pupils to draw on their knowledge to make predictions are missed. For example, Year 9 pupils investigating the energy changes accompanying chemical reactions, could have drawn on their prior

knowledge of the different reactivity of metals to make some predictions and to explain their observations. Resources and time are used very well as when a Year 7 class observed and recorded common features of some carefully chosen specimens of invertebrates, contrasting these with the odd one out. Class discussions are sharply focussed and well paced. For example, lower attaining Year 8 pupils discussed the features of a range of bird feathers they were examining, including using a viewing magnifier linked to a television monitor. They quickly linked features of the feathers with their various functions and progressed very well in their understanding of how animals adapt to their environment. Occasionally, teachers extend whole class discussions for too long a period without checking pupils' understanding sufficiently so that a passive minority can be left behind. Lessons are generally structured well but few teachers close their lessons with a plenary session to summarise the key points learned with their pupils. Teachers set a variety of appropriate homework that effectively extends learning from the lesson. Marking of pupils' work is regular and provides correction of errors, good use of praise and a clear indication of the quality of the work.

107. Since the last inspection, science standards have improved because teaching has improved. Teaching and pupils' progress is now monitored well. However, information technology in science, a weakness identified in the last inspection, is still under utilised and it remains a priority for development.
108. The department is led well by a very experienced head of science, ably supported by his deputy. The department's aims, values and priorities are consistent with those of the school and day to day management is effective. The strategic direction of the department could be improved if annual reviews of the department's effectiveness encompass a more systematic analysis of past standards to ensure all pupils benefit and to guide appropriate areas for development. Technicians are making an excellent contribution to standards in science, especially to pupils' investigative science. Most of the department's laboratories support the teaching of science well, and two that are poor are shortly being refurbished. However they are barely adequate in number to accommodate all the classes taught.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Standards attained by 14-year olds in 2000 were well above average with almost nine out of ten pupils at or above the expected standard for their age. Although most of the work seen during the inspection was in the early exploratory stages of projects, the quality of the designs being produced and the evidence of earlier projects point to a continuing high standard of attainment. Pupils' achievements are very good in relation to their prior attainment. Particular strengths shown by 11 to 14 year-old pupils include their use of pattern and design and a good understanding of the visual language. Pupils draw accurately from observation and the best work shows good control of shape, line and tone. Pupils show good compositional skills. Year 8 pupils, for example, created some very complex designs of a high standard for a painting stimulated by classical Indian music. Pupils make imaginative use of the school environment as a subject for their screen print designs.
110. By the age of 16, pupils' standards in art and design are also well above average and represent very good achievement. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, 70 per cent of pupils attained the higher A* to C grades which was slightly above the national average. In the previous two years the proportion of pupils attaining these grades was well above the national average and evidence of the work of the current Year 11 pupils suggests a return to these high standards. The dip in examination achievements may be attributed to a break in continuity due to staff changes midway through the course. Particular strengths in the work of 14 to 16 year-olds include their ability to select and combine images to create their own complex designs. These often show a strong sense of composition, as shown in the work of Year 10 pupils who visited Bosham harbour and turned their sketches and photographs into decorative designs for printmaking. A wide range of materials and methods are used very effectively by Year 11 pupils to create striking sculptures based on natural forms. These show a very good, and sometimes excellent, use of colour, texture and form, with a very high quality of finished detail. In GCSE examinations, girls perform better than boys overall, to an extent very similar to that found nationally. Work of the highest standard however is seen from both boys and girls.

111. Teaching is good overall and in Years 7 to 9 it is often very good. In Years 7 to 9 teaching typically includes very good quality planning and preparation, which gives pupils the support they need to work independently. High expectations of behaviour result in all pupils concentrating on their work. Teachers are aware of the particular needs of individual pupils and modify their language and tone of delivery so that pupils of all abilities understand and gain new knowledge and skills. However, in classes with a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, lessons occasionally don't offer enough challenge to the higher attaining pupils. Overall, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. The quality of teaching in Years 10 and 11 is also good. Very good individual support is given to pupils that challenges their ideas and leads them to consider alternative approaches. The teachers' good knowledge of the subject is revealed in detailed lesson introductions, from which most pupils gain in knowledge and understanding. Sometimes, however, too much information is given at one time for some pupils to cope with. A successful feature across the whole age range, which is particularly supportive for lower attaining pupils, is the consistent, organised approach to making art. Pupils learn to collect, select and combine images and ideas and to experiment with different materials and methods of using them before creating their final piece of work. There are few opportunities, however, for sustained drawing and painting from observation, which would present a suitable challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The study of artists' work and of art from other cultures is included in the planning for each project but the depth of study is insufficient and pupils retain little of the information they discover.
112. The teaching of literacy skills is satisfactory through speaking and listening activities, recording of projects in pupils' resource books and in the display of key words in the studios. The department makes satisfactory use of ICT. Staff and pupils are able to find examples of artists' work using the Internet or CD-ROMs but the department does not have the facilities to teach ICT skills effectively. The accommodation is good but on the few occasions when three classes are timetabled simultaneously, one class is taught in a non-specialist room and this affects standards by restricting the range of activities.
113. The art department has made good progress since the last inspection in raising standards and in introducing a more systematic approach to projects that encourages exploration of different materials and techniques. A mainstay of the department is the leadership and support offered by the experienced and well-established head of department to the relatively new members of staff. All the teachers are strongly committed to the continuing development and success of art within the school. They regularly provide opportunities at lunchtimes and after school for pupils to continue their coursework or develop their own projects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Standards in GCSE examinations are above average overall. Pupils choose between a full or short GCSE course in design and technology. In the full courses in food technology and resistant materials standards are well above average. Pupils taking short courses do less well than those taking full courses. In the short courses in resistant materials and graphics standards are below average. Girls outperform boys, though both girls' and boys' results are above the national average for their gender. Pupils achieve well, but their results in design and technology are generally lower than in their other GCSE subjects because the time allocated to the subject is rather low and some areas of the curriculum are not covered in sufficient depth.
115. By the end of Year 9, in work seen, standards are above average in all material areas, with a significant minority of pupils attaining well above average. Most pupils have a good understanding of the design process. Their graphical communication skills are good and, in the case of higher attaining pupils, very good. Girls tend to be more meticulous in their approach to research and design work than boys, though no more so than in most schools. Lower attaining pupils are hesitant and unsure of the correct terminology when explaining their ideas and when describing the processes involved. Most pupils show good skills in using tools, utensils and mechanical equipment to shape and produce their products. Pupils' experience of mechanisms, pneumatics and

the use of computer aided design and manufacturing equipment is underdeveloped. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, show good interest levels in their work and their achievement is good in relation to their prior attainment.

116. By the end of Year 11, in work seen, standards are above average overall. Pupils' achievements are good in comparison to their attainment at the end of Year 9. Standards in graphic products and food technology are well above average. The standard of graphical communication in most pupils' coursework is good; in some of the work produced by higher attaining pupils it is excellent. They use a somewhat narrow range of graphical skills, but their techniques are well crafted. The design process is well understood and firmly embedded in all design projects. Pupils are able to explain their ideas confidently, with higher attainers confidently using the correct terminology. A minority of lower attainers do not readily use technical vocabulary when describing their work. In food technology pupils successfully develop a good understanding of the nutritive, sensory and physical properties of food. The use of a computer by pupils to design and then to make some elements of design work is underdeveloped.
117. Teaching is very good. As a result learning is very good in the great majority of lessons. Pupils' achievements are restricted, however, by the low time allocation for the subject, and the resulting limitations in the curriculum. Teachers use a good range of examples to guide and support pupils with their learning. Teaching methods successfully enable most pupils to improve and develop their skills in designing and making. Design worksheets provide clear guidelines for projects, and these include extension tasks that provide effective challenges for higher attaining pupils. However, some worksheets are not sufficiently wide-ranging to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment. Teachers are successful in motivating pupils and clear communication ensures pupils are aware of what they are required to do in their projects. This leads to good progress in most lessons. In many lessons good humour prevails and an atmosphere conducive to positive learning is established. The great majority of pupils respond well and show very good behaviour in all circumstances. Assessment procedures enable teachers to monitor and support pupils' progress effectively towards their GCSE and National Curriculum targets. However pupils are not always sure what National Curriculum level they are working towards in Years 7 to 9. Homework is set regularly and this effectively extends the limited curriculum time. The development of literacy skills, particularly the technical language of the subject, is not fully supported in all design areas. Some classes are unusually large for a practical subject and this reduces the amount of individual support and attention teachers are able to provide. This affects standards and raises some concern about safety when large numbers are present. Technical support is very good and provides an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning, including individual support on tasks. There is, however, insufficient technical support time in the food technology area.
118. Good leadership provides a clear educational direction in both resistant materials and food technology. The subject leaders have efficiently managed the many changes to design and technology in the past few years and have planned effectively to deliver most of the requirements of the new National Curriculum. The subjects are housed on separate sites but manage to promote a satisfactory sense of corporate identity for design and technology. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Effective management and very good teaching have led to an improvement in standards. Accommodation has been greatly improved, although one food room has inadequate resources for cooking. However, the time allocation for the subject is below the national average and this affects standards. This lack of time restricts the in-depth study of some areas of the National Curriculum, in particular mechanisms, pneumatics, control technology and textiles.

GEOGRAPHY

119. Pupils' attainment at age 14 is well above average both in teachers' National Curriculum assessments and in work seen during the inspection. Standards are also well above average at GCSE. Results have been well above average over the last four years, and similar standards are being reached by pupils in the current Year 11. Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 in relation to

their attainment on entry, and also in Years 10 and 11 in comparison with the standards they achieved at the end of Year 9.

120. Pupils' very good achievement throughout their time in school results in very good geographical knowledge, understanding and skills, which they use very effectively in their work. From Year 7 onwards, pupils demonstrate a mature grasp of key points and issues. They become very confident in using geographical terms, in providing clear explanation, and in sustained and substantiated argument. This was well illustrated in a Year 8 lesson where pupils engaged in mature and well-informed debate about the impact of tourism on the Italian Alps. Pupils have very good investigative skills and their written work shows detailed research, accurate diagrams and maps, well-structured extended writing, and in Years 10 and 11 especially, very good application of ICT.
121. In Years 10 and 11, the higher attaining pupils reach very high standards. Their very good knowledge, understanding and skills are used very effectively in investigation and problem solving. They ask questions, form hypotheses, test predictions and draw well-substantiated conclusions. They have a very good understanding, for example, of the impact of volcanic eruption on different types of economic development. They make use of their very good background knowledge and their ability to cross-reference this with scientific knowledge. Good numeracy skills are applied well in calculation, measurement and data interpretation. GCSE coursework is of very high quality, especially that of higher attaining pupils, which reflects very good knowledge, understanding and skilled use of ICT. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve very well. They become competent in a range of geographical skills and their knowledge and understanding are sound but sometimes lack depth. Their coursework sometimes shows gaps in research and explanation. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
122. Pupils' very high levels of motivation, interest and initiative, together with the very good relationships and behaviour in lessons, are major factors in promoting learning and achievement. Achievement is also strongly promoted by teaching which is very good overall. During the inspection teaching was judged to be good or better in all but two lessons where it was satisfactory. In two of the 11 lessons seen teaching was excellent and in three it was very good. Teaching is strongest in Years 10 and 11.
123. Pupils' learning is very well supported by the skilful sharing of the teachers' very good subject expertise, and their interest in geography is inspired by the teachers' enthusiasm for their subject. Lessons are very well planned to provide thorough explanation and interpretation of subject matter, and to facilitate individual support and guidance. Learning is strongly promoted in the great majority of lessons by a brisk and purposeful approach. Pupils achieve well because of appropriately high expectations, which are accompanied by positive and encouraging feedback. The building on to pupils' earlier learning and wider experiences boosts their confidence as learners. Pupils are enabled to achieve high standards by a constant challenge to work accurately as geographers. Geographical skills are taught very well, and a good range of methods are used very effectively to promote learning of a very high order. For example, video films are used especially well to promote understanding, and pupils' development of knowledge, understanding and skills is significantly enhanced by the excellent use made of ICT.
124. Questioning is used well to recall earlier learning and at best, to challenge and develop thinking. There are good instances where pupils are encouraged to reflect on the significance of their work for themselves. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to reflect on the human tragedy caused by earthquakes, especially in poorer areas, and this resulted in good support for their spiritual, moral and cultural development.
125. In all lessons learning is strongly supported by good classroom relationships. Humour, underpinned by rigour, often fosters very good learning. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve very well because teachers have appropriately high expectations and match work well to their learning requirements. The development of both literacy and numeracy skills are well supported through a strong emphasis on their importance. Homework is valuable in advancing knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of geographical skills is further enhanced

by very good opportunities for pupils to apply them practically for a specific purpose. A good example of this was in a survey of local residents and businesses which was commissioned by the local council in preparation for a pedestrianisation scheme.

126. Occasionally pupils' learning is slowed because not enough is asked of them. At times, for example, greater challenge could be provided if pupils were asked to summarise lesson gains instead of this being done by the teacher. In many lessons there is too little opportunity for pupils to take initiative through discussion in pairs or groups and in the presentation of their findings. In Years 7 to 9 too much emphasis on the completion of a series of tasks results at times in low levels of interest and pupils becoming restless and bored.
127. Pupils' progress is monitored through regular marking and clear record-keeping. However marking is insufficiently detailed in providing constructive guidance for improvement, especially in Years 7 to 9.
128. The department is very well led and managed. The clear vision and direction provided for the work in geography promotes high standards, and very effective teaching and learning. The performance of the department is well monitored and kept under systematic review. Systematic procedures are being developed to assess and track pupils' achievement throughout their time in the school. The good support for teachers and clear lines of communication and consultation, result in consistency and good practice across the department. Development planning is clearly focused and strategic. Resources including the teaching accommodation are used well to support and enhance learning. Excellent use is made of ICT. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection in most areas of its work. The marking of pupils' work has improved but guidance to help pupils to improve their standards especially in Years 7 to 9 is still inconsistent.

HISTORY

129. Standards in Years 7 to 9 are well above average, both in teachers' National Curriculum assessments and in work seen during the inspection. Standards in GCSE are also well above average. The proportion gaining grades A* to C has been well above average for the last three years and the proportion gaining A* and A grades consistently above average. For the last two years girls have attained better results than boys, though boys' results are still above average. Work seen in the inspection was of a similar standard. Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 9 in relation to their attainment on entry and also in Years 10 and 11 in comparison with their attainment at the end of Year 9.
130. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a secure understanding of the key features of the time period studied and can select and extract information from a variety of sources in order to build up a body of knowledge. They use this to respond to written and oral questions, and higher attaining pupils confidently explain the factors leading to the rise of National Socialism in Germany and the outbreak of the Second World War. Pupils recognise that events may be viewed from different standpoints, and in their work on the industrial revolution they show understanding of the changes that arise in the lives of different groups within society. Pupils display their understanding of the people from the past in different forms, for example in writing diaries of First World War soldiers, and in poetry reflecting different attitudes towards the War. Written responses to questions are generally accurate and clear, though the responses of some middle and lower attaining pupils are brief and lack development. In projects pupils display good research skills using the Internet and books, and arrange their findings logically.
131. By the end of Year 11 pupils have a secure understanding of the themes they have studied, including the history of medicine and the life and beliefs of the "Plains Indians". They identify factors that contribute to changes in circumstance and can explain the events that arise when two opposing cultures meet, as in the western migration of Europeans in America. Pupils are aware that there are likely to be several different factors contributing to an event and that the effects may be immediate or longer term. They recognise the factors that give rise to change in thinking about medicine and can identify key events in the development of medicine over time. Pupils make their own notes from sources and textbooks and write fluently in response to questions. There is little evidence of pupils'

displaying their skills of discussion and argument in extended writing, but in oral work pupils are encouraged to explain their judgements and higher attaining pupils support their opinions with evidence. Pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress in the development of skills and understanding.

132. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are well motivated and approach lessons with a desire to learn. They work well in groups and are co-operative and willing to learn from each other. An excellent example was observed in a Year 7 class when pupils interviewed each other in order to learn about the roles in society in Ancient Rome. Pupils respond to oral questions well although boys are more responsive than girls in many classes. Unless actively encouraged by teachers, pupils do not generally question or follow their own lines of enquiry. Concentration is good throughout all years and ability levels, and pupils' written work displays a pride in their studies.
133. The quality of teaching is very good for all year groups. Pupils are challenged to think about the information they are acquiring and to use it to explore the causes and effects of events. Lessons are very well planned and good management of time means that on most occasions the lessons close with a period when pupils are led to reflect on what they have learnt. Good use is made of review of the previous lesson through question and response to assist pupils' re-call and to enable them to build upon previous knowledge. Teachers are concerned to involve pupils actively in their learning and at times imaginative teaching methods are used to encourage pupils to develop their understanding. Teachers have a very positive relationship with their pupils and clearly value their work. As a consequence pupils respond well and gain confidence in their abilities. Teachers have high expectations of effort and behaviour and as a result create a very good working environment that supports good progress. Marking is regular and encouraging, and especially in the GCSE groups it points pupils towards improvement. However, self-assessment in order to enable pupils to understand the marking criteria and share responsibility for their own improvement is still being developed. Assessment tasks are clearly laid out, but pupils are not informed of their progress in relation to National Curriculum criteria.
134. The subject is taught in an attractive suite of rooms and display is used effectively to celebrate pupils' achievement and to extend their learning. Models of castles, Tudor rooms and photographs of recent re-enactments of Roman life provide opportunities for pupils to absorb information and provide interest and re-enforcement of earlier work for all year groups. Literacy skills are supported by the display of humorous quotations, key words and by opportunities to read silently and out loud. Pupils are encouraged to use computers to find and present information and for investigation into past events, for example in answering the question "What happened at Kirk O'Field?" Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their interest in history through extra-curricular clubs for history, archaeology and Latin. The subject is taught within the Humanities Faculty and there is a shared ethos for learning throughout the building.
135. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress. Pupils have a greater understanding of change over time and there are more opportunities for pupils to work together and to learn from each other. Boys are still attaining below girls, but they are attaining better than boys nationally. Pupils are provided with more opportunity to use sources as evidence to explain events from the past. Teachers share a commitment to improving standards and as a result there is a willingness to explore new initiatives and ensure continuing good practice.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136. By the end of Year 9, standards in ICT are average overall. Pupils reach standards that are well above average in some aspects of the subject, but due to lack of opportunity, standards are below average in other aspects. The great majority of pupils are well above average in communicating information through word processing, desktop publishing and in handling information from a wide range of electronic sources, including the Internet. Pupils make very good progress in lessons in these areas of the subject. However, other than in short modules of work in ICT lessons, pupils have very little opportunity to develop skills in control technology and measuring, resulting in less than satisfactory progress in these specific strands. Pupils have good skills in using a spreadsheet to

carry out data analysis and to illustrate their findings graphically. The great majority of pupils show good keyboarding skills and use the mouse effectively to select and manipulate menus and functions. Higher attaining pupils use the technical vocabulary of the subject well with lower attainers showing a less secure use of the appropriate technical terminology. In relation to their prior attainment in ICT, pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are good overall. There is little difference in standards reached by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs show considerable interest in their work and make good progress.

137. Standards at the end of Year 11 are broadly average. In Year 10, through the ICT key skills course, the great majority of pupils attain well above average in the skills of communicating and handling information, including good use of sophisticated presentation software. However, pupils have very little opportunity to use computers to control events, to model processes and to measure work in subjects where this normally occurs. As a result, pupils make less than satisfactory progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in these important components of ICT. Due to timetabling difficulties, the pupils who follow the Extended Pathway do not receive their full entitlement in ICT, although opportunities in other subjects compensate in part for this. Pupils' achievements are good overall in relation to the standard they reached at the end of Year 9.
138. ICT is used very effectively in several subjects for word processing, desktop publishing and for handling information. However, there are also some subjects that have yet to outline how ICT is to be used and developed. Geography and the vocational courses make excellent use of ICT; pupils do research from the Internet and from resources that teachers have specifically created for the school's Intranet. English and religious education have also produced ICT resources for the Intranet. In history, pupils are encouraged to use ICT to find and present information. Pupils compose and record their work on computers in music, and older pupils use sophisticated music technology. ICT is used to some degree in science, mathematics, art and design, modern foreign languages and design and technology but in these subjects there is considerable scope for further development. Its use is also under-developed in physical education.
139. Teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good or excellent. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and are very successful in stimulating pupils' interest in the use of the computer. Tasks in handling and communicating information are very well matched to pupils' interests and are well structured, enabling pupils to build effectively on their skills and prior knowledge. Teachers provide high levels of individual support, challenge and guidance, working with pupils at their computers. The system for assessing pupils' progress is effective in the specific ICT lessons but assessment of ICT work in other subjects is less secure. Teaching methods are successful in promoting good learning. As a result, most pupils show good or better interest levels in their work, sustain their concentration spans for appropriate lengths of time and make good or very good progress in lessons. Teaching is successful in promoting very good behaviour in almost every lesson. The very good level of technical support provided ensures that all equipment works effectively and contributes to pupils' learning through individual support when they are working at their computers.
140. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. A substantial investment has been made in improving ICT resources, and this has helped to improve standards of attainment throughout the school. The very effective leadership and management of the subject ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fulfilled. The department has facilitated very good ICT opportunities for pupils in many of their subjects although there remains some underdevelopment in others, especially in relation to control technology and measurement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

141. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 show standards in French to be above average. In the light of work seen during the inspection this appears to be broadly accurate. Standards have been improving over recent years. GCSE results in 2000 were average in French and well above average in German. Results in German have been consistently high over the last three years, whereas there is no clear trend in French. Comparisons with other subjects in 2000 show that

French is one of the subjects that both boys and girls do less well in. In 2000 almost three times as many girls as boys attained the highest grades in French or German.

142. At the end of Year 9, standards in French in work seen during the inspection are above average. The level of accuracy of written work is good for all pupils although for the lower attaining pupils this is mainly copying. Average attaining pupils write well in structured exercises but it is only the highest attaining pupils who can write at length. These pupils use a range of tenses and vocabulary and write in a style appropriate to a GCSE standard. Higher attaining pupils also speak French well, creating meaningful sentences on a range of topics. The majority of pupils respond confidently but more briefly. Pupils' accents are generally good, particularly when they are not reading the words. Listening skills are well developed. All pupils are "tuned-in" to hearing French all the time and as a result understand a wide range of language, both of the topics they are learning and of classroom instruction. Although some creative development work is being done in Year 9 on reading, pupils' reading skills are limited to satisfactory comprehension of the texts in the course books. In German, standards are average but this represents good achievement as pupils only start German in Year 8. The higher attaining pupils understand a wide range of rapid spoken German. All pupils can carry out short spoken exchanges but most need the support of the written word.
143. Pupils' achievements in relation to their previous attainment are good in both languages for pupils in Years 7 to 9. In Year 8 in French there are pupils who are already going beyond a minimal response and showing a pleasure in being creative with the language. Beginners in German in Year 8 develop good accents and many write well. Progress for pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly when teachers expect a lot of them.
144. At the end of Year 11 standards are average in French and above average in German. In French the higher attaining pupils continue to write at length and with accuracy. The written work of the average attaining pupils is less accurate than that of younger year groups. In German the writing of the higher attaining pupils is as impressive as it is in French. The written work of average attaining pupils is marred by errors in basic grammar, such as word order in German. When speaking in either language, the higher attaining pupils make use of their good recall and express themselves well on a range of GCSE topics. Other pupils have to search for vocabulary and are, as a result, less confident speakers. As in the early years, listening is the best developed skill.
145. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 in relation to standards reached at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory overall. Achievements of the highest attaining pupils, both boys and girls, are good. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs at GCSE is satisfactory. There is, however, in both languages a significant minority of pupils of average to lower attainment who are not achieving as well as they could. This is partly as a result of their lack of enthusiasm for languages and partly because teaching does not always provide them with the support they need to be confident language learners.
146. Pupils' attitudes are good overall. Concentration levels are high and behaviour is very good. Both boys and girls respond with enthusiasm and pupils try hard even when work is really challenging. Relationships are very good and pupils work well in pairs. When given the chance to work more independently, or in groups, pupils respond well. There are generally not enough opportunities for pupils to do this in language lessons. Occasionally pupils' response to the lessons is satisfactory rather than good and they need coaxing to participate.
147. The quality of teaching overall is good. It is slightly better in Years 7 to 9, where there is a higher proportion of teaching which is good or very good. This is also true in the quality of learning. Management of pupils is very good. Teachers are calm and consistent in their approach. Teachers are confident speakers of French and German and provide good models for their pupils. They also challenge pupils well to listen for extended periods, which leads to good skills. Planning is good. In the best lessons objectives are set not just for the lesson but for each activity. These are then shared with pupils and progress is reviewed at the end. This approach motivates pupils. The vast majority of lessons are well structured and provide ample opportunity for pupils to hear and practise before they are asked to speak. Teachers vary their approaches well and there is good use of

movement, gesture and visual aids to help younger and lower attaining pupils remember vocabulary. A particularly good example of this was a lesson for lower attaining pupils in Year 7 where the teacher split up new and difficult words into sounds which pupils could master, relating them to familiar sounds in their own language. Games are also used well to support learning and teachers make good use of a range of high quality resources in the classroom. There has been good development work done on the use of ICT though not all teachers use computers consistently yet. Marking is generally good but is not consistent throughout the department. Some teachers provide a lot of detailed and helpful feedback relating the work in Years 7 to 9 to National Curriculum levels. Others mark regularly but in much less detail. Marking in Years 10 and 11 is consistently useful. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good or better, there is rather too much teacher talk and too few challenges to pupils to speak in any extended way. Occasionally teachers assume too much of pupils and move on before the pupils are ready. There is no departmental approach to the teaching of literacy or numeracy.

148. A high level of consistency in lesson planning is ensured by a wealth of resource files in every classroom. There is good provision for pupils who learn both French and German throughout the school although the reduction in time for each language means that some skills, such as independent reading, are not as well developed as they should be. There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular provision, including residential visits, exchanges and the opportunity for Year 11 pupils to do work experience in Europe. Progress has been made on systems for assessing pupils' work, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and the head of department is aware of the need for a greater standardisation of pupils' work at the end of Year 9. Leadership and management of the department are good. The level of consistency of approach and amount of professional dialogue indicate a shared commitment to improve. The team is hard working and there is successful delegation. There is a need for a more formal and regular monitoring of all aspects of the work of the department. Progress overall since the last inspection is satisfactory.

MUSIC

149. Standards at the end of Year 9 are above average and represent good achievement. GCSE examination results in 2000 were well above average with 90% of candidates gaining A* to C grades. This was an improvement on the previous year and pupils' achievements were very good, due to sustained learning and effective teaching taking place. Work seen during the inspection was of a similarly high standard.
150. By the end of Year 9 pupils reach above average standards in skills and understanding. Many keyboard compositions are musically interesting and pupils confidently describe what has been done. Average and higher attaining pupils perform with confidence and control and some use minor keys to give a soulful effect to their compositions. Some lower attaining pupils lack co-ordination and find it difficult to maintain a steady tempo. Year 8 pupils understand variation from using, for example, skipping melodic patterns over backing drones to decorate the theme. Year 9 pupils know about concordant and discordant intervals and compose contrasting sections to depict light and darkness, calm and storm. They listen carefully to short Beethoven extracts and follow teacher demonstrations on the piano to gain stimulus for their work. The least able pupils make good progress using basic ideas and form. Average and higher attaining pupils compose more complex pieces and perform them with style and accuracy. Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 can use computer programmes to edit and record their work. In the work observed there was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
151. By the end of Year 11 pupils reach standards that are well above average. They understand historical developments in music and compose in a wide range of styles from classical rondos to eighties dance form. Year 11 pupils know the history of different types of vocal music, such as the development of the counter tenor voice. Their compositions and knowledge of musical history show that thorough learning has taken place. They use sophisticated music technology such as multi-tracking and sequencing to develop advanced compositions.

152. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall. Pupils are encouraged and motivated by enthusiastic teaching. They are keen and respond well to their teachers. Both music teachers have very good subject knowledge which supports a breadth of study across the musical skills of performing, composing, appraising and listening. Challenging lessons inspire and motivate pupils as, for example, when teachers combined two Year 7 classes for their regular singing lesson. Careful attention to detail such as good diction, tone quality and posture promoted a high standard of response that brought the singing and chanting to life. Behaviour is good because of capable classroom management and careful planning of lessons. Rare instances of inattention are soon checked and pupils are quickly brought back on task. Pupils put creative effort into their work. In Years 10 and 11 pupils are encouraged to work independently. Older pupils have good dialogue with teachers and talk intelligently about their work. Searching questions make pupils think and justify their work as, for example, in a Year 10 lesson where pupils compared the Dorian mode and blues scale. Occasionally not enough time is left at the end of lessons for appraisal and summing up. Work is marked regularly but teacher comments do not always give a focus for future work. Teaching is aimed at inclusiveness and the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, show commitment and make good progress.
153. Pupils work well together and their attitudes to music are very positive. When pupils perform to the class, other pupils listen well and there is little evidence of negative behaviour. Pupils work very well in pairs on keyboards and sensibly discuss ways of tackling their work. Movement around the room is purposeful, with instruments and equipment handled carefully. Pupils are trusted to work productively in the practice rooms.
154. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have risen and good progress has been made in the use of ICT in music. Although there are only four computers in each teaching room, a number of pupils in each lesson were observed using computers to compose, arrange and record their work. The assessment system is clear and understood by most pupils but now needs to be aligned to the new National Curriculum levels for music.
155. The music department is well led and managed. Accommodation and resources are very good with two large, airy teaching rooms and six practice rooms. Although the storeroom is large there is still not enough space to accommodate all the instruments and equipment. The school has a large jazz band which performs to a very high standard with occasional concerts in the school and the community. The school also runs an effective orchestra, various ensembles and a music technology club. More than 150 pupils play instruments and many support the extra-curricular activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

156. All pupils follow a core curriculum in physical education and some pupils also take a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11. Standards in the core course at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are average, with a number of pupils attaining above that level. Results of pupils taking GCSE physical education are well above average. Numbers taking the examination are increasing each year; girls attain as well as boys and pupils are physically and intellectually challenged.
157. In Years 7 to 11 pupils' attainment reflects the whole ability range. In Years 7 to 9, lessons were observed in dance, badminton, netball, short tennis, basketball and volleyball. Pupils make good progress and achievement is good. At the beginning of Year 7 pupils have a limited movement vocabulary and basic ball-handling skills. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of positional play and rules. They perform sending and receiving skills with increasing confidence and apply them in the major competitive games. Boys in Year 9 talk knowledgeably about the game of rugby and, in Year 8 badminton, pupils are beginning to keep up a rally using a range of shots with increasing control. A number of higher attaining pupils are beginning to anticipate moves to outwit their opponent. In Year 7 dance, pupils compose, perform and appreciate simple dance sequences. They respond well to the visual images and rhythm of the music.
158. By the end of Year 11, pupils increase their knowledge, understanding and performance skills in a range of activities. Achievement is good overall, but in the core programme, a minority of pupils who only have one lesson a week do not achieve as well as other pupils. Achievement of pupils studying GCSE is very good. The higher attaining pupils in the examination groups and the core lessons develop and apply more advanced skills and techniques and apply them into increasingly demanding situations. They are able to observe and evaluate their performance and that of others, identifying areas for improvement using technical language. In Year 10 trampolining, the GCSE pupils perform complex routines linking moves together fluently with increasing control and clarity of body shape. They are willing to respond to further challenges attempting forward somersaults. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the physical education programme and make good progress.
159. All pupils respond well to the high expectations demanded of them in standards of clothing, behaviour and attitudes to work. Participation in physical education is very high. Pupils enjoy their lessons, are highly motivated and are willing to be physically active. This is due to the enthusiasm and positive role models of the teachers who promote an active healthy lifestyle. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, fostering confidence, trust, respect and building pupils' self-esteem. For example, in trampolining, pupils performing forward somersaults trusted the teacher's support and this enabled them to respond to the challenge. As pupils move through the school they develop very good social and co-operative skills, with a partner, in group work and in team play. In competitive team play, pupils demonstrate fair play, good sporting behaviour and honest competition. In all years pupils handle and use specialist equipment safely, are aware of their own and others safety and use the facilities with due care and attention.
160. Teaching and learning are good, with some very good teaching observed in GCSE theory and core curriculum trampolining. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and a good balance of activities. The management and organisation of pupils are very good. Teachers make good use of quality demonstrations and questioning, improving pupils' observation and performance skills. In GCSE theory lessons, effective questioning increases pupils' knowledge and understanding of the factors other than fitness which affect performance, and enables pupils to use appropriate technical language. Praise and encouragement increase pupils' confidence; evaluative feedback identifies areas for improvement and reinforces learning. Teaching in games is often teacher-directed, with insufficient opportunities for pupils to be responsible for their own learning and practices are not always planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The use of learning resources, literacy, numeracy and ICT is underdeveloped.

161. Physical education provides a wide range of activities in the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities. All pupils learn to swim, hence developing a life skill and participating in health-related exercise. The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 has an emphasis on games, especially competitive games, reducing the amount of time spent on gymnastics and dance. In the Year 10 and 11 core curriculum, pupils do not have the opportunity to opt for and study two areas of activity in depth and pupils following the Extended Pathway do not have access to the same curriculum. GCSE is a popular and highly successful course but there are no opportunities in the core to study accredited vocational qualifications. The provision of extra-curricular recreational and sporting provision is very good and complements and extends the curriculum. Pupils have extensive opportunities and represent the school in a range of competitive sports, with a number of talented pupils selected to play locally and regionally. The school achieves continuous success in a number of sports, especially in rugby, football, netball and athletics. Dance makes a positive contribution to the school with the highly successful integrated dance group fostering very positive links with the community.
162. Leadership and management are good. Clear policies reflect the aims of the school. Day to day procedures are efficient and effective. The department works well together as a team; teachers are committed and give generously of their time. The curriculum is well planned, particularly for the examination groups, whose work is carefully monitored. Short-term planning is good, but there is a lack of long-term strategic planning to ensure the department keeps abreast of current issues and trends. A written risk assessment for health and safety is not carried out. The provision of accommodation and specialist equipment is good, but the fence surrounding the swimming pool is a cause for concern.
163. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement, which has raised the quality of teaching and learning in games. Staffing of physical education was an issue in the last report and this has been addressed with the appointment of a part-time female specialist to develop netball and improve the gender balance of staff. The sports hall has been completely refurbished. The floodlit courts have been resurfaced and facilities to play basketball outdoors have been developed. The continued use of the school hall as a gymnasium reduces the amount of time the department can spend on gymnastics and dance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

164. In Years 7 to 9 pupils reach average standards and their achievements are satisfactory in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. In Years 10 and 11 all pupils follow the GCSE syllabus, which considers contemporary moral issues in the light of the teachings of Christianity and Islam. While not all pupils take the examination, the course succeeds in giving focus to pupils' learning and their achievements are good in relation to their prior attainment. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average. In 2000, 76 candidates sat the GCSE short course examination, achieving results that were well above average for both boys and girls, although girls achieved a larger proportion of higher grades.
165. In Years 7 to 9 pupils build up a secure body of knowledge primarily of the Christian Church, and they investigate the main features of other major world faiths. Pupils in Year 8 consider the role of places of worship in the community, for example the work of the Gurdwara, and they gain considerable understanding of the beliefs of others through their visits to the mosque and the cathedral. Pupils undertake independent research into a Christian denomination of their choice, and higher attaining pupils demonstrate an understanding of the significant differences between denominations. Pupils produce project work that reflects good effort and understanding, often including first-hand research and interviews. They have a basic understanding of the historical events that led to the divisions within the Church today and they display this understanding in project work concerning the period of the Reformation. Pupils understand some of the different types of writing in the Bible and most demonstrate sensitivity and thought in their own composition of a psalm. Pupils have an understanding of the life of Jesus and consider the events of the crucifixion and the resurrection. They have a simple understanding of the link between this and the celebration of the mass in church today. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with people from the early days of Christianity, for example the feelings of Mary Magdalene.

166. In Years 10 and 11 pupils recognise that religious belief has a significant bearing on the values of believers and the more thoughtful pupils consider the importance of ritual in the lives of individuals. Pupils reflect upon religious concepts such as the sanctity of life and they apply this understanding to contemporary issues, for example the morality of euthanasia. They identify Christian teaching that supports particular views and relate these to people's values, for example when considering relationships outside marriage. They are aware that people may hold different beliefs and opinions from themselves, and that these may also be valid. The attainment of Year 10 pupils who are studying the full GCSE course is well above average. They study the importance of religious belief in forming codes of behaviour and the consequences of such belief when responding to difficult choices, for example the question of abortion. Their responses are thoughtful and show evidence of questioning and evaluation.
167. The attitude of the great majority of pupils towards the study of religion is satisfactory and their behaviour is good. There is some reluctance on the part of a small minority of pupils to be seen to demonstrate interest or to become too involved, and on occasion this has a limiting effect upon the depth of study by others in the class. Despite this, relationships within the classroom on the whole are very good. Pupils listen to each other with courtesy and respect each other's right to their opinion. When pupils are involved in group work or discussion they are enthusiastic and supportive, producing group projects that are informative and clear. Written work however is at times left unfinished and pupils do not generally display a commitment to strive to produce their best work other than on special projects.
168. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work hard to challenge pupils' pre-conceptions and in the best lessons the use of imaginative teaching methods engages pupils and stimulates them to think more deeply. Pupils are encouraged to think independently and they share their ideas with the class because teachers ensure that opinions are valued and listened to. High expectations of behaviour and very good management of pupils result in lessons which are orderly and proceed at a good pace. Good lesson planning usually includes clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson, and a closing session in which pupils reflect upon what they have learnt. Group and paired work are used extensively and as a result pupils learn from each other and develop good social skills. Assessment of pupils' work is still undeveloped and there is little evidence gathered that would enable teachers to measure the level of progress made in the key skills of religious education. Marking is encouraging, but is not consistent from group to group.
169. The department is developing the use of computers for research and the presentation of work. Pupils respond positively, as in a Year 9 class where pupils took a virtual reality tour around places of worship. As a consequence, pupils develop good research skills and growing confidence in the use of technology. The commitment of teachers is most evident in the voluntary after school lessons that enable pupils in Year 10 to follow the full GCSE course. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and effort as, for example, in their preparation of high quality computer-aided presentations.
170. Teachers seek to work in collaboration with other departments. Resources are adequate, but the range of Christian artefacts and library books needs to be wider to support the extensive study of Christianity. There are insufficient textbooks for use by the older pupils when two groups require them, and no books for pupils to use at home. This reduces the range of home study and the opportunities for pupils to extend their understanding of religious practices.
171. Since the last inspection there has been very good progress. Religious education is now taught as a discrete subject with a weekly lesson that enables greater continuity and progression. Pupils in Year 11 now have the chance to take GCSE and as a result standards of attainment are rising. Lessons are taught by specified teachers who teach in rooms where pupils' achievements are celebrated by attractive displays. Attitudes towards the study of religious education have improved and the greater use of written work supports a more academic approach to the subject.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

172. Standards in the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses at age 16 are well above average in Business Studies and above average in the Health and Social Care course. These results represent very good levels of achievement and the constant drive towards higher level accreditation is to the credit of the school. There are no differences in achievement between students of different gender or ethnic origin.
173. In the Business Studies GNVQ in 2000, 83% of students passed the course and 67% achieved the higher levels of distinction and merit. In the Health and Social Care course, 93% passed and 36% achieved distinction or merit. These results were an improvement on previous years both in terms of higher level achievement and in terms of student retention. In 1998 and 1999 a significant number of students failed to complete the course and of those who did complete, several gained only unit accreditation and not the full GNVQ. Retention, unit accreditation and the need to reach higher levels of accreditation are all issues that have been successfully addressed by the school.
174. Results in the RSA Initial Awards – Environmental Studies, Computer Graphics and Agricultural Studies – have been consistently high over the years. Students on these courses gain not only in terms of viable, appropriate accreditation but they also acquire valuable personal development skills. Students become independent learners and learn how to work well as part of a team. Good examples of this, observed during the inspection, are the path laying, landscaping and woodland furniture construction activities that form part of the Agricultural Studies course. All the RSA Initial Awards have realistic and appropriate vocational context.
175. In work seen during the inspection, students attain standards above the level expected of 16 year-olds nationally. They have a good knowledge of the topics that they are studying and they all have a better understanding than is expected for their age. This applies to students following both the GNVQ Part One and the RSA Initial Award courses.
176. Students benefit from very good teaching, which is well informed and well organised. Vocational teachers bring a wealth of experience into the classroom, leading to confident teaching which earns students' respect. Students develop skills of enquiry, analysis and presentation to a good level, making very good use of ICT in all of these. Because of the student-centred approach adopted by the majority of teachers, students become increasingly self-reliant in the organisation of their work. They show initiative in the acquisition of evidence and they take appropriate responsibility for their own evidence. Teachers' knowledge, understanding, planning, expectations and management of students are of the highest quality. Vocational students behave very well in lessons. They have positive attitudes and are courteous and respectful of other students, visitors and staff. They form constructive working relationships and respect each other's feelings, values and beliefs. Students are self-motivated, they enjoy their work and have a clear awareness of their performance and potential. The assessment of their work by teachers is both thorough and accurate. Assessors provide feedback to students about grading criteria and they carry out assessment of grades in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body. Internal verification systems are secure and consistent and meet all GNVQ specifications.
177. The Vocational Pathway is a well designed course developed for students who will be seeking training for employment after leaving school. These students definitely benefit from this vocationally orientated curriculum. The residential component of the course is equally significant, and is well designed to combine investigation of leisure and tourism in the Swanage area with problem-solving challenges. It successfully develops the key skills of working in teams, problem-solving and communication.
178. There was no vocational report at the time of the last inspection but since that time there has been a growth in vocational courses within the school for students in Years 10 and 11. Vocational education is very well led and managed by a head of department who provides clear educational direction for the full range of vocational subjects. Staff within the department are very able teachers and all have a shared commitment to improvement. The school is keen to expand the range of courses for Vocational Pathway students. Vocational courses are popular with students and provide a very good

standard of education. They are an important part of school provision and a significant strength of the school.

DRAMA

179. GCSE results in drama have improved significantly over the last three years. They were well above average for A* to C grades in 1999 and above average for both A* to C and A* to G grades in 2000. In work seen during this inspection standards of attainment are well above average at the age of 14 and above average at age 16. Standards are well above average overall as a result of the quality of teaching, which is consistently good or very good and occasionally excellent.
180. The younger pupils quickly learn to work with concentration and focus, and they develop physical control and self-control through exercises, role-play, improvisation and simulations. They understand and can incorporate techniques such as “freeze frames” and “thought tracking” in their work. By Year 9 they are able to take account of the presence of an audience and use space effectively. They can evaluate their own and others’ work. In Years 10 and 11 pupils consolidate these skills and become confident in working together as a group or with different members of the group. They become increasingly independent learners, capable of managing their individual presentations whether in performance, stage management, lighting or costume. They accept suggestions from each other and approach their drama work in a mature, confident and thoughtful manner. Throughout the age range speaking and listening skills are cultivated, and pupils often speak fluently and convincingly both in role and when involved in discussion or responding to questions.
181. Pupils’ attitudes to learning are very good. They enjoy their drama work and respond with enthusiasm and consistent interest to its challenges. Only once were some pupils observed passively watching as opposed to being actively involved. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly successfully integrated into drama classes and correspondingly have very good attitudes and make equally good progress.
182. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject, actively involve pupils through a variety of stimulating and challenging tasks, and expect and achieve high standards. They use questioning very effectively to make pupils think about what an audience will see as they perform, for example, or the significance of costume in illustrating character. They encourage pupils to evaluate their own and others’ work, and this habitual critical and supportive analysis contributes significantly to pupils’ progress. One excellent lesson epitomised what high quality teaching could achieve. A Year 9 class devised a performance from improvisation of the reactions of local people to the idea of a rock concert in their village. Within the space of a lesson pupils moved from preparation to creation of an authentic “public meeting”, a performance largely sustained by the pupils themselves with little intervention from the teacher who had made this possible.
183. Drama makes a significant contribution to the life of the school. Leadership is very good, and the team’s quality guarantees continued high standards of attainment by the pupils.