

INSPECTION REPORT

ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Weymouth

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113896

Headteacher: Mr. T P Balmforth

Reporting inspector: D. Pittman
16976

Dates of inspection: 14th – 18th January 2002

Inspection number: 190073

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Canon Keith Hugo
Date of previous inspection:	21 st October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16976	Mr. D. Pittman	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements.</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9724	Ms. B. Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
28097	Ms. S. Nolan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
3731	Mr. W Robson	Team inspector	English. English as an additional language	
1779	Mr. D Leonard	Team inspector	Science	
1385	Mr. K. Hopkins	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
10053	Ms. J. Simms	Team inspector	Art and design Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20497	Mr. V. Williams	Team inspector	Geography History	
4829	Mr. I. Waters	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
22501	Ms. S. Jones	Team inspector	Music	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

13217	Mr. M. Butterworth	Team inspector	Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

All Saints is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school serving the whole deanery of Weymouth and Portland. It has no predefined feeder schools, although the majority of pupils (75 per cent) come from three junior schools. The school's overall aim is to provide a high quality secondary education in a supportive atmosphere based on Christian values. The school achieved Beacon Status in September 1998. The school is smaller than the national average with 848 pupils on roll (464 girls, 384 boys). Standards of attainment on entry are above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (6.8 per cent) is below the national average. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is above the national average; the majority of these pupils are at the early stage of support. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need (3.0%) is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is low. The school has a LEA-funded Dyslexia Base.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

All Saints is a very good school. It promotes an exceptional sense of community and shared values. Standards are well above average and pupils make good progress. They benefit from good teaching and from the strength of the relationships within the school. The leadership and management of senior staff are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievements are good.
- The school promotes excellent attitudes and relationships.
- Pupils are taught well.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. The quality of the extra-curricular provision is of the same standard.
- The provision for care and the concern for pupils' welfare are very good.
- Leadership and management by staff and governors are strong.
- Parents hold the school in very high regard.

What could be improved

- The standards of attainment in English at the end of Year 9.
- Learning opportunities need strengthening in vocational education.
- The inconsistency of some marking and insufficient use of diagnostic comment.
- A more systematic approach in identifying subject skills for gifted and talented pupils.
- The accommodation provision for physical education is poor.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the previous inspection in 1996. Overall standards of attainment have continued to rise since that time. In the core subjects, at the end of Year 9, there was a dip in attainment until 1998 but subsequently standards in mathematics and science improved significantly. This trend in improvement was not matched in English. A comprehensive

programme of self-review has been instrumental in sustaining the pace of change. The school has introduced an effective performance management programme that successfully supports the monitoring and evaluation of teaching. In consequence there has been a greater emphasis on teaching styles and the sharing of good practices. The overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Assessment procedures are now more rigorous and informative. These data are effectively used to establish individual targets for pupils. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably; this includes resources for hardware, staff and technical support. The subject now has appropriately designated lessons, which are provided in all years from Year 7 to 10; all pupils have the opportunity to take a GCSE short course examination at the end of the course.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	B	C	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In the 2001 national tests for 14 year olds, results were well above the national average. In English attainment was close to the national average but below average in comparison with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics and science was well above average nationally and also in comparison with similar schools. The overall trend in this performance was better than the national picture. The overall standards achieved were above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.

In GCSE examinations, results were well above the national average and well above the performance of similar schools. GCSE results have been consistently above average in recent years, although there was a slight dip in 2000. The trend in GCSE standards has been similar to the national picture. Examination performance in most subjects was significantly above national figures, with particularly high standards being achieved in art, English, geography, religious studies and science. Standards achieved in design and technology and mathematics were not as high as they should be. The school exceeded its overall target for GCSE examination performance by two per cent.

Attainment in lessons at the end of Year 9 is above average in most subjects. It is well above average in mathematics but in line with national expectations for English, music and physical education. Achievement in subjects is predominantly good but it is unsatisfactory in English by the end of Year 9. Standards of attainment continue to improve in most subjects through Years 10 and 11. Attainment is well above the national expectation in English, science, history, geography, art and modern foreign languages. Achievement is particularly good in English, art and science. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning and involvement in school life are excellent. They are enthusiastic about their studies and many take an active part in the significant range of opportunities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. In lessons pupils consistently behave well in order to concentrate on their work. Standards of behaviour outside of lessons are also very good.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the provision for their personal development; they show increasing confidence and maturity in successive years. Pupils work well together and have a genuine respect for the opinions and views of others. Relationships are excellent; it is a very positive feature of the school.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are well above the national average with a particularly low level of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. In all of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory; much of it was better than satisfactory. In one lesson in every three, teaching was of high quality, that is, very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Examples of excellence were seen in English, drama, ICT, physical education and personal and social development lessons. Teaching is very effective in meeting the needs of pupils.

The quality of teaching is very good in science, and it is good in English; teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Across the school, the main strengths in the teaching are teachers' knowledge of their subjects, detailed and effective planning and the high expectations of achievement. Pupils are 'known' well; the rapport and positive relationships between staff and pupils are very noticeable features of most lessons.

The result of the teaching is good quality learning; pupils gain new knowledge and understanding very effectively. Most pupils work hard and concentrate well on their studies, even when teaching lacks the inspirational element of the best lessons. Pupils work well on their own initiative and organise themselves efficiently; generally a considerable amount of effort goes into written work and homework. Pupils with special needs learn well and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
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The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Subject planning provides very good breadth and balance. The programme for personal, social and health education is well organised and effective. The curriculum is considerably enhanced by the excellent extra-curricular provision: the enrichment activities successfully promote pupils' development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There is an effective combination of in-class support, special courses and individual withdrawal sessions to help pupils in all year groups. They improve basic skills well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. A strength of the school. Pupils are friendly and courteous; they have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. This provision contributes significantly to the promotion of Christian values and the positive community ethos within the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school looks after pupils very well; heads of year and tutors know pupils thoroughly. They keep careful records. This knowledge is effectively used to support pupils' work, personal development and behaviour. Procedures for child protection are very good.

The school has a very strong partnership with parents. The very effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress enable parents to be well informed about their child's development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior staff provide effective and efficient leadership of the school. Many heads of department and pastoral leaders are also effective and competent managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses; there is an effective committee structure. Communication between the school and governors is open and productive. Statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school uses data exceptionally well to monitor the school's performance. Actions to bring about improvement are planned efficiently and implemented successfully. Good systems are in place for managing the performance of teachers.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Detailed planning enables resources to be efficiently deployed; there is systematic identification of priorities and a clear indication of action to be taken.

The overall staffing provision is good. In almost all subjects, staff specialisms meet curricular requirements. The provision for learning resources is good despite tight budget constraints. The

overall accommodation provision is satisfactory. Recent extensions to the building are of a high quality but some accommodation, notably the provision for physical education, is poor.

Financial planning is very effective and relates well to the school's priorities for improvement. The school consults a range of people about financial matters and obtains resources at a competitive price. It uses them in the best possible way to meet its aims.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like the school • Their children make good progress • They feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or questions • They consider the school expects their children to work hard and do their best • The school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents do not think that their children get the right amount of work to do at home

The inspection team agrees with parents' high opinion of the school. However, inspectors consider that the work set for pupils to do at home is appropriate and relevant.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average. Pupils come to the school with good basic skills in literacy and numeracy.
2. Results in the national tests for 14 year olds were well above the national average in 2001; there was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In English, attainment was close to the national average but below average in comparison with similar schools. Attainment in mathematics and science were well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, results in mathematics and science were also well above average. The trend in performance in the core subjects was above the national picture. The overall results in 2001 were above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds.
3. GCSE results in 2001 were well above the national average and were also well above average in comparison with similar schools. Results in these examinations have been consistently above average in recent years although there was a slight dip in performance in 2000. The trend in GCSE performance has been in line with the national picture. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The results of GCSE examinations in most subjects were significantly above national figures with particularly high standards being achieved in art, English, geography, modern foreign languages, religious studies and science. Standards in design and technology, music and physical education were in line with national averages. The school exceeded its overall target for the GCSE examinations by two per cent. The school is making good progress towards its current targets, which are appropriately challenging.
4. On balance, attainment in work seen in English is above national expectations. Standards of literacy are good. The quality of work by Year 9 pupils is in line with expectations. Pupils usually express their ideas confidently and clearly during class discussion. Nearly all listen attentively to the teacher. Generally, pupils' reading is of a higher standard than their writing. Higher attaining pupils write well-structured essays with relevant quotes from texts. However, many average and low attaining pupils lack sufficient confidence to write at length. Given their attainment on entry, their overall progress is unsatisfactory. By the end of Year 11, standards have improved significantly to above average levels. Pupils show good speaking and listening skills. They can write very well which is reflected in both descriptive and analytical essays. Standards of writing are well above average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.
5. Overall, standards in work seen in mathematics are above national averages. By the end of Year 9 attainment is well above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils have good numerical skills and are confident in using a range of mental methods in their calculations. Algebraic and data handling skills develop well. At the end of Year 11, the standards achieved are slightly above average. This drop in performance is due to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Able students have good algebraic skills and they are applied correctly to problem-solving activities. However, pupils' investigational skills are less strong. Generally the progress made by pupils of all levels of ability is satisfactory.
6. On balance, standards of attainment in science are above average. In Year 9 standards are above expectation but a little below those suggested by recent National Curriculum test results. Pupils' notebooks show the quality of work to be appropriate to their ability levels. Pupils conduct experiments accurately and are able to analyse their results correctly. In Year 11, standards of work are well above average and reflect the results of recent GCSE

examinations. Almost all pupils can use correct scientific terminology in describing and explaining recent work. Pupils read aloud well, and pronunciation is generally good. Pupils can ask and answer questions. Overall, progress through successive key stages is very good.

7. Standards of work seen in history, geography, art and modern foreign languages are above average at the end of Year 9 and improve to become well above expectation at the end of Year 11. In art, pupils learn the key skills of painting, drawing and printing well. Pupils have a good grounding in geographical skills; they can correctly interpret Ordnance Survey maps and accurately analyse statistical data. In history, pupils' knowledge of chronology is generally good, and most demonstrate an ability to identify the nature and significance of source material very well. In French and German lessons, pupils read aloud well, and pronunciation is generally good. Pupils can ask and answer questions in the language being studied. Achievement in all of these subjects is good.
8. Attainment in ICT is above average in both key stages. Pupils show significant strengths in their skills of word processing, desktop publishing and spreadsheet work, although their knowledge of control technology is weaker. Overall, pupils make good progress in their confident use and understanding of computer applications.
9. Attainment in design and technology is above average through Years 7 and 9. Pupils work safely in a wide range of materials, and develop good skills with a range of tools and processes. At the end of Year 11 it is line with expectations. The difference in achievement between key stages is due to the variability of standards achieved in resistant materials courses. Attainment in these courses has been affected by the lack of emphasis on practising the required design principles and processes. However, in food technology, most pupils produce design folios that show good investigative skills and a systematic development of ideas. Overall, progress in design and technology is satisfactory.
10. Attainment in music and physical education is in line with expectations at the end of Year 9. These standards are maintained in music but are better in physical education, to become above average by the end of Year 11. In music pupils can compose and perform rhythmic pieces successfully showing a good understanding of the characteristics of African music. However, their keyboard skills are underdeveloped. Older pupils have a good understanding of harmony. In physical education, pupils develop games skills such as passing and moving into space well. Overall achievement in both subjects is satisfactory.
11. Standards on entry for pupils with special educational needs are generally lower than those of other pupils. However, they make good progress overall. Teachers and assistants are careful to see that pupils understand what homework is required, and opportunities are given for home and coursework to be done in the dyslexia base to ensure that pupils can move forward at their own pace. Pupils benefit from the school's ethos of inclusion, which encourages and values all pupils. Pupils who are gifted and talented make good progress as the result of the appropriate extension work they are given.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to the school and the work they do there are excellent. Relations within the school and the way in which pupils respond to the provision for their personal development are also excellent. Standards of behaviour are very high.
13. Pupils' attitudes are excellent. They enjoy going to school. At all levels, they are keen to learn as much as possible. This was the case in a Year 7 English lesson where pupils were studying the soliloquy "Is this a dagger which I see before me?" from Macbeth. They were attentive and worked together enthusiastically, looking up unfamiliar words in dictionaries. It was equally true in a Year 10 science lesson where pupils were testing earlier predictions about reactivity. They worked with intense concentration, wanting to get as much as possible from the lesson. Pupils are well motivated and fully attentive in lessons. They take pride in their work; books are well kept; and they talk about what they are doing with confidence. There was a good example of this pride in a Year 8 design and technology lesson where pupils were making a comb joint for a trinket box. Such excellent attitudes help pupils learn.
14. Behaviour is very good. In lessons pupils consistently behave well in order to concentrate on their work. Standards of behaviour outside lessons are also very good. Pupils move sensibly along crowded corridors. Classrooms, including computer rooms, are open at lunchtime: pupils can be trusted to behave well. There are only occasional cases of bullying. Pupils interviewed were very confident that any occurrence would be reported and dealt with promptly by the school. The number of fixed-term exclusions during the academic year 2000/2001 – there were no permanent ones – is low for a school of this size.
15. Relationships in the school are excellent and a very important factor in helping pupils to do their best. Pupils get on well among themselves. Those interviewed all wanted to emphasise to inspectors how friendly and welcoming the school was. Pupils also work very well together. They show a mature understanding of how their actions can affect others. The quality of their co-operative work was noted in many lessons, such as one in which Year 9 pupils were designing and making celebration cakes. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. Pupils believe that teachers care about the progress they make and react by doing the best they can. The way in which pupils respond to the provision for their personal development is excellent. In a personal and social education lesson for Year 9, pupils discussed the arguments for and against globalisation with both interest and maturity. Pupils recognise that the school has much to offer them: large numbers take part in a wide range of activities, both in and out of school. Many of these activities have a charitable purpose and raise large sums of money. Other activities help to broaden their own horizons. From their conversations with inspectors, they approach them all with enthusiasm and considerable success.
16. The level of attendance at the school is very good. The rate of attendance for the academic year 2000/2001 was 92.7 per cent, well above the national average of 91.9 per cent. Unauthorised absence was 0.4 per cent, compared with the national average of 1.1 per cent. Punctuality is good.
17. Pupils' attitudes were already good at the time of the previous inspection. They have continued to improve.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Pupils are taught well throughout the school. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with many examples of very good teaching. In one lesson in every three, teaching was of high quality, that is, very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is particularly effective in science, history, geography, art and in ICT for Years 7 to 9. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and for English it is good. On balance teaching meets the needs of pupils, of all levels of ability, well. Standards of teaching have improved since the previous inspection.
19. A particular strength is the consistency of the quality of teaching across subjects. Teachers are enthusiastic and are committed to the pupils and the school. They form a self-critical group, supporting one another well. The school has a rigorous programme for professional development and training. Each member of the leadership team supports other teams of teachers. The school has set clear aims for improvement in teaching and learning.
20. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and expertise, and show enjoyment of their subject, which is often enthusiastically shared with their pupils. In English, the teachers' expertise enables them to explain specialist vocabulary and develop pupils' own use of this very well. Teachers have high expectations, and work is usually well matched to the ability of the pupils. In the best lessons, teachers set suitably challenging tasks. Another strength of the teaching is the teachers' use of discussion and activities, enabling pupils to voice their own views and ideas. For example, pupils in a Year 8 history lesson simulated the effect of events in Charles I reign on the different religious groups such as Protestants, Catholics and Puritans. Clear presentations and challenging work are strong features evident in many lessons
21. The very good teaching evident at the school promotes and consolidates pupils' learning. Explanations are clear, and questioning is effective in moving pupils' learning forward and helping them recall previous learning. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson, the teacher probed pupils' understanding of the reactivity series while they carried out a practical exercise; pupils responded to this very well, with the result that they quickly consolidated their learning and began to write equations for the reactions carried out.
22. The teaching of literacy skills is good; elements of the National Literacy Strategy are being effectively implemented. Several departments help pupils to develop their use of subject specific vocabulary. For example, science teachers often provide vocabulary sheets to ensure that pupils understand key words. One such sheet highlighted the meaning of the word 'emit', to avoid confusion with 'omit'. In ICT and design and technology, teachers insist on pupils' using technical vocabulary precisely and display these words prominently to reinforce their use. Pupils are given regular opportunities to read aloud in history, ICT and personal and social education. This develops their confidence and they read with good expression. Many read silently at the start of all English lessons, but teachers miss the opportunity to listen to individual pupils reading during this time. All subjects ask pupils to read for information but rarely help them to practise skimming and scanning in order to take notes when reading. Some departments are more effective than others in helping pupils to develop their writing skills. For example, history teachers help pupils to structure their extended writing. In geography and science, teachers provide writing frameworks to help pupils to structure their essays and reports of experiments. In design and technology, pupils are encouraged to draft and re-draft their work. However, teachers' marking of incorrect spelling and punctuation is inconsistent. Mistakes are carefully corrected in history, for example, but less regularly in French and German. In science and English, teachers do not always insist on pupils correcting spelling and punctuation after they have marked their work. The teaching of numeracy skills is also good. In geography lessons teachers use statistical data effectively

to reinforce numerical ideas. Science teachers systematically consolidate competence in measurement and interpretation of data through experiments. Pupils' spatial skills are developed well in art. The improved accessibility to computer resources is enabling teachers to incorporate the use of ICT into their lesson planning to a greater extent.

23. The homework set is purposeful and challenging and is used well to reinforce learning. Good opportunities are provided for accelerated learning in lessons. A range of visits and visitors to the school motivates pupils and promotes their learning. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
24. Ongoing assessment of pupils' learning and developmental needs is good. The marking of work is generally frequent and thorough. However, there are some inconsistencies within and between departments on the use of National Curriculum levels to indicate attainment. In lessons teachers give appropriate feedback, as well as support and praise. Assessment data and performance data are effectively analysed by teachers and staff with pastoral responsibilities to set targets for pupils to achieve.
25. Pupils are keen to achieve well and very good progress is seen in their developing knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils are effectively encouraged to develop as independent learners; in many lessons this is a strong feature of the very good learning. Pupils make clear advances in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils' intellectual, physical and creative efforts are developing well.

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

26. Management, staff and governors place the curriculum at the centre of their interests, seeking to provide the best opportunities for all pupils. Provision within subjects is good, but taken together with the impressive range of enrichment offered, overall curricular provision is very good. The curriculum is kept under constant review, with an open, welcoming attitude towards change and advice. The 14 – 16 curriculum, for example, is set for further planned alterations to accommodate the changing requirements of the school's population. The school meets its statutory requirements in full. Departmental curricular provision is particularly strong in history, geography, music and science.
27. The school provides a very broad range of high quality learning opportunities relevant to the ages and abilities of its pupils. The breadth and balance of opportunities for pupils aged 11 – 14 are good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided, with additional drama, personal, health and social education (PHSE) and ICT lessons. Most pupils take two modern foreign languages from Year 8, although remarkably few continue with two languages into GCSE work. An alternative curriculum for lower attaining pupils, known as the 'Sunshine' curriculum, begins in these years, with lowest sets undertaking additional key skills work in literacy combined with a European studies course. This is highly relevant for these pupils and valued by parents and pupils alike. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is mostly through setting arrangements, which are very effective for most, but not all, subjects. The school is reconsidering the effects of setting in the arts which is not always appropriate. These sets are based on ability in modern foreign languages, creating significant gender imbalances in most groups in Years 8 and 9. Greater emphasis at school and subject levels on planning for the highest attainers would improve provision yet further for this minority. 'Twilight' lessons in Latin are still provided, as at the time of the last report, an aspect which does provide well for higher attaining pupils in languages. Although the school attempts to avoid them, some difficulties arise with the two-week timetable, for example with classes having lessons in music or art on two consecutive days, then no lessons for two weeks, creating an element of discontinuity, especially when pupils miss days through illness. Physical education provision

has declined since the previous inspection, being compromised at all stages by unsatisfactory accommodation.

28. The curricular provision for pupils aged 14 – 16 is also good. For their GCSE options, pupils can select their two favoured subjects openly and almost all get the subjects of their choice. All pupils in year 10 take a short course GCSE in ICT, but discrete lessons do not continue into Year 11, an issue which needs to be resolved. Latin is available on the same twilight basis as an additional GCSE and take-up is good for this subject. The 'Sunshine' curriculum continues for lower attaining pupils, now including work for a Youth Award (ASDAN) qualification. Physical education has recently been included as a GCSE subject and business studies is also available, providing pupils with the opportunity to start a new subject. This is the only vocationally oriented subject currently provided, however, and the school recognises the need to widen its provision of alternative, vocational courses for this age of pupil. Plans are in place to develop such courses in two stages, beginning this year. These will involve close liaison with the local further education college. This additional breadth will improve the already good access all pupils enjoy to a good subject-level curriculum across the school.
29. The support for the rare instances of pupils speaking English as an additional language, is good. The county support teacher, who offers help and advice, visits on a termly basis when required. The school provides resources, such as language dictionaries, where appropriate.
30. The effectiveness of provision for the development of literacy skills is good. The school has recently published a policy for literacy across the curriculum. Along with recent training days, this has ensured that all teachers are aware of ways in which they can help pupils to improve their literacy skills. Most departments are beginning to plan for the teaching of literacy through their schemes of work. The English department is developing schemes of work in line with the National Literacy Strategy, although these are still at an early stage.
31. The effectiveness of provision for the development of numeracy skills is also good. Pupils use their mathematical skills well when required to do so as in science, geography and art. An audit across the curriculum of how subject areas use and apply numeracy has taken place and a policy for numeracy across the curriculum is being developed.
32. It is the school's excellent provision of enrichment opportunities of all types which creates the very good overall curriculum described. The list of extra-curricular events, excursions, performances, visits, residential activities, fund-raising, and music lessons is very impressive indeed. Many examples could be used to illustrate this unusually strong picture. Young engineers, for example, have won trophies for an environmentally sound vehicle construction. The Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) week provides an excellent range of opportunities including an 'Insight into Industry' in Year 9, and an excitingly varied London residential in Year 8. An average of 40 pupils take a nationally recognised Health and Safety Hygiene certificate in Years 10 and 11. Pupils participate in these opportunities with unusual vigour and enjoyment, speaking with great pleasure of their appreciation of this wide range and recognising the efforts and involvement of staff in this provision. Physical education provides a wealth of outdoor games opportunities but little else, constrained as it is by poor indoor accommodation.
33. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The PHSE curriculum is a strength of the school. There is an hourly lesson each week which, for Years 10 and 11, also includes careers education. The programme is well planned by the co-ordinator and the year teams. Tutors do most teaching very competently; there is frequent use of specialists such as health professionals from outside the school. Topics included in the programme are well chosen, including health and drug education; each topic is appropriate for the various years. The

programme is evaluated frequently so that it can be revised where necessary. There is a strong emphasis on developing a sense of responsibility, both within the school and the community, and society more widely, through the topics selected and the way in which they are taught.

34. There are very good programmes of study to promote pupils' health. Aspects of healthy living are an important part of the personal and social education course; physical education lessons include health-related exercise. The school also runs a popular extra-curricular course leading to a basic food hygiene certificate. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety, both within the school and on visits outside, are generally good. Potential hazards were drawn to the school's attention relating to some of the older buildings.
35. PHSE includes most of the careers education programme which is also very good. Work experience is a very successful element of this, occurring at the end of Year 10 in a good range of local workplaces. Pupils receive good preparation for this and debriefing occurs in Year 11. Pupils speak favourably of the careers education they receive. PHSE also provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to benefit from expertise and advice from outside speakers from many different walks of life, who come into the school to participate in this programme. Contributions from the local community are good generally, but links with industry and businesses are less good than the school would wish. Stronger links would help pupils, particularly in the business studies and science departments. Relationships with partner institutions are very good, for example through the school's position as a Beacon School. Links are strong, and strengthening with the local tertiary college. They are particularly strong at both ends of the school regarding pupils with special educational needs through the consortium arrangements.
36. Overall, the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent. The richness of the provision is a testimony to the commitment and broad vision of education held by the staff of the school.
37. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good. The school ethos, based on Christian values, is very strong. As part of their performance management, all staff have an objective aimed at supporting and enhancing the Christian ethos of the school. There is a full and varied range of collective worship opportunities, including tutor time, which provide pupils with time for reflection and contribute to the spiritual dimension of the school. Opportunities for spiritual growth are also provided in most subjects. In an English lesson, Year 8 pupils were encouraged to reflect on the meaning of Betjeman's poem 'In Westminster Abbey'. In a drama lesson, a Year 11 pupil gave a very powerful performance of a grieving mother which was celebrated by the teacher and the other pupils.
38. The school's provision for the moral development of pupils is excellent. There is an effective system of awards with award assemblies for each year and an annual awards day to celebrate achievements. The school fosters values such as honesty and fairness and promotes the principles of right and wrong in dealing with any inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are trusted to respect property and accommodation unsupervised. Teachers, by their own example and expectations that pupils will behave considerately, act as very good role models for pupils. Moral issues are central to the PHSE programme and all Year 9 pupils learn about the Holocaust. Pupils' moral development is sustained very well in assemblies and through the numerous fund-raising activities for charities. Within subjects, moral development is promoted very well in English, geography, design and technology and ICT. In geography pupils discuss issues such as sustainable development in the tropical rainforest as against the conservation of irreplaceable resources.

39. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The school provides a caring environment based on mutual respect between members of the school community. A strong sense of community is fostered through assemblies and tutor groups. There are numerous lunchtime and after-school activities to enhance the social development of pupils. There are also many opportunities for pupils to work together in concerts, productions, fund-raising activities, planning for worship or for the 'Leavers' Service', and through the experiences provided by ALE week. There is an emphasis on group work and pupils' participation in many subjects, notably in PHSE, music, drama, modern foreign languages, English, physical education, science, ICT and design and technology. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and accept responsibility. These include the prefect system, activities in tutor groups, clubs, sports, as representatives on Weymouth Borough Youth Council and the area Youth Action Group's initiative on responsible retailing.
40. The cultural development of pupils in the school is very good. There is a very good programme of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' knowledge and experience. In the summer term, ALE week provides all Year 8 pupils with cultural experiences either from a residential base in London or from school with activities which mirror those in London. So, in London pupils may visit Tate Modern, the Globe theatre and Camden market, while pupils at school may visit Salisbury Cathedral, take part in the 'Great Egg Race' and visit Yeovilton Air Museum. The drama department organises regular theatre visits, and, in modern foreign languages, there are French and German exchanges. There are also opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultural diversity of British society and of the wider world in PHSE, food and textiles, music and geography and through trips to Thailand, India and Africa. In ALE week all pupils in Year 7 learn about the customs and practices of the Indian culture. During Euroweek, pupils will have opportunities to experience different languages in taster lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. There are very good procedures for the care and welfare of pupils in the school. The school places a high priority on the way in which it looks after the pupils in its care. It succeeds in its aims. Tutors and heads of year stay with groups throughout their time at the school and make sure they know the pupils well as individuals. They use their knowledge very sensitively to help and support them. In interviews and in a number of lessons, pupils commented that teachers and tutors make their interest in pupils clear and show they want them to succeed. This approach helps pupils, both in academic subjects and in their overall personal development. Informal knowledge is backed by meticulously-kept records of academic work, attendance, behaviour and personal development. Pupils have an individual interview with their tutors twice a year, on pupil review days, to set and review targets, and also see their head of year. They say that they value the guidance they are given and the opportunity to talk. All members of staff see the targets set at review days and consider that these help them in providing appropriate support for pupils. Parents who attended the parents' meeting considered that it was good for pupils to learn to set targets for themselves and have to review these targets regularly. Procedures are very effective and efficient in practice.
42. Procedures for child protection are very good. The designated teacher has up-to-date training. Members of staff get an annual briefing: new staff are briefed as part of their induction. Liaison with appropriate agencies is good.
43. The procedures to promote good behaviour and discipline are very good. Requirements are clear to both pupils and members of staff. The procedures are consistently applied. The high standards of behaviour noted during the inspection are evidence that the procedures work. Bullying and oppressive behaviour are not a problem, though the school is aware that cases do occur. An anonymous survey was conducted recently among pupils to see

whether they knew of any bullying. The school has already acted on the results. This corroborates the view held both by parents and pupils that the school deals with such matters promptly. The procedures to monitor and promote attendance are very good.

44. Whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. There are excellent central systems, very effectively supported by the school's data manager, to capture, analyse and access appropriate information on pupils' attainment at key points in the school year. This information is supplemented well with assessment data from subject areas at three interim reporting points. Good use is made of this information to inform parents of pupils' progress. The data is used efficiently by tutors, heads of year and subject teachers to track pupils' progress, identify and recognise both achievement and underachievement, and set targets for future development.
45. The school's assessment policy provides clear guidance to departments on formulating their own assessment practice. There are very good examples in subjects such as science and history where assessment is a strong contributory factor to pupils' success in these areas. Assessment is less consistent in other curricular areas, and the challenge for the school is to spread the best practice to all subjects. Day-to-day assessment and recording in mathematics lack a focus on diagnosing pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The school's policy on formative marking is not universally applied, particularly in English and modern foreign languages. Not all subjects yet moderate systematically the assessment of pupils' work to ensure its validity.
46. Since the previous inspection, very good progress has been made on establishing coherent whole school systems. National Curriculum levels and examination grades are now regularly used. The National Curriculum assessment at the end of Year 9 is effective. The consistency of the recording of pupils' progress in the profiles and reports is now well established.
47. The school succeeds especially well in the way in which it collects and records information about many aspects of pupils' academic and personal progress. Co-operation between subject departments and year teams is very good. All members of staff can draw on the wide range of information collated by the school data manager. The school uses the information available in a sensitive manner to give very good support and guidance to pupils, both academically and personally.
48. There has been considerable improvement in the support given to pupils since the previous inspection. Assessment information is increasingly being used in planning the next stages of pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school has a very strong partnership with parents. They take a highly positive view of the school and think that their children are happy there. Parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting consider that the school expects pupils to work hard and do their best, and that they make good progress. Almost without exception, parents say that they would feel comfortable approaching the school should they have questions or concerns. Parents also consider that the school is well led and managed. A small number of parents who returned the questionnaire do not consider that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. The inspection team agrees with parents' high opinion of the school. However, inspectors consider that the work set for pupils to do at home is appropriate. In April 2001 the school conducted a survey to establish parents' views on the school. This too was overwhelmingly positive and many more parents took part than returned the OFSTED questionnaire. The school is clearly held in very high regard by parents.

50. The links, which the school has developed with parents, are highly effective. Several factors contribute to this effectiveness. Heads of year, and particularly their tutor teams, work hard to establish personal contact with the parents of the children in their groups. They keep them up to date and tell them when children do well, not just when concerns arise. This willingness of the school to contact parents frequently means that, in return, parents feel confident to approach the school themselves with concerns, or if they want to share information which they consider will help the school to care for their children. Personal contact is strengthened by a range of booklets which give parents general information. The induction programme for pupils entering Year 7 is very supportive and effective. Curricular evenings, one for each year group, give parents the opportunity to learn about and discuss aspects of the curriculum – for example, literacy and numeracy in Year 8. The information the school provides for parents about the progress their children make is very good. Three interim reports and one full report give them a clear view of progress during the year. The termly interim reports show the National Curriculum level (which is explained to parents), with a grade for behaviour, class work and homework in each subject. The information is repeated in full reports. The frequency and clarity of the interim reports help parents to follow their child's progress throughout the year. Parents feel they are alerted to problems and lapses in time to take action. The general information which the school provides about itself is also of high quality, with a very good mix of initial briefing, background facts and current news.
51. Parents themselves also contribute very effectively to their children's work at home and at school. The school has evidence that attendance at consultation evenings is very high and that it contacts those parents unable to attend. Parents respond well to the school's encouragement to support their children's work.
52. The school's partnership with parents was already strong at the time of the previous inspection and has continued to strengthen.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The leadership group very effectively promotes the aims and values of the school. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction and has high expectations for all. An open and participative style of management has created a good team ethos throughout the school. His deputies and the leadership team very ably support him. Management is well structured, with all members of the senior team having clear roles and responsibilities. The composition of the team is relatively small and may need expanding as the school grows in size. The expansion of the group would enable management training opportunities for other members of staff. Within the leadership team, members are accountable and well informed, and share a common purpose. Together with the governing body, they strive for improvement. Leadership is decisive but recognises the value of consultation and negotiation. The heads of departments and working committees are the main consultative bodies and they work well.
54. Heads of department have a good awareness of their roles in monitoring standards, teaching and learning. The quality of leadership and management is particularly strong in science, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. The monitoring of teaching focuses acutely on sharing of good practice and identifying the needs for professional development. This has had a significant impact on staff awareness of their strengths and on areas for improvement. Supportive systems are in place which enable the school to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and how to improve further. The school achieved its Beacon status in 1998. This award endorsed the high quality of educational provision being made by the school.
55. Heads of year form a very effective team and play a crucial role in promoting the aims and values of the school. They are fully involved in academic and pastoral issues and act as a direct link between home and school and between the school and outside agencies. They monitor the progress of groups of pupils and their subsequent levels of learning. They work closely with tutors to support and guide pupils' learning.
56. Developments are implemented, managed, monitored and evaluated efficiently. The annual school improvement plan is detailed and appropriately referenced to strategic issues. These include: continuing to raise standards of GCSE performance and in National Curriculum tests, particularly for English in Years 7 to 9; and implementing the national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The capacity of staff to succeed in these areas of development is good.
57. The governors are very well informed about the strengths and weaknesses within the school and they are actively involved in all its facets. Governors have successfully ensured that all statutory requirements in relation to their responsibilities are met. Governors work closely with the headteacher and the school. They are effectively involved in setting performance targets, and monitoring standards and the adequacy of curricular provision through committee structures. The documentation required for parents is in place. The chair of governors is particularly supportive and plays a wide-ranging and active role. Members of staff regularly give presentations to governors. Governors are in a good position to make informed decisions and participate fully in the recognised priorities of the school.
58. Financial management and the planning of the use of resources are very efficiently connected to the school's priorities. The school effectively maintains a balanced budget. Although operating within tight budgetary constraints, an appropriate proportion of the school's budget is allocated to learning resources for departments. In financial administration, there are correct divisions of responsibility and good procedures for ordering, receiving and paying for goods and services purchased by the school. The last financial

audit indicated minor areas for improvement in financial efficiency. These have been corrected. Specific funding for the support of pupils with special educational needs is used well and to good effect. Competitive tendering is used for the ordering of goods or services, and the school works hard to achieve the best value in its financial decisions. The administrative staff are highly efficient and greatly assist the smooth running of the school. The 'data manager' is very effective and has played a central role in raising staff awareness as to how assessment information can be used productively in target setting. All support staff are very approachable and present an excellent first point of contact for the school.

59. Appropriate targets for improvement are continuously set and are being met. The school's systems are not overly bureaucratic; they support the drive for raising standards. The school provides a high quality of education. A positive feature of the school is the shared commitment to improvement. The dedication of senior managers, staff and governors is a significant contributory factor to this successful school. The school gives very good value for money.
60. Teachers are well qualified to cover all areas of the curriculum and there is a good balance between more experienced and younger members of staff. There are particular strengths in areas such as geography and science that have led to well above average examination results. Compared with many schools, there have been few changes in teaching staff, other than an increase in the number of younger teachers in recent years to accommodate increases in pupil numbers. This stability has a positive impact on pupils because courses are rarely disrupted by changes of teacher. In a few areas of the curriculum, such as design and technology and science, technicians have too little time to carry out necessary tasks, resulting in some equipment being unavailable for use by pupils. The school makes effective use of in-service training to increase the expertise of staff. For example, all teachers recently participated in literacy and ICT training; effective strategies for developing pupils' skills in these areas are now in use in the majority of subjects.
61. The school's Beacon status provides further opportunities for professional development through contacts with other schools, as well as wider recognition of the quality of some aspects of provision at All Saints. There is an excellent scheme for the induction of new staff. New teachers feel very well supported, both within their departments and in the school as a whole; they feel that managers are approachable and will deal with problems sympathetically and effectively. Links with the teacher training scheme at Exeter University provide good professional development opportunities for staff and, in return, the school makes a valuable contribution to the training of new teachers who appreciate the supportive environment. The school has recently received recognition in this area by being invited by the Open University to join a national committee.
62. Staffing has improved since the previous inspection. There are no significant weaknesses in the provision of teaching staff now, although weaknesses still remain in technical support for a small number of subjects. The induction of new teachers and the provision for training new teachers have further improved and are now excellent.
63. The majority of subjects are well resourced to meet the demands of the curriculum. The deficiencies noted in the previous inspection report in history, geography and modern foreign languages have improved. The resources in English are now satisfactory. The resources for ICT are good. The whole school is networked and the broadband Internet connection is very fast and very good. Design and technology, geography and history require more computers in their respective areas. Geography needs a budget for fieldwork.
64. The learning resource centre makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. It is a very pleasant environment, and it is used very well at lunchtimes by approximately 50-60 pupils,

when the librarian works at full stretch. Extensive use is made of the Internet and intranet. History and geography are far and away the main users of the learning resource centre for projects such as medieval realms and the Amazonian rainforest. It is under-used by the science department for independent research, and by the English department.

65. The stock numbers approximately 5300 books, which is low; 2000 of these books are on loan from the Schools Library Service, to which the school subscribes. This stock is augmented each year with 15 project loans, for subjects such as design and technology, religious and physical education. In order to encourage reading, lists of recommended books have been prepared by the librarian for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Analysis of loans shows that more girls than boys borrow books. At present, there is insufficient room to display books.
66. The school is in a very pleasant position overlooking the sea and Portland. Buildings and grounds are generally in good condition, being both well maintained and clean. Some corridors in older parts of the school are narrow but do not appear to cause undue problems and pupils move along them in orderly, civilised fashion. Substantial improvements, including the installation of ramps and lifts, have been made to ensure that pupils with special educational needs can gain access to all parts of the school. A new wing has rooms, laboratories and accommodation for mathematics and science. It is of very good standard and has a positive impact on both teaching and learning. A number of departments including science, English, history, modern foreign languages, art and physical education have good displays which both inform pupils and celebrate their achievements. Although a good resource room is available for staff, the main common room is too cramped for the number of people who have to use it.
67. Accommodation for geography is restricted. Many geography lessons have to use classrooms in different parts of the school which often lack necessary resources for the subject. Accommodation for physical education is poor and affects both curricular design and standards of indoor games. Access to a swimming pool is no longer available and an indoor teaching space, previously used for physical education, has been reallocated to another subject. Both the English and physical education departments are short of storage spaces. Health and safety issues are generally well covered in the school although some concerns, particularly in physical education, have been communicated to senior staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to raise standards the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Raise standards of attainment in English at the end of Year 9.
[Ref. paragraphs: 74, 75, 82]
- Improve learning opportunities in the curriculum for vocational education.
(Paragraph: 28)
- Ensure greater consistency in some marking and more use of diagnostic comment.
(Paragraphs: 45, 95, 106, 152)
- Develop a systematic approach in identifying subject skills for gifted and talented pupils. (Paragraphs: 102, 108, 120)
- Improve the accommodation provision for physical education. (Paragraphs: 67, 169).

In addition the school should give consideration to the following issues:

- Ensure that the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are more precise. (Paragraph 72)
- Review the setting arrangements for arts subjects in Years 8 and 9. (Paragraph 27)
- Make a separate provision for ICT in the Year 11 curriculum. (Paragraphs 143, 144)

Special educational needs provision and the Dyslexia Base.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is **good** and has some very good features.

Strengths

- Inclusion is very much part of the school ethos and that enables pupils with special educational needs to play a full part in every aspect of the school's life.
- The school provides a suitable curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. The combination of in-class support, special courses, and individual withdrawal sessions for pupils with special educational needs in both key stages, enables pupils to have full access along with their peers.
- The quality of teaching and support in many lessons enables pupils to make good progress.
- The special educational needs and Dyslexia Base is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who know her pupils well and keeps staff comprehensively informed about their needs and difficulties.
- There is good involvement of parents who are kept well informed and have regular contacts to discuss their concerns with the special educational needs co-ordinator so as to maximise learning opportunities for pupils.
- The governing body, senior management team and special educational needs co-ordinator are meticulous in seeing that special needs funding is used for its designated purpose, and in contributing to special educational needs from delegated funding to ensure the best possible opportunities for pupils.

Points for action

- Ensure that lessons in the Dyslexia Base have sufficient pace and challenge to help pupils with special educational needs to make faster progress.
- Ensure that targets on individual education plans are sufficiently precise to be measurable against timed criteria and that they are used by teachers throughout the school and not just in the Dyslexia Base.

68. Whilst standards on entry for pupils with special educational needs are generally lower than those of other pupils, these pupils make good progress overall. They benefit very much from the school's ethos of inclusion which encourages and values all pupils and has high expectations of their involvement in all aspects of school life. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in lessons, and subject teachers make careful provision for pupils' particular difficulties, by, for example, enlarging texts for pupils with visual impairment. Teachers and assistants are careful to see that pupils understand what homework is required, and opportunities are given for homework and coursework to be done in the Dyslexia Base so as to ensure that pupils can move forward at their own pace.

69. Pupils with special educational needs are very positive in their attitudes to school. They enjoy coming, are never afraid to ask for help and benefit from the one-to-one attention they receive in the base. In classrooms, they work confidently along with other pupils. Their behaviour is very good, even when they have statements or individual education plans for emotional and behavioural difficulties or attention deficit disorder. Other pupils in the school are supportive and positive in their dealings with pupils with special educational needs and there is no evidence of discrimination or prejudice.

70. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Subject teachers take careful account of the advice and recommendations given to them by the special educational needs co-ordinator, for example by noting that pupils with Asperger's Syndrome learn best from real items and examples, rather than by abstract descriptions, and acting accordingly. This enables pupils to gain good access to the curriculum. Skilled teaching assistants offer

invaluable support in lessons, acting as scribes for poor writers, repeating and reiterating new phrases in language lessons or ensuring that pupils with behavioural difficulties remain on task. Teachers or assistants check homework logs carefully to make sure pupils understand what homework is required. However, one or two lessons in the base lack pace and challenge when pupils are asked to perform tasks that they have already mastered. This difficulty is caused in part by the good relationships that base staff have developed with pupils and the subsequent temptation to be too friendly and supportive rather than pushing pupils on as fast as possible. Occasionally, the valuable time of teaching assistants is wasted in lessons when teachers' expositions are long, and teaching assistants have no role in it.

71. The curriculum offered to pupils with special educational needs is flexible and appropriate and provides a good combination of withdrawal and in-class support. Generally, the trend is for full inclusion in subjects, facilitated by teacher assistant support. However, when pupils' statements specify individual or small group help, the school is careful to see that this is given, and the provision of such help, mainly for pupils registered in the Dyslexia Base, is generous. The 'Sunshine' curriculum and the various setting arrangements in place in the school allow pupils to work at a relevant level of challenge and pace. Support in the base helps pupils with coursework and homework when required. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in all extra-curricular activities, visits and residential experiences and accept responsibilities along with their peers. These factors encourage their confidence and maturity.
72. Reviews of individual education plans and annual reviews of statements are carried out with full regard to statutory requirements. Parents and pupils are thoroughly involved and outside professionals, such as the educational psychologist, speech therapist or physiotherapist, are effectively used when required. Parents have regular access to the special educational needs co-ordinator at parents' meetings, and have frequent contact by telephone and letter. They are offered valuable information about how to contact the local education authority's Parent Partnership schemes. The special educational needs co-ordinator, tutors and subject teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully, making good use of the data provided by the school's data management system. However, the lack of precision in individual education plan targets does not make it easy for progress to be measured against the targets set. For example, individual education plan targets are often general in nature, such as 'Improve reading and spelling', and provide no criteria or time-scale against which progress can be judged. This issue will need to be addressed as the school implements the new Code of Practice for special educational needs which is more prescriptive in its requirements for individual education plans than the previous one.
73. The special needs department is well managed by an enthusiastic and highly organised co-ordinator. She keep colleagues informed of pupils' needs and difficulties, as well as providing a bank of general information about particular aspects of special needs to which all staff have access. Teaching assistants are well trained, either by specialist courses, such as the Hornsby Dyslexia Course, by accredited local education authority courses or by in-house training. Governors and the senior management team are well informed about the use of the funding for special educational needs in the school, and scrupulous about ensuring that special funding is used appropriately. Resources are currently adequate and will be extended when the department moves into a larger base in the near future.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	162
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	48	73	35	0	0	0
Percentage	4	30	44	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	848
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	58

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	32
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	230

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	78	77	155

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	66	71
	Girls	58	64	68
	Total	103	130	139
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66(82)	84(81)	90(82)
	National	64(63)	66(65)	66(59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34(46)	58(45)	57(45)
	National	31(28)	43(42)	34(30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	58	56	61
	Girls	62	55	61
	Total	120	111	122
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77(72)	72(81)	79(74)
	National	65(64)	68(66)	64(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40(37)	61(44)	41(36)
	National	31(31)	42(39)	33(29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	69	74	143

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	36	65	71
	Girls	50	71	72
	Total	86	136	143
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	60(51)	95(92)	100(96)
	National	48(47)	91(91)	96(96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46.4
	National	39.0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	5
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	830
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	16	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	48.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	337

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.6
Key Stage 4	20.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	1806542
Total expenditure	1767963
Expenditure per pupil	2085
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13036
Balance carried forward to next year	25543

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	19

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	840
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	47	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	63	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	58	12	3	1
The teaching is good.	42	54	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	47	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	41	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	51	8	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	42	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	50	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	53	5	1	7

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

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well during Years 10 and 11 and gain very good results at GCSE.
- Teaching is good in all years and enables pupils to learn well in most lessons.
- Pupils' excellent relationships with their teachers and each other make a very positive contribution to their learning.
- The teaching of English makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should during Years 7, 8 and 9.
- Schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 are not clear enough to ensure that all pupils experience a well-balanced programme of study.
- The management of the department is satisfactory. However, the long-term illness of the head of department and a lack of unity among teachers are hindering pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9.

74. Pupils' attainment in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2001 was close to the national average but below the average for similar schools. Pupils reached lower standards than in mathematics and science. Results have fallen since 1999, when they were well above average. In GCSE English, the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in 2001 was well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. This represents a significant rise in attainment compared with previous years, when they were usually close to the national average. Results in English literature were very high compared with the national average, but only two thirds of pupils took the examination. In all years girls attain higher levels than boys, but the difference is much less than that found nationally.
75. Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9 is unsatisfactory. They enter the school in Year 7 with above average standards but by the end of Year 9 standards are just average. By contrast, achievement in Years 10 and 11 is good. For example, Year 11 pupils did well in 2001 to maintain the high standards they had attained previously. Inspection evidence confirms that current standards of work in Year 9 are in line with national averages, but they are well above average in Year 11.
76. Year 9 pupils usually express their ideas confidently and clearly during class discussion. Nearly all listen attentively to the teacher. High attaining pupils work together very effectively and respond thoughtfully to each other's ideas, in pairs or small groups. A few less capable pupils lack sufficient concentration to discuss without close supervision but still respond well to teachers' questions. Pupils' reading is of a higher standard than their writing. Many can read quite difficult texts, such as soliloquies from Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', fluently and with good expression. Even some low attaining pupils are able to adapt their expression to portray different characters in simple texts, although some still lack confidence and read very slowly and haltingly. In the upper sets, pupils make good reference to the text to back up their views. For example, they could justify their claims that Macbeth is gullible and insincere by quoting specific scenes and lines in the play. Despite the department's insistence on silent reading at the start of most lessons, few pupils read widely and their reading logs show that they take a long time to finish what they read. The most capable pupils attain very high standards in their

written work. They plan their essays and stories carefully. As a result, many write well-structured essays with relevant quotes from texts that they integrate well into their discussion. They write imaginative narratives in which they plan intriguing plots, develop character and build up tension very effectively. However, many average and low attaining pupils lack sufficient confidence to write at length. They have difficulties with correct syntax, punctuation and spelling and only improve slowly over time.

77. Year 11 pupils use Standard English confidently. For example, in two lessons they were able to express their feelings about the events of September 11th very clearly. They listened and responded to each other's views with maturity and sensitivity. Pupils' reading skills are also well developed. Most are able to use specialist vocabulary when analysing texts and identify examples of parody, metaphor and personification with ease. However, all except the highest attaining find it more difficult to identify the effect of these techniques. All pupils have a good understanding of the historical and social background to set texts. Standards of writing are also well above average. Pupils in upper sets write confident, critical essays in response to difficult texts, such as when they explain similarities between Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress' and Donne's 'The Flea'. Some write gripping narratives in which they develop realistic characters and surprising twists to the plot. Low attaining pupils still make mistakes with basic punctuation at times. However, many are able to adapt their style of writing for a particular purpose. For example, one pupil from a lower set was able to create a diary entry, as if written by Lennie's friend George in Steinbeck's 'Of Mice and Men'. Statements such as "Slim was real good with him" and "Boy does she flirt" showed good understanding of the language used by the character she was representing.
78. Gifted pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils who gain grades A* and A is well above average. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress over time and achieve a GCSE pass in English. They receive valuable support from teaching assistants during some lessons but teachers do not always consider how they can use assistants most effectively when planning their lessons.
79. Pupils have very positive, mature attitudes to their work in English and, with occasional exceptions, behave very well. Teachers and pupils treat each other with mutual respect and trust. These excellent relationships and very good attitudes make an important and positive contribution to pupils' learning.
80. The difference in pupils' achievement in all year groups is not related to the present quality of teaching. Teaching is good and pupils learn well in lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They show this through their use of incisive questions during class discussions, which challenge even the highest attaining pupils to develop a deeper understanding of literature. For example, a Year 8 class fully understood Betjeman's portrayal of false piety and humility in the poem 'In Westminster Abbey' as a result of the teacher asking if they saw any evidence of God in the poem. Teachers' own knowledge of the subject is strong. This enables them to explain specialist vocabulary and develop pupils' own use of this very well. Their management of classes during discussion is usually very good. They ensure that as many pupils as possible contribute and that all listen attentively. In the best lessons, they also provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss in pairs and small groups. At times, however, the teacher talks for too long. This denies pupils the opportunity to develop their own, more personal, response to texts before they hear the teacher's views. Teachers provide a good variety of homework. For example, pupils were asked to read their summary of a poem to their parents, ask them for their views and re-draft their work after this discussion. Others were given specific research tasks to enhance their understanding of the social and historical background to a novel they were about to read. These tasks interest pupils and many appreciate the opportunities that they provide to take more responsibility for their own learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, they do not always provide

sufficient guidance about how the work can be improved. Not all teachers insist on the correction of spelling or punctuation mistakes and, as a result, some pupils make slow progress with these basic skills. Teachers rarely provide pupils with frameworks to help them structure their writing, and some less competent pupils struggle to write at length as a result, especially in Years 7, 8 and 9.

81. The English department makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Teachers provide ample opportunities for pupils to reflect in depth on important issues. Year 11 pupils read Ted Hughes's poem 'Grief for Dead Soldiers' with deep concentration and empathised with the grief of a soldiers' widow. They were helped to explore their emotions about the events of September 11th with sensitivity when comparing two poems by Thomas Hardy and Simon Armitage with the same title, 'The Convergence of the Twai'n. A discussion of John Betjeman's poetry led to Year 9 pupils posing and reflecting on the question, "If God doesn't believe in killing, does that make him a coward?" Teachers support all of these discussions very sensitively.
82. Several factors have influenced the recent decline in standards at the end of Year 9. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory, but the recent long-term illness of the head of department has caused several problems. Many pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have been taught by non-specialist teachers in recent terms because of absence and staffing difficulties. These have now been resolved. The head of department has now identified several appropriate areas for development. For example, schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 lack sufficient detail to ensure that all pupils follow a well-balanced programme of study. Teachers have now started to revise schemes of work to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. This is beginning to have a positive effect on lesson planning and the allocation of teaching resources. At present, procedures for assessing pupils' work in these years lack consistency. As a result, not all pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve and reach higher standards. However, assessment procedures are now under review. In the writing of new schemes of work, not all teachers are contributing enough towards the production of new teaching resources. The lack of clear job descriptions causes further difficulties in the allocation of responsibilities amongst teachers.

Literacy

83. Standards of literacy are good in all years and allow pupils to make good progress with the work that they are asked to do in all subjects. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and speak clearly and confidently in class discussions. Standards of reading are good. For example, most pupils can read source material in history with confidence and are able to carry out research for art projects by reading independently. The majority of pupils write accurately but in Years 7, 8 and 9, some average and lower attaining pupils lack the confidence to write at length, and experience difficulties with spelling, punctuation and grammar.
84. The school has recently published a policy for literacy across the curriculum. Along with recent training days, this has ensured that all teachers are aware of ways in which they can help pupils to improve their literacy skills. Most departments are beginning to plan for the teaching of literacy through their schemes of work. The English department is developing schemes of work in line with the National Literacy Strategy, although these are still at an early stage.

Drama

Provision for drama is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve high standards of performance and gain very good results at GCSE.

Areas for improvement

- Provision in Years 7 to 9 lacks sufficient continuity to enable pupils to achieve high standards.
- Rewriting the scheme of work so there is sufficient emphasis on drama techniques.
- Improve the development of literacy skills.
- Create more opportunities for self-assessment by pupils.

85. Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 9. They work well together when planning and performing their work. Most are aware of the importance of concentration in order to stay in role and higher attaining pupils use mime convincingly, to add realism to the roles they play. They develop good speaking and listening skills and the more competent pupils vary the power and pitch of their voice, or use silence effectively, to add depth to their performance. However, pupils' knowledge of the range of drama techniques and conventions is weak.
86. Pupils gain very good results at GCSE. In 2000, all pupils attained grades A*-C. In 2001 results were above average and nearly one third of the pupils achieved A* or A grades. Standards of work in Year 11 are high. During the inspection, pupils were preparing for a performance of Chris Owen's 'A Mother's Voice'. They were able to use a range of drama skills and shared enthusiastically in the direction and development of the first two scenes from the play. Their ability to concentrate on their role and produce a convincing performance was impressive. Pupils' knowledge of the historical and social context of the play allowed them to empathise with the characters they were portraying and convey the intense emotions of people being persecuted by an oppressive political regime.
87. Teaching is good and pupils learn well. The teacher's very good class management ensures that pupils concentrate and make the most of the short time available for learning drama in Years 7 to 9. The use of a range of teaching methods, but especially teaching in role, provides pupils with an excellent role model and helps them to aim at a high standard of performance. In one outstanding Year 11 lesson, the teacher used her sound knowledge of drama techniques to focus pupils' discussion on the use of movement, costume, props and stage organisation. However, the teacher ensured that this guidance was not too obtrusive. She allowed pupils to retain control of the scene they were practising, to develop their own skills of stage direction and make a personal response to the play.
88. The aims of the drama course in Years 7, 8 and 9 are not clear. Schemes of work for pupils in these years lack continuity and there is insufficient emphasis on pupils learning and using specific drama techniques. The department considers that the development of literacy skills is a prime aim of the course but there are no links with the English department to ensure a consistent approach. Assessment of pupils is not linked to the schemes of work and pupils have insufficient opportunity to evaluate their own performance and skills. There is only one teacher in the department and this makes the teaching and assessment of all pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 a difficult and onerous task.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are well above average.
- Results in GCSE mathematics are improving year on year.

- The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive influence on teaching and learning in Years 7 and 8.
- Strong teamwork promotes the department's capacity for improvement.
- Most teachers manage behaviour well; this enables pupils to concentrate and apply themselves conscientiously to their work in mathematics.

Areas for improvement

- In some lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to learn through a broad range of activities. Some pupils fail to do as well as they should at the end of Year 11.
- Assessment information on pupils is not used consistently in teachers' planning of lessons.
- There is insufficient use of ICT resources to widen pupils' experiences and understanding of mathematics.

89. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment in mathematics is broadly above average. This is confirmed by the pupils' work in Year 7 where their basic skills assist them very well in extracting and synthesising information within mathematics. By the age of 14, attainment is well above average overall. There has been an improving trend in the standards reached in the national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 9. Given their starting points, this represents good achievement for most pupils. When looked at over time, the results of boys and girls fluctuate from year to year. However, in 2001 the girls' results in mathematics indicated faster progress than that of the boys, in spite of similar attainment on entry. As yet, the department is unable to explain this difference. Mathematics results in the national tests were better than those of English but similar to those of science. They were well above those of similar schools at both level 5 and above and level 6 and above.
90. In the 2001 GCSE mathematics results, the proportion of the school's pupils achieving grades A*-C was slightly above average. Whilst no pupils gained the highest A* grade, the percentage of the pupils gaining grade A was above the national figure. Based on the pupils' achievements at the end of Year 9, the results were in line with those found in similar schools. However, mathematics results were less good than those of English and science. The girls' results in mathematics were higher than those of the boys, maintaining the position at the end of Year 9. There is a gradual improvement in the year-on-year GCSE grades and this is reflected in the current Year 11. Four pupils have already obtained the A* grade in GCSE mathematics.
91. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment by the end of Year 9 is well above average; pupils' achievement is good. Higher attainers have very good numerical skills and are confident in using a range of mental methods in their calculations. Their manipulative skills in algebra are strong and they can apply them well to simple trigonometric and other problems. They can work systematically and identify underlying patterns. However, they are not always able to explain their results and generalisations. They sometimes rely too heavily on rules, occasionally not well remembered. Average attaining pupils have good number and other mechanical mathematical skills. They are accurate in their work on constructions and represent statistical data appropriately. However, they are sometimes uncertain as to how to apply their skills in non-routine questions, which test their deeper conceptual understanding. While most lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are confident in working with money and in simple calculations, a few still show confusion when choosing which operation to use in solving problems.
92. By the end of Year 11, the standards the pupils reach in their work are slightly above average; achievement is generally satisfactory. Able students have good algebraic and other general mathematical skills, which many apply well to problem-solving activities. However, their investigational skills are less strong than their mechanical skills and only a very few are able to explain their findings rigorously to justify their generalisations. Average attaining pupils

present much of their work carefully and this is reflected in their angle work as well as in that on loci. While they cope well with linear equations and other simple algebraic skills, many show a limited understanding of topics such as quadratic equations and factorisation. They often find difficulty in identifying the characteristic dimensions of area and volume formulae. Lower attaining pupils, as well as those with special educational needs, display poor recall of simple number classification such as multiples, squares and cubes. Many find difficulty in multiplying powers of ten, for example, by mental methods, and in some cases, a limited knowledge of table facts prevents their progress. Nevertheless, they are able, with help, to break down a task into simple steps, make sensible predictions, and test their results.

93. Pupils' attitudes to learning are never less than satisfactory and often good or very good. This allows them to make the most of the learning opportunities offered to them. When their interest is stimulated they are capable of responding very well indeed, and often exceed what is expected of them as in the data-handling project in Year 7. Their behaviour is good and there are strong positive relationships with their teachers and with each other.
94. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall. There are, however, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching within the department. Although no unsatisfactory lessons were seen, the good and very good teaching was limited. There was a higher proportion of good teaching in Years 7, 8 and 9, and this is reflected in pupils' standards at the end of Year 9. The best lessons are well structured and provide a stimulating range of activities, well matched to the pupils' prior attainment, as in the Year 9 lesson on circles. In this lesson, pupils were not only led skilfully to extend their manipulative algebra in applying standard formulae to problems, but were also able to appreciate some of the cultural aspects of their mathematics. As a result, the pupils were very well motivated, actively involved in learning, and able to persevere with challenging work. In other good lessons, teachers' secure mathematical knowledge and their good management of pupils' behaviour combined to create an ethos in which pupils concentrated well. Most teachers plan lessons conscientiously. However, teaching objectives and learning outcomes are not always clearly distinguished so that there are many missed opportunities to assess and record pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The marking of pupils' work is regular but does not always guide pupils on how to make further progress. Pupils' thinking skills are not always sufficiently encouraged so that they rely too heavily on rules. Some lessons offer a very restricted range of activities for learning mathematics and as a result some pupils lose interest and achieve less in GCSE mathematics than might be expected given their achievements in Year 9.
95. Since the previous inspection, progress within the mathematics department is good. The pupils' attainment has improved, particularly at the end of Year 9. The present good leadership of the department is raising both teachers' and pupils' expectations of what they can achieve. There is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching. Progress is under way on developing further the mathematics curriculum to incorporate recent national initiatives. However, practice within the department remains inconsistent in several areas, including the quality of teaching and teachers' day-to-day assessment and recording of pupils' achievements. The use of ICT resources to enhance teaching has not been adequately addressed.

Numeracy

96. The provision to use and develop pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. Within mathematics, pupils' number skills are usually good in all year groups, but better in the lower year groups than in Years 10 and 11. There is clear evidence of the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy on pupils' learning. Higher attaining pupils cope very well with decimal multiplication and division, using a range of mental strategies. Those pupils

who still struggle with number facts are helped effectively to close gaps through the breakfast club catch-up activities. Many pupils use their calculators sensibly, often estimating their answers to check for accuracy. However, some pupils in middle groups do still show uncertainty when estimating answers.

97. In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils use their numerical skills well. Within science, they use data handling skills well to represent experimental data graphically. From early in Year 7, they can collect, tabulate and represent pictorially numerical relationships. Higher attaining pupils preparing for GCSE are confident in handling percentages and in understanding the need to repeat experiments in order to improve the accuracy of their averages. Numerical skills are a significant strength in geography and much enhance the pupils' work, including their independent studies. Good spatial awareness is encouraged and well used in art with pupils able to apply their understanding of measurement and proportion readily to their tasks. Pupils use their spatial skills and graphical communication skills less well in design and technology but, generally, their basic skills promote their achievements satisfactorily. GCSE pupils in music recognise the symmetry in serial music. They understand how lengths of notes are diminished and augmented.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **very good**.

Strengths

- Good quality teaching leads to results that are well above average.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, allowing time to be used fully for productive learning.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies, including a high proportion of practical work, to capture and maintain pupils' interest.
- Pupils are encouraged to do well because they are set realistic targets to improve their examination performance.
- Very good leadership and management of the department promote good teamwork among teachers, leading to a stimulating experience of science for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Lesson planning that focuses more sharply on learning outcomes, so that all pupils, particularly those in Year 7, are appropriately challenged.
- More consistent marking, so that teachers' comments show pupils what they need to do to further improve their science.

98. In 2001, the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the average for all schools and that for similar schools. This represents very good achievement for those pupils between Years 7 and 9, and continues an improving trend in results since 1998.
99. There was a similar pattern in GCSE results at the end of Year 11. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades, A*-C, was well above the average nationally and that for similar schools. This represents good achievement for these pupils through Years 10 and 11. Almost all pupils were entered for the examination and all those entered gained a grade, with very few low grades; more than twice the national average gained the highest A* grades. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
100. In the work seen in Year 9 during the inspection, standards are above average but a little below those suggested by recent National Curriculum test results. This is partly because the attainment of present Year 9 pupils was lower than that of previous years when they entered

the school and partly because higher attaining pupils make slower progress than they should in Year 7; they achieve well through Years 8 and 9, but have not yet caught up lost ground. In a Year 7 lesson, the great majority of pupils understood the relationship between surface area and air resistance when they investigated pieces of paper travelling through air. However, less help from the teacher in designing the experiment would have given higher attaining pupils greater challenge and allowed them to show higher achievement.

101. In Year 11, standards of work seen during the inspection are well above average and reflect the results of recent GCSE examinations. Pupils achieve well through Years 10 and 11, as when they quickly understood the relationship between acceleration, velocity and time. Almost all can use correct scientific terminology in describing and explaining recent work, for example the differences between the particle arrangements in solids, liquids and gases; a small number has difficulty in recalling less recent work, such as the main principles of digestion and respiration. About one fifth demonstrate very high standards, particularly when analysing and evaluating the results of their investigations.
102. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils. Gifted and talented pupils make less progress than they should in some lessons because teachers do not always provide them with sufficiently challenging work. However, in Years 10 and 11 there are opportunities for them to demonstrate very high standards, for example when they enter for the 'Physics Olympiad Challenge', in which a pupil recently won the gold medal.
103. The great majority of pupils write well and use the rules of spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately. Their numerical skills are generally well developed because they are encouraged to tabulate results and express numerical relationships in the form of graphs from an early stage in Year 7. The department is beginning to develop pupils' ICT skills in a number of interesting ways, for example using computer microscopes to obtain images of their own teeth, then the Internet to find out how microscopes work. Pupils are very good at carrying out practical work; they handle laboratory equipment carefully and safely.
104. Behaviour in science lessons is very good; almost all pupils are attentive throughout the full length of lessons, allowing time to be fully used for productive learning. Exercise books are kept very well, showing that pupils take pride in their work, and forming an accurate record that helps them in later revision. The great majority respond very well to homework tasks that extend and consolidate work from lessons. Pupils work very well in small groups during practical work, sharing the workload and often helping each other.
105. Teaching and learning in science are good in Years 7 to 9, and very good in Years 10 and 11. A particularly notable feature is that none of the lessons seen during the inspection were less than good. Key features of this good and very good teaching are:
 - a variety of approaches, including a high proportion of practical work;
 - very good emphasis on the meanings of key words, enabling pupils to describe and explain their work; and
 - demonstration by teachers that they care about the progress of individual pupils, to which pupils respond by wanting to do their best for their teacher.
106. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher first used a quick test to help pupils review their earlier learning about the meanings of speed, velocity and acceleration. Pupils then carried out their own experiments with ticker-timers, building on their knowledge when they discovered for themselves how the velocity of an object changes with the force applied. Teachers find time in every lesson to give individual pupils their attention as they move around laboratories to check understanding. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, the teacher probed pupils' understanding of the reactivity series while they carried out a practical exercise; pupils responded to this very well, with the result that they quickly consolidated their learning and

began to write equations for the reactions carried out. Although work is usually well adapted to the needs of lower attaining pupils, teachers' planning does not always focus sharply enough on learning outcomes for higher attaining pupils. Marking of pupils' day-to-day work is up to date, but clear learning targets that will help them improve their science are not set regularly enough.

107. The science department is very well led and managed. Teachers work well together as a team, sharing ideas and supporting each other. For example, teachers have recently collaborated on designing investigations to challenge higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, the department is not structured in a way that allows delegation of tasks or provides development opportunities for teachers. A key feature in pupils' motivation is the very good system for recording and tracking their progress; pupils know where they are in terms of their attainment and have clear targets for progression to the next level. Schemes of work are being up-dated, but at present contain insufficient reference to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, or to industrial and commercial applications of science. Laboratory accommodation is very good and is enhanced by displays of pupils' work, both in the laboratories and in surrounding corridors; they are stimulating spaces for pupils to learn their science. Although the laboratory technicians provide a very good service in support of teaching, they have too little time to keep all equipment in a good state of repair.
108. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. National Curriculum and GCSE results were well above average then, and they still are. Teaching was good in about one third of lessons at the last inspection, but is now good or very good in all lessons. Some higher attaining pupils, particularly in Year 7, are still insufficiently challenged and the technicians still have insufficient time, but the laboratory accommodation has improved significantly.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- Above average examination results in recent years with very good achievement especially for boys.
- Good teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 lead to pupils acquiring good levels of confidence, particularly in using their two-dimensional skills.
- Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to unusually high levels of independence and individuality in pupils' work for GCSE.
- The department contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils, especially boys, need to annotate work in their sketchbooks better to show what they have learned and how.
- The department needs more storage space, better and more flexible furniture and more computers to provide a richer curriculum, particularly in three-dimensional work

109. Pupils' skills in art when they enter the school reflect the range of attainment expected nationally. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Years 7 to 9, especially in two-dimensional work. They learn the key skills of painting and drawing, printing and other techniques very securely because teaching is good. Pupils become very confident that they can manipulate and control these media to achieve the effects they are desire, so they feel proud of their achievements and enjoy their work. By the end of Year 9, attainment in these two-dimensional areas is above average overall: in

three-dimensional work attainment is average. Overall standards of attainment are above average. Schemes of work cover these elements satisfactorily but teachers are constrained by having unsatisfactory storage, relatively small rooms for large classes and difficult 60-minute lessons. These factors create difficulties even for two-dimensional projects in classes observed. Pupils have very little space in which to work, but their own very positive attitudes, excellent degrees of co-operation and respect for others' workspace are key factors in overcoming these difficulties. In these ways pupils contribute very significantly to their own progress and success. In a current project in Year 8, for example, large top sets working on designs for a two-dimensional composition relating to Easter on A2 sized paper, had insufficient space, needing to overlap paper as they worked. The same is true for pupils designing masks in Year 9. Both of these projects are examples of the significant contribution made through art to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, incorporating, as they do, good emphasis on the inclusion of religious or cultural symbolism as elements of pupils' designs. All such projects include good levels of research and preparation, often as homework which most pupils undertake diligently. One Year 9 lesson, for example, included pupils describing the meanings and usage of masks from other cultures they had found on the Internet and elsewhere for homework. While pupils in all sets have similar curriculum opportunities, they are currently setted in groups based on abilities in modern foreign languages. This generally gives larger sets of higher attaining pupils who are predominantly girls and lower sets which are mostly boys. This gives a different quality of experience for groups, and while it offers positive opportunities, for example for teachers to emphasise the required vocabulary displayed on walls to lower attaining pupils, occasions occur where lower attaining pupils do not benefit from seeing and hearing examples of research done by abler pupils.

110. A large proportion of pupils, particularly girls, goes on to take art for GCSE. Here, achievement is very good and by Year 11 attainment is well above average. GCSE results in 2001 were well above average, a significant improvement over 2000. Current Year 11 pupils' work reflects similar high standards in two-dimensional work and in relief sculpture. Because of the constraints mentioned above, few pupils develop fully three-dimensional sculptural work. GCSE achievement is particularly impressive for boys, many of whom are lower attaining pupils who achieve standards much higher in art than in their other subjects. Although no boys have achieved highest grades, they do very well for their underlying abilities. A high proportion of girls achieve A*s. Differences lie in the lower achievement of boys in annotating their work in a way which demonstrates their learning, both at an intellectual level and in understanding the development of their skills. Girls do this much better, so achieve higher grades overall. A key strength of the department in Years 10 and 11 is pupils' ability to work independently from very early in Year 10, thus creating a high degree of individuality and personal response in their practical, visual interpretations of ideas.
111. The overall quality of teaching is very good. It is predominantly good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Strengths of the teaching lie in the very good relationships teachers share with pupils, knowing them very well and providing very effective one-to-one advice and help when needed. Teachers teach core skills rigorously to younger pupils, generating the confidence mentioned above. A team-teaching approach to GCSE classes shows teachers using effective 'hands-off' methods which enable pupils to develop the required degree of individuality. Secure subject knowledge and understanding enables teachers to target help very finely where requested or required, but they mostly intervene only where necessary, allowing pupils' own creativity to emerge. Teachers manage classes very well to overcome the difficulties of unsatisfactory furniture and small rooms and provide a very good quality of experience for their classes. Teachers now need to enable boys, particularly higher attaining boys, to achieve better quality in their written work.

112. Department management has remained good and the department has improved well since the time of the previous report. Attainment in examinations is still high. Girls are now achieving A*s. Critical studies are much better integrated into pupils' examination work, particularly girls'. Although the department needs more computers, the use of ICT is now very creative and, together with printing and photography, forms a good range of two-dimensional work for GCSE. Department documents are now good and interestingly presented with photographed illustrations of pupils' work. The difficulties of 60-minute lessons still exist, making it difficult for teachers to incorporate aspects of evaluative reflection into lesson.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Good and often very good teaching leading to good quality of learning for all pupils and resulting in GCSE results in food technology and textiles that are well above the average.
- Very effective leadership and management which ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to a broad range of experiences.
- The quality of relationships and high standards of behaviour generate positive attitudes to learning; these promote good and often very good progress.
- Very good technical support which enables effective individual pupil support and guidance.

Areas for improvement

- Raise standards in resistant materials by concentrating on matching tasks more closely to pupils' interests and capabilities and by improving presentation and graphicacy skills across all material areas. Also, ensure that all pupils are effectively taught the principles and processes of designing from the beginning of Year 7 in resistant materials. More rigorously identify the most gifted and talented pupils and extend their intellectual and creative capabilities through challenging tasks which enable them to achieve at the highest grades at GCSE.
- Establish greater opportunities for all pupils to use computers but particularly in relation to computer-aided design and manufacturing work to design and make a product.
- Improve the accommodation, especially for textiles, to more readily reflect the requirements for fashion designing and making.
- Further increase the provision of technical support time in food and textiles in order to provide greater support for teachers, especially where larger than usual groups are being taught.

113. Teachers' assessment in the subject at the end of Year 9 shows pupils attaining well above the national average. This is not supported by inspection evidence which shows attainment in food and textiles to be well above average but significantly below the average in resistant materials. Overall standards are average. Achievement is, however, good since pupils enter the school with below average attainment in the subject based on a variable experience of a full design and technology curriculum in earlier years.
114. By the end of Year 11, the proportion of A*-C grades achieved varies between the contributory specialisms, but GCSE results overall were broadly similar to the national average in 2001 and show a consistent trend in attainment over the past three years. Achievement is therefore satisfactory since pupils started the course with average attainment overall. The teaching in resistant materials over past years has not provided sufficient emphasis on teaching the principles and processes of design, resulting in significantly below

average standards. However, during this period, whilst the A*-C results in resistant materials were significantly below average, they were well above the average in food and textiles, showing very good achievement in these subjects. GCSE results in the range A*-G have been above the average over this period. Girls attain better than boys in the subject and achieve as well as girls nationally. Boys attain in line with boys nationally. Pupils do not achieve as well in the subject as they do in their other subjects, especially at the highest grades.

115. At the end of Year 9, standards of work seen vary across material areas but overall are above national expectations. Pupils work safely in a wide range of materials and develop good skills with a range of tools and processes. For example, in a Year 9 food technology lesson, pupils show very good skills in using tools and equipment to prepare and mix ingredients for their 'celebration cakes', using the creaming method very successfully. In a Year 9 electronics lesson higher attaining pupils show very good levels of creative imagination and innovation in their design for an 'FM Radio'. In a 'pencil case project in textiles', pupils are making very good progress in understanding and practising designing and making. However, in a Year 7 resistant material group, pupils' experience in designing is superficial and expectations are too low. In food and textiles, higher attaining pupils convey their design ideas well with good graphical communication skills. However, average and lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, have much weaker skills of presentation and graphicacy, with inconsistencies in the way they approach and carry out their design tasks.
116. In the work seen, by the end of Year 11 standards are broadly average overall. They are well above average in food technology and textiles and well below average in resistant materials and electronic systems. Standards have been affected considerably in resistant materials by the lack of emphasis placed over past years in practising the required design principles and processes. In food technology, for example, in the 'airline catering unit', the majority of pupils produce design folios that show good investigative skills and a systematic development of design ideas with good graphical communication skills. Similarly, in Year 11 textiles, a high proportion of pupils, mostly girls, produce design folders which show very good levels of creative flair and imagination. However, in other design areas, for example in the 'clock project' in resistant materials, the investigative research, presentation and graphicacy skills of too many of the mostly average and lower attaining pupils show a weak understanding of design processes. Pupils present work showing little concept of spatial awareness and the expected conventions of design drawing. In this area too many pupils cannot use the correct technical terminology when describing their designs and in outlining the processes involved. In all material areas, the use of the computer by pupils to present work is underdeveloped, as is their knowledge and understanding of the use of the computer to design and manufacture a simple product. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve appropriate levels for their capabilities. There is no significant variation in the attainment of pupils from different backgrounds or in relation to ethnicity or for whom English is an additional language.
117. Where the teaching is good or better and tasks are well matched to pupils' interest and capability, the great majority of pupils show a very positive attitude to learning and much enthusiasm in carrying out the tasks set. In resistant materials, pupils' past experiences in designing have not been sufficiently demanding and lead to a less positive attitude to learning. This is being gradually and effectively addressed by the new teaching staff. Behaviour in all lessons is usually very good and pupils show a high degree of co-operation and collaboration when working on practical tasks.
118. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is often very good in a substantial number of lessons. In the minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, it is because the tasks set

are insufficiently challenging at an intellectual and creative level and the expectations of outcomes are too low. In all lessons, the teaching methods and styles used are very successful in keeping pupils on task and working productively in a pleasant working atmosphere. Teachers produce lesson worksheets that provide pupils with guidelines for their tasks but the worksheets are not always sufficiently modified to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment, and especially in challenging the gifted and talented pupils. Strategies to develop pupils' literacy skills, particularly the technical language of the subject, are good but not yet universally implemented across all design areas. In resistant materials, marking is not always well focused on the design element of the work and does not give pupils sufficiently clear direction about how they can improve this work. In most design areas, pupils are encouraged to use ICT to complete coursework but such work is very much restricted by a lack of computers in the area. Homework is set, but learning is reduced because it is not always sufficiently challenging. A positive ethos for learning is always sought by teachers and almost always generated, with all pupils expected to work hard and achieve the expected objectives in each lesson. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that a very pleasant atmosphere is generated and that learning takes place in a very caring environment. The technicians provide invaluable contributions to the pupils' learning by helping them whenever possible with their tasks. There is, however, insufficient technical support in the food and textiles area.

119. The leadership in the subject is very good and management of the provision is now secure, with clear indications of rising standards and higher expectations by all staff. The inconsistencies attributable to the teaching of the subject in the past have been resolved. Overall, however, past weaknesses in some design areas mean that progress since the previous inspection is only satisfactory rather than good. Standards have dropped but are now beginning to rise as the greater focus on the principles and processes of designing are being implemented in resistant materials and electronic systems.

GEOGRAPHY

The overall provision in geography is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards have improved significantly and are now high, as seen in recent GCSE examination results.
- Teaching is very good. It is particularly enriched in the ICT programme and the fieldwork provision in Years 10 and 11.
- Subject leadership is very good; day-to-day management is very effective with teachers working together as a competent team.
- Teachers are very committed, supportive and caring; this aids pupils' progress noticeably.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers and their peers are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; they contribute significantly to the standard of learning.

Areas for improvement

- Fieldwork needs to be developed in Years 8 and 9 to support the taught curriculum.
- Teaching needs to ensure that in all lessons pupils are more involved in their own learning.
- Pupils need to be more involved in assessing and targeting their own progress.
- The inadequate specialist teaching accommodation and shortfall in resources need to be addressed.

120. Standards of work are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 9. Pupils' achievement in relation to standards at entry in Year 7, which is slightly below the national

average, is good at the end of Year 9. There is a slow start to the course in Year 7, but the pace of work develops well in Years 8 and 9. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good grounding in geographical skills. Most can use and interpret Ordnance Survey maps satisfactorily, and presentation and analyses of statistical data graphically are good. Knowledge of location is satisfactory overall except for low attainers whose knowledge is less secure. Pupils of all attainment levels have an inadequate understanding of spatial patterns. Higher attainers do not have sufficient challenge overall, in particular in developing higher levels of skills in their work in Year 7. Average attainers progress well, particularly in Years 8 and 9 where the pace of work is brisk. Low attainers, including pupils with special educational needs, are given good support by learning support assistants and class teachers, and progress well, although some literacy problems still exist.

121. Standards of work at the end of Year 11 for most pupils are well above the national average. Achievement of most pupils over Years 10 and 11 is good and, for some, very good when related to standards of work at the end of Year 9. A good rate of progress is evident among pupils of differing levels of attainment. This is the result of challenging work, high expectations, more open-ended assignments and a greater emphasis on enquiry skills and case studies. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, produce very detailed and thorough work. They are able to describe and explain a range of physical and economic processes very well. Average attaining pupils are able to describe the processes well and show good understanding of quite complex input, process and output linkages. Low attainers are able to describe the processes satisfactorily but their understanding is more limited. Against the national position for similar ability pupils their standards of work are high. The best individual GCSE project work based on fieldwork is of very good quality. A programme of revision and examination skills has been very successful in ensuring coursework is used to maximum advantage in preparation for GCSE examinations.
122. Recent GCSE A*-C grade results have been above or well above the national average, with the 2001 results being very high. The trend of improvement is significantly greater than the national trend. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades is very high, being more than double the national average. Boys and girls both perform well. In 2001 boys' performance was exceptionally high compared with the national norm. When compared with other GCSE subjects within the school, geography results have been above or well above the average, as in 2001. Recent GCSE A*-G results have also been above the national position.
123. The pupils' attitude to learning is very positive. Most pupils work very conscientiously on tasks set and concentrate well in lessons. Many show a real enthusiasm for the topics taught. Pupils' behaviour is invariably very good and often excellent; there is rarely even an attempt by pupils to misbehave. Very good, constructive and effective relationships exist with teachers, and pupils are supportive of one another. Pupils listen with interest and tolerance to other pupils' views and individual responses to questions are usually good. However, class response is not sufficiently developed.
124. Teaching is overall very good and it improved over the period of the inspection. Teachers with training in the subject and with considerable skills, undertake all the teaching. Teachers are well motivated and caring, and provide very good professional guidance and support. They manage pupils well through encouragement, praise and clear direction, and these form a very good foundation for learning. Teaching is lively, well focused and interesting. It is underpinned by a very secure knowledge of the subject matter taught. Lesson planning is very detailed and comprehensive and based on the use of a wide range of high quality and relevant resources. Some lessons, although of good quality, are too teacher led, with insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate. This didactic teaching does not enhance learning as teachers do far too much for pupils. Best teaching occurs when lessons have a

variety of practical activities that require pupils to involve themselves in their learning. There are high quality interventions by the teacher to reinforce learning. Teachers also circulate well and give good support to pupils. When there is good dialogue between the teacher and pupils that extends the pupils' knowledge, there is a greater understanding of the topic taught. These features were well illustrated in a Year 9 lesson where pupils used computers to establish the distribution of earthquakes, the links that occur between them and the pattern of plate boundaries discussed in the previous lesson. Most pupils' ICT skills are very good and they loaded the earthquake template using Classlink very competently. Pupils using the Internet, Physical World and World Book extracted relevant information and copied it on to the template. From this they investigated the distribution, causes and the effects of earthquakes extremely well. The higher attainers even noted a difference between the types of plate margins and the nature and form of earthquake activity. The success of the whole lesson centred on the very effective preparation, support and dialogue between the teacher, learning support assistant and pupils. Similarly, when visual aids such as video extracts, maps, diagrams, and graphs are used, especially when projected on to the master screen, learning is noticeably better. This was evident in a Year 10 class on weather where the teacher placed the lesson in the context of work previously studied very well. Using a master screen projection, pupils' individual maps, and skilful teaching using a series of well-chosen questions and answers, pupils identified the relationship between rainfall totals in grid squares and the relief of the same area by colour coding. With the use of prompt cards and pupils working in pairs, pupils went on to work out the weather from symbols provided for eight different weather stations. Learning in this mainly low ability class was impressive.

125. Fieldwork undertaken greatly enriches the curriculum and results in most effective learning, particularly in Years 7, 10 and 11. It is inadequate, however, in Years 8 and 9. Fieldwork in the local area needs expanding and there is a need for all pupils to study the physical and human geography of an area outside the local area. ICT has been very well developed since the last inspection and an impressive course of ICT applications linked to curriculum themes exists in all years. A coherent programme of ICT skills progressively developed over Years 7 to 11 exists and is a model of good practice.
126. Learning generally would be further improved if more use were made in Years 7 to 9 of local Ordnance Survey maps and local examples that are within pupils' experience, rather than theoretical models. The subject needs to develop pupils' study skills further, such as thinking skills in Years 7 to 9. Standards of literacy are good and standards of numeracy are very good overall. There is very good use of the Learning Resources Centre in providing valuable support for the development of enquiry skills in project work.
127. Leadership of the subject is very good and the day-to-day management is very efficient. Departmental strategic and curricular planning is very thorough and other documentation is also of high quality. The subject development plan needs to include subject priorities as well as those of the school and be used as an operational plan developed over a longer period than a year. There is need to formally evaluate the impact of teaching and training on learning. Assessment is of generally good quality but pupils' marked work in Years 7 to 9 has limited comment and insufficient guidance as to how pupils can further improve their work. Current practice does not involve pupils sufficiently in the evaluation of their own learning and in identifying agreed targets for improvement. The department's assessment arrangements, including monitoring and tracking of pupil progress over time, are very good. Staff work very well as a team but the lack of suiting together of the specialist subject rooms restricts, somewhat, opportunities for professional dialogue. There are restrictions as some teaching rooms are limited for independent resource-based learning with large classes. Good quality wall displays, including pupils' work, provide an effective learning environment. Learning resources are good overall. However, there are important shortfalls, such as the need of a fieldwork budget, a large permanent display world map in each of the specialist subject

rooms as standard equipment and a suite of eight or ten computers shared with history, to ensure that the ICT requirements for all students are fully met.

128. There were few areas for improvement identified in the previous report. All have been suitably addressed. There has been good progress since the previous inspection in taking positive action to improve standards of work in external examinations and to develop school priorities such as ICT. The head of department and staff have very good capacity to improve standards further and implement the points raised in this report.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards of work are consistently above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are very good and effective in helping pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and make a significant contribution to the very good standard of learning.
- The subject is very well led, and effectively and very competently managed, and this ensures the pupil experience is well organised and appropriate to their needs.
- A very strong team of committed and professional specialist teachers provides high quality teaching with pupils fully involved in their own learning.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and produce an effective and harmonious classroom ethos.

Areas for improvement

- The well above average standards in coursework need reflecting in sustained GCSE results of similar high quality.
- A fieldwork programme in Years 7 to 9, and a coherent ICT programme for Years 7 to 11 with ready access to ICT facilities, are needed to further enrich the curriculum.
- A more detailed explanation of lesson aims and context of study would help provide a firmer foundation in lessons, particularly for lower attainers.

129. Standards of work are above the national average at the end of Year 9. These standards are achieved by high quality teaching and pupils who have a very positive attitude to learning. Standards on entry at the start of Year 7 are close to the national position. Pupils' achievements in Years 7 to 9 are therefore good and for some very good. This is so for pupils all levels of attainment, including the gifted and talented who are suitably extended. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good grounding in historical skills. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of events and the main people of the periods studied. They appreciate their significance in the overall context of study particularly well. Knowledge of chronology is generally good and most pupils demonstrate an ability to identify the nature and significance of source material very well. Higher attainers are beginning to analyse the reasons for, and the results of, events and changes that occur over time and give different interpretations of these. However, in Year 7, at times materials used are not always adequately simplified to meet the needs of low attainers.

130. Standards of work are well above the average at the end of Year 11. In lessons observed, standards of work in Year 10 are particularly impressive, with pupils making a very big input into the development of their own knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject. In Years 10 and 11, pupils' achievement is at least good. By the end of Year 11, pupils have further developed their skills in using historical evidence and analysing the reasons for, and the

results of, events studied. Pupils are generally confident in undertaking historical enquiry and in using source material. Average attainers analyse and interpret evidence well, but critical evaluation needs developing. There is, however, high quality evaluation in the best individual coursework projects on Sherborne Castle. The good progress in Years 10 and 11 results from the very high quality teaching provided by all three subject specialists and pupils who work hard and are highly motivated. Coursework standards are not fully reflected in the GCSE results. A greater emphasis on revision and examination skills and the application of pupils learning to GCSE examination requirements could further improve the already above average results.

131. Recent grades A*-C results GCSE have varied, with some years being just below the national average to other years being above, as in 2001. The proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades is above the national position most years. In 2001, boys and girls performed well against the national average with the difference between them being similar to that nationally. The subject is far more popular as a GCSE option with both boys and girls than is the case nationally. In 2001, when compared with other GCSE subjects within the school, history results were close to the average. However, boys did better in history than in their other subjects. Grades A*-G results in GCSE are above the national position. The overall trend in GCSE results is upwards but has not always been consistent or sustained.
132. The pupils' attitude to learning is very positive and many pupils display real interest and enjoyment in their work. Pupils work very well and at good pace, and are attentive in class. Many display a real pride in their work, and presentation and quality of effort are very high. Pupils respond very well to teachers' questions, and oral and written contributions to lessons are often detailed and of high quality. Pupils have excellent relationships with their teachers, particularly in Years 10 and 11 where a real rapport is evident. Pupils want to co-operate with their teachers, and their excellent approach to learning contributes noticeably to their good progress. They relate very well to each other when working in groups.
133. Teaching and learning are very good overall and occur when specialists teach the subject. Learning is also of a high quality due to pupils applying themselves diligently to their work and having high aspirations. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils, and classroom management and control, built on good relationships, are strengths. Best teaching occurs when lessons are carefully and imaginatively planned, and is underpinned by detailed knowledge and understanding of the subject matter taught. This teaching is lively, stimulating and presented at a brisk pace, with real challenge and very high expectations. In these lessons the question and answer technique is skilfully used, often aided with visual materials, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues and events and thus their self-learning. In particular, these lessons develop historical enquiry and investigation skills well. Lessons are supported with a wide range of high quality visual aids and resources, including artefacts, photographs, posters, maps and charts, and practical activities such as simulation and role-play exercises. This was seen well in a Year 8 lesson where pupils, working in groups, assessed the responses of persons drawn from the prominent religious groups that existed during the reign of Charles I. Pupils simulated the effect that five selected events of Charles' reign had on the character they represented. Learning was impressive as the pupils noted the likely effect of these events on their roles as Protestants, Catholics, Puritans and craftsmen of that time. The teacher's guidance was very skilful and pupils' analyses were consolidated very well. This had a significant and positive impact on the quality of learning. It was also evidenced in very successful lessons in Year 10 that discussed the migration of peoples to the American West. Pupils using maps and tables of statistical data identified the areas from which the settlers migrated to the Great Plain and the teacher reinforced their analyses on a master map projected onto the whiteboard. Pupils established a pattern for such movement and, with skilful guidance, explained the possible reasons for the migrations. Using information packs and working in pairs, they categorised

statements extremely competently into push, pull and enabling factors. This showed an exceptionally high level of understanding of the concept being taught and learning was very secure.

134. Learning would be further improved if in all lessons the aims of the lesson were more precisely focused on what pupils will know, understand and be able to do by the end of the lesson. This should be shared with the class at the start and tested for effectiveness and the end of the lesson. At times, learning suffers when teachers do not take sufficient time to thoroughly and fully place the lesson in the context of study so that pupils of all attainment levels can make appropriate linkages.
135. Literacy skills are well developed but numeracy skills need greater prominence in the programme of study. The use of the Learning Resource Centre in developing historical enquiry skills in selected areas of the curriculum is very good practice from which pupils clearly benefit. Fieldwork is not included in Years 7 to 9 as an educational experience and this needs rectifying. However, the coursework for GCSE includes fieldwork at Sherborne Castle and is a very productive experience for pupils. ICT has been developed since the previous inspection with it being applied to at least one project each year. There is need to develop this further and establish a coherent programme of ICT skills linked to curriculum topics taught over Years 7 to 11.
136. The leadership of the subject is very good. The department is conscientiously and effectively run and very competently managed. Documentation is thoughtfully prepared, clearly presented and of very good quality. The work of the department is carefully monitored. The department needs now to formally evaluate the impact of teaching and training on learning and establish a longer-term, operational subject development plan that is fully costed and reviewed. Day-to-day marking is good, with comments made usually helpful and indicating how pupils may further improve their work. The department's monitoring of pupils' performance, tracking progress and taking appropriate action are very good. However, it does not currently use pupils' self-evaluation sufficiently with teacher assessment to provide targets for individual pupils based on developing knowledge, understanding and skills. All three subject specialists work very well together and are a very accomplished and competent team with a good blend of experience and youth. The newly qualified teacher has been exceedingly well supported by the head of department and the school. There is a current vacancy that needs filling with a well-qualified subject specialist to sustain existing high standards. Accommodation is very good and suited which allows for regular informal professional dialogue between staff. Good quality wall displays provide an attractive learning environment. Learning resources are good and the specialist teaching rooms are well equipped. However, a suite of some eight or ten computers is needed, shared with geography, to ensure that facilities are available for all pupils to have the necessary access to ICT work.
137. There has been good progress since the previous inspection, with overall standards of work and quality of teaching and learning rising significantly. The main points for improvement in that report have been appropriately addressed. There is very good capacity in the subject to improve standards of learning further and meet the points raised in this report.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching in all lessons is good or better, and sometimes outstanding, leading to a high quality of learning in most lessons.

- Good leadership and management of the discrete ICT provision ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to ICT within the limits of resources.
- Very good relationships between pupils and teachers lead to very good attitudes to learning, very good behaviour and good progress in almost every lesson.
- Good resources for the discrete teaching of ICT, including very fast Internet access, enable pupils to research their topics quickly and effectively.
- Excellent technical support for the subject ensures that the systems are always working efficiently and effectively, which greatly benefits pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement

- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to extend their accredited study in the subject into Year 11 and ensure a more effective and realistic assessment of pupils' ICT skills at the end of Year 11.
- Develop more explicit references to National Curriculum levels of attainment in the projects set and ensure that the levels awarded more realistically reflect pupils' attainment in all strands of the subject.
- Ensure that the most gifted and talented pupils are suitably extended and challenged by the work set.
- Continue to build upon the good practice in many subjects by providing more opportunities for all pupils to use ICT across the curriculum to support their learning and ensure that all subjects contribute effectively to the assessment of pupils' ICT skills in Year 9.

138. Teachers' assessment in the subject at the end of Year 9 shows pupils attaining well above the national average. This is over-optimistic and not supported by inspection evidence which shows above average attainment. Whilst there are significant strengths in communicating information, attainment in data handling and control technology is only at a basic level. However, achievement is very good by the end of Year 9 since pupils enter the school with below average attainment. GCSE A*-C results in the short course were above the national average in 2001 and significantly above in the full GCSE course. Achievement is therefore good, and notably so in the short course completed by the end of Year 10. However, the very small number candidates (all boys) who took the full course makes comparisons with national averages less meaningful and renders gender comparisons meaningless.
139. Levels of attainment in ICT are above the national average. In the Year 9 work seen, there are significant strengths in pupils' attainment in word processing, desktop publishing and spreadsheet work to calculate values, especially in the work of the higher attaining pupils. However, there are weaknesses in all pupils' understanding, skills and knowledge in control technology, and to a much lesser extent, in data logging and measurement where recently introduced work in science supports pupils' learning in this aspect to good effect. In the current Year 7, most pupils have very good practical skills. They use the mouse and keyboards effectively, although a very small minority of pupils who have difficulties with literacy are slow to pick out the keys they need and are less likely to use short cuts to speed up their work. Pupils know how to log on to the network, use passwords, call up programs and use them to search for information. Pupils alter the style of letters to make words more attractive to the reader, and add suitable illustrations in their texts, called up from clip art files. In one Year 7 lesson, pupils used the Internet very effectively to investigate 'bugs'. Although some pupils show good skills in using 'presentation' software to create slides to tell a story, it is less well established as a method of presenting work in general. Pupils' work, using the Internet, is very good, made more practical by the excellent broadband fast connection which always links pupils to multi-task work very effectively, as for example in the 'May Ball' project in Year 9. Most pupils know how to use search engines to find information, but some of the lower attaining pupils are often overwhelmed by it and cannot always decide what best fits their needs.

140. Standards at the end of Year 11 are above average in relation to communicating and handling information, including research work using the Internet. For example, in science pupils used a computer microscope to examine their own teeth and then used the Internet to research how a microscope works. There is considerable use of computers in geography and history where well-planned opportunities are provided. In art, pupils effectively scan images and manipulate these creatively. Pupils effectively use digital photography in art and food technology to create images that are used in their coursework. Similarly, pupils show good skills in the use of a range of software programs in physical education to complete their coursework in Year 11. In the Year 10 GCSE short course most pupils are achieving at the highest levels, with no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. Higher attainers are more adept at inputting text, drafting and redrafting work, using keyboard shortcuts and multi-tasking than average or lower attaining pupils, although a great majority of these show good skills in these activities. Clearly, almost all pupils are developing their skills in the use of a good range of computer programs and are very competent at word processing, accessing the Internet and in using spreadsheets. All pupils have good practical skills, readily logging onto the network, using passwords, and loading the required program and their saved work files. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve appropriate levels for their capabilities. There is no significant variation in the attainment of pupils from different backgrounds or in relation to ethnicity or for whom English is an additional language. The overall achievement of pupils is good.
141. The teaching is very successful in generating a very positive attitude to learning and very good behaviour in all lessons. Pupils are very interested in their work and are almost always fully focused on completing work within the sharply targeted time limits. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm in their work and are very supportive of one another, readily helping each other to overcome problems.
142. Teaching and learning are very good in the timetabled ICT lessons in Years 7 and 9 and good in Year 10 GCSE lessons. Across the curriculum, where teachers have been observed using computers with their pupils, skills have been high. However, there are also missed opportunities in a minority of subjects to enable pupils to use computers to support their learning or use the skills learnt in discrete lessons. In all lessons, teachers' planning is thorough, with tasks that are topical, interesting and well matched to pupils' interests being very well related to the subject requirements. Although some extension tasks are written into lesson plans for the more gifted and talented pupils, little use was made of these tasks in lessons seen. Similarly, the teaching aids used on some occasions to set objectives and displayed as a large projected image, guide and support the higher and most of the average attaining pupils well, but are not always sufficiently modified to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Nevertheless, teachers make good use of special network-control software called 'Classlink' to enable them to demonstrate concepts on all computers simultaneously, thus ensuring that all pupils can see the demonstration clearly on their own computers. Despite a display of key ICT words on classroom walls, teachers do not always effectively reinforce the development of the technical vocabulary in the subject. Good oral assessment techniques provide pupils with a clear direction for their work and in identifying areas for improvement. However, pupils are not always sufficiently aware of what National Curriculum levels they are working towards. Pupils' capabilities are well known by the teachers, who are sensitive to individual needs. The planned work in all timetabled lessons covers the requirements of the National Curriculum, although provision for control technology is basic and generally underdeveloped.
143. Within the discrete timetabled ICT lessons, good leadership and management ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met within the limits of resources. The deployment of both teaching and support staff with appropriate expertise and experience to teach the subject is good. Assessment and reporting procedures and processes are good

within the discrete ICT programmes of study but these arrangements do not effectively use the ICT work in other subjects to support overall judgements, particularly at the end of Year 11.

144. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection. The use of computers across the curriculum has been considerably increased, although there are still some missed opportunities in some subjects to enable pupils to make effective use of computers. The computer hardware and software provided is now very modern and powerful with very fast Internet access, and funding has been established to increase the provision of both control technology hardware and software. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to use computers outside of curriculum time, which considerably helps pupils develop and use their skills. There is now excellent technical support which provides a very effective contribution to pupils' learning by ensuring the efficient operation and maintenance of the equipment and in effectively supplying and controlling data for a range of educational needs throughout the school.

Key ICT skills for Years 7 to 11

145. Pupils' ICT skills are generally very good in terms of communicating information through word processing and desktop publishing. However, the great majority of pupils have little more than a basic knowledge and understanding of how to use the computer to control another machine, to capture data, log changes or measure outcomes over a period of time. Most pupils can effectively use a spreadsheet to carry out basic mathematical calculations, with the higher attaining pupils able to set up complex formulae without too much support from teachers. However, the skills learnt in, for example, using spreadsheets in discrete lessons, are not always fully utilised in other subjects. Research skills using the Internet are good; most pupils are selective and discerning in what they search for and use. Almost all pupils have very good practical skills, readily logging on to the school network, using passwords, loading the required software programs and their saved work files, and using the keyboard and the mouse to successfully negotiate the required menus and functions.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision for modern foreign languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils' standards of attainment are rising in Years 7 to 11.
- The department is well led and managed.
- The contribution made to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils have the opportunity to study Latin in their own time.

Areas for improvement

- More encouragement for pupils to study two languages in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure that the styles of teaching across the department are more consistent.
- Develop the marking of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 to improve the levels of understanding.

146. The proportion of pupils attaining grades in the range A*-C in 2001 in the GCSE full course examinations was well above the national average in French, and above the national average in German. These results show a substantial improvement in each language over those in 2000. The proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-G was above the national average in French and German.

147. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 in 2001 are above the national average. This marks a significant improvement over the previous year, when assessments suggested that pupils' attainment was in line with the national average.
148. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' overall standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 in their main language, French or German, are above average. Their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of the foreign language, used by the teachers in many lessons and in conversations on cassette, is good. Pupils read aloud well, and pronunciation is generally good. Pupils can ask and answer questions. Higher attaining pupils in a Year 8 German class are very confident speakers and they talked with partners about what they like wearing best of all. They can use subordinate clauses with *weil* correctly. Pupils' standards of writing overall are satisfactory. In the work seen, pupils are achieving appropriate levels. The majority of pupils in Year 9 can use the perfect tense; higher attaining pupils in a Year 8 French class can use it competently to write short paragraphs about holidays. Some of the writing, however, lacks purpose, and few pupils complete corrections or redraft their work to improve its accuracy.
149. In the work seen during the inspection, pupils' overall standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are well above average. They achieve well. Pupils' understanding of the foreign languages is very good. Average attainers in a Year 11 German class had no difficulty in noting down details about birthday celebrations and showed a good knowledge of the vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils in a Year 11 German class understood, with the aid of key words to help them, the main points of two passages about Christmas celebrations in Austria and Germany. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 showed a good knowledge of the calendar of Christian festivals in German. They were able, for example, to link up correctly the English definition of Christ on the cross and Christ rose after three days to Good Friday or Easter Monday and to the German equivalent. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11, in a French class, demonstrated a very good knowledge of different tenses in forming sentences about what they would have done if certain circumstances had prevailed. In one of their coursework samples, they wrote about work experience with a wide range of the appropriate vocabulary and used different tenses well. Mistakes were minimal.
150. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into classes, and some of the classes contain fewer pupils. When support is present, it is good. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9 and good progress in Years 10 to 11.
151. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is very good. Their attitudes to the subjects are good or very good. This enables them to learn well. They apply themselves well to the different tasks, listen well to the cassettes in comprehension exercises, and work well independently. They work co-operatively with their partners in conversations or in role-plays and relationships are very good.
152. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good: overall, it is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects, and they use the foreign languages well in many lessons, but not in all of them. In addition, all teachers provide listening exercises on cassette, so that pupils hear different voices in a foreign language. These measures enable pupils to develop their understanding. The teaching of the basic skills, literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory. In a Year 7 German class, pupils had written one and a half pages of dates correctly, but in a Year 7 French class some of the pupils had copied the date from the board incorrectly. Key words are not always spelt correctly. Teachers help pupils to improve pronunciation. Pupils worked well in another Year 7 German class to produce a graph in a class survey on hobbies. Teachers plan their lessons well, with different activities and skills, with the result that pupils maintain their concentration and interest. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their oral and aural skills. In a Year 9 German lesson,

for example, higher attaining pupils had made good progress in their second language and used the perfect tense well in the lesson to describe holidays in different towns with the aid of a well-prepared worksheet of symbols as prompts. Lower attaining pupils in another Year 9 lesson learnt the names of parts of the body, and by the end of the lesson had put these into constructions to say that each part hurt. Not all lessons, however, finish with an evaluation of how much has been learnt. Teaching methods are good and resources are well used. Games, mimes, pair work, reading aloud and the use of flash cards all help to make pupils productive and to ensure that they work at a good pace. The use of the German Assistantin together with the class teacher in a Year 7 lesson increased the pace. Relationships are very good. The management of pupils is good. Homework is set regularly, but the marking of pupils' written work in Years 7 to 9 is inconsistent and irregular across the department; it does not always help pupils to understand what they must do to improve

153. In the French lessons where the teaching is only satisfactory, questions are not directed at named pupils, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to repeat or to consolidate phrases, and pupils are sometimes not sufficiently productive because the activities are not challenging enough.
154. The curriculum is enhanced in Year 9 with the provision of Latin. Lessons take place twice a week before school. The teaching is enthusiastic and stimulating and provides the pupils with the opportunity to look analytically at the language from which French and German have evolved. In the lesson observed, one of the excellent poems composed by one of the group, relating to a character in the book, was read out to the class. Pupils were then exhorted to "think and link, link and think" as words in the Latin passage were compared with French and English. Pupils then had the opportunity to translate some of the passage into English. Eleven pupils were entered for the GCSE examination last year, and all pupils obtained a grade in the A*-C range.
155. The leadership and management of the department are good. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are opportunities for pupils to travel abroad and to have contact with native speakers in school. Pupils in Year 6 from local primary schools, which send their pupils to All Saints, have the opportunity to learn French or German in one half-hour lesson each week. In the one lesson observed, they learnt the names of animals in German from flash cards, which for them was a new way to learn, and sang a song. Although a second foreign language is introduced in Year 8, very few pupils continue with the study of two languages for the GCSE examination. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and results in pupils learning well in many lessons.
- The department's contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The very good relationships between teachers and pupils and the wide range of opportunities on offer have led to more pupils taking part in extra-curricular activities.
- The very good provision for instrumental and singing lessons has resulted in a third of pupils receiving lessons.

Areas for improvement

- More systematic monitoring of teaching and learning, including instrumental lessons, in order to share good teaching practice and to ensure pupils are learning effectively.
- Plan more specifically for higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 to enable them to make more rapid progress in lessons.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to use ICT to enhance their performing and composing skills.

156. Teacher assessments for 2001 show pupils at the end of Year 9 attaining below the national average. However, results are unreliable because at the time there were no national exemplification materials against which teachers could standardise assessments. In 2001, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A*-C at GCSE was in line with the national average. Results have tended to be above national averages since the previous inspection but as numbers are small, comparisons are statistically unreliable.
157. By the age of 14, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average; pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When performing in a group, pupils in Year 9 can play their own part fluently and confidently and with an awareness of how the parts fit together. They can compose and perform polyrhythmic pieces successfully, showing a good understanding of the characteristics of African music. However, their keyboard skills are underdeveloped. Generally, only pupils receiving piano or keyboard lessons play with both hands and know how to play chords. Pupils in Year 7 show a good understanding of the musical elements and they can improvise melodic phrases successfully. In Year 8, pupils can maintain their parts confidently when singing three different spirituals at the same time.
158. By the age of 16, pupils' attainment is average and their overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 11 can compose well-structured pieces with a good balance between repetition and contrast. They have a good understanding of harmony and of the characteristics of the instruments for which they compose. However, they do not always develop their ideas sufficiently to achieve the higher grades. Many pupils receive instrumental lessons and this has a positive impact on all aspects of their work. Pupils perform fluently and expressively and the performances of some pupils are well above average.
159. Pupils' attitudes to their learning and their behaviour are both very good. This is mainly as a result of the good teaching and the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are also very supportive of each other and can be trusted to work sensibly in groups around the music suite without constant supervision. The numbers of pupils taking part in extra-curricular activities and receiving instrumental lessons have increased significantly since the previous inspection. Approximately one third of pupils are now receiving instrumental tuition. The numbers of pupils opting to follow a course in music at GCSE have also increased during the last two years.
160. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use their own musical skills effectively in demonstrations, which enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a Year 9 lesson about theme and variations, the teacher demonstrated the possibilities for varying a tune which the pupils successfully tried out themselves on instruments. In many lessons and extra-curricular activities, very enthusiastic, lively teaching and effective use of humour results in pupils being keen learners. Varied activities and good use of time results in pupils concentrating well. While pupils are working, teachers go round and provide very constructive and encouraging support, leading to pupils making good gains in their understanding and skills. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher's very careful planning, thoughtful organisation of groups and effective support resulted in pupils producing well-presented performances, showing very good understanding of 20th century music. However, teachers' planning does not always cater sufficiently well for developing the performing and composing skills of higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 who have well-developed

instrumental skills. Consequently, these pupils do not always make enough progress by the end of the lesson. Teachers could make more efficient use of instrumental and ICT resources so that fewer pupils have to share instruments. This would enable more pupils to develop their instrumental and composing skills effectively. Pupils' progress over time at both key stages is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils achieve well as a reflection of the quality of music education received and this achievement is not yet reflected in the teacher assessment results or examination performance. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers adapt the tasks and teaching methods to meet their needs.

161. Opportunities for pupils to learn to play a wide range of instruments are very good. There is also a very good range of extra-curricular activities including handbells, recorder group, band, jazz club, songwriting club, singing groups, support sessions for GCSE pupils and rock bands. Pupils can extend their performing skills by taking part in school concerts, assemblies, Communion services, the Weymouth Festival and local fund-raising activities for charities.
162. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department has clear ideas for moving the department forward and there is a strong commitment to improvement. The head of department works with much energy and enthusiasm and has succeeded in raising the profile of music in the school since being appointed just under two years ago. With the appointment of a second music teacher in September and therefore an increase in staffing, teachers have been able to discuss teaching and learning methods regularly. However, there is not a systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning, that also includes instrumental teaching, in order to share good practice, to identify training needs and to further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. However, assessment criteria are too general to enable pupils to understand clearly what they have to do to achieve a particular mark, grade or level. Since the time of the previous inspection, the music accommodation has been improved and is now good. During the previous term the department moved into a suite of new rooms providing more classrooms and space for pupils to work in small groups. Resources have also improved. There is a good range of classroom instruments and sufficient ICT resources for the department to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. However, there are no computers with music sequencing software and insufficient planned opportunities within schemes of work for pupils to use ICT to enhance their composing and performing skills. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Very good relationships between teachers and classes ensure that lessons move with pace and purpose.
- Good teaching motivates pupils to work hard and make progress.
- Administration of the subject ensures that teachers work with corporate spirit.

Areas for improvement

- Poor accommodation affects the development of indoor games.
- Curricular design is narrow, with over-emphasis on games, largely because accommodation has deteriorated since the previous inspection.

163. By the end of Year 11, attainment is above average. Two groups of pupils who have taken the GCSE examination reached standards in line with national levels. About half of them achieved good passes. Written coursework ranges from satisfactory to good, with about two thirds of boys and girls producing good work. Year 11 projects about fitness are very good; many pupils, encouraged by teachers, show a wide range of ICT skills in producing them. Most GCSE pupils are motivated to learn. Well-planned homework ensures that the majority have good understanding of topics and can confidently discuss them. Boys and girls are equally forthcoming and articulate in answering questions and expressing opinions. Pupils have good football skills and make noticeable improvement in passing and in moving appropriately off the ball. Teachers have high expectations, and key principles are clearly explained. Similar improvement occurs in basketball where boys and girls learn to apply attacking strategies. Between Years 10 and 11 there is noticeably good progress in basketball.
164. By the end of Year 9, pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards in basketball and netball are in line with national expectations. In Year 7, boys and girls improve their understanding of rules and at the same time extend their acquisition of passing and catching skills. Some lessons, however, have to be taken in the school hall, which is without nets and unsuitable. This obviously restricts teaching and development of shooting skills. Year 8 pupils improve in netball where emphasis on small-sided games and practices allows all pupils to have much involvement. Throughout both key stages, pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into lessons. They are motivated, behave well and often make very significant contributions to lessons.
165. The overall quality of teaching is good; it is often very good and, occasionally, excellent. Thorough preparation features in excellent teaching. It results, in combination with the teachers' very good subject knowledge, in really motivating pupils and stimulating them both to make excellent oral contributions and to show much interest. Teachers have very good relationships with classes which help to develop pupils' enthusiasm, concentration, application and enjoyment of lessons. Specialist trained teachers have good subject knowledge and demonstrate skills well, in order to give pupils clear understanding. All teachers work hard to improve standards despite the poor accommodation for the subject.
166. ICT is used very well for administrative purposes and for production of teaching materials. Two networked computers have further enhanced such use. There are many very good displays which both convey information and celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils are clearly encouraged to use ICT to produce homework and a majority of both boys and girls have very good ICT skills. However, access to ICT facilities for teaching is restricted.
167. Leadership and management of physical education are good and result in a clear, corporate spirit between staff. Policies and schemes of work have been revised to meet National Curriculum requirements. A new assessment scheme, introduced in 2001, aims to link pupils' performances to national levels.
168. Accommodation for physical education is poor. Only the playing fields are of good standard. One small gymnasium and the school assembly hall are the only available spaces for indoor teaching. This adversely affects both standards of indoor games and design of a curriculum which, as a result, is strongly biased towards games. Storage space is simply inadequate. Severe problems are encountered whenever the weather is poor. Loss of access to a local pool also means that swimming, praised during the previous inspection, is no longer on the timetable.
169. Improvement, since the previous inspection, is satisfactory. Staffing has been strengthened and the number of specialist teachers increased. The GCSE examination has been

introduced and is proving to be popular with boys and girls. Accommodation has, however, deteriorated both because the swimming pool is no longer available and because another indoor space has been reallocated to another subject.

170. Extra-curricular provision is good. It is strong in games and many pupils, boys, girls and those with special educational needs, take part. There is a good range of games practices at lunchtimes and after school. More than half of pupils, boys and girls, attend extra-curricular sessions, some having played representative sport at town and county levels.