

INSPECTION REPORT

Portchester School

Bournemouth

LEA area: Bournemouth

Unique Reference Number: 113869

Headteacher: Mr C Bradey

Reporting inspector: Mr K Davitte

Dates of inspection: 8th – 12th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708089

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	-	Secondary
Type of control:	-	County
Age range of pupils:	-	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	-	Male
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Appropriate authority:	-	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	-	Mr D Marris
Date of previous inspection:	-	October 1995

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Ms J Bouch Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr A Lemon	Art Special educational needs	Special educational needs assessment
Mr B Meech	Mathematics	Staffing
Mr V Shuttleworth	English and drama	
Mr C Simmonds	Science	Accommodation
Mr V Harrison	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
Mr R Bulman	Modern foreign languages	Learning resources
Mr M Roberts	History	Assessment
Mr J Knight	Geography	Curriculum
Ms D Kay	Music Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Ms C Runyard	Physical education Equal opportunities	

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Current initiatives introduced by the headteacher have resulted in a greater focus on teaching and learning and have raised expectations and standards.
- Good teaching is enabling most pupils to make good progress.
- Good support staff enable the school to run smoothly and lessons to function efficiently.
- Drama makes an exceptional contribution not only in the standards achieved at GCSE but also to the personal development of pupils.
- Prefects make a mature contribution and help in dealing with some challenging pupils.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities gives choice and extends the work of the classroom.
- Current tight financial control is bringing the budget back into balance whilst ensuring that resources for learning are adequate overall.
- Alternative programmes for some pupils in Year 11 provide a more relevant curriculum, a sense of achievement, and a better preparation for their next stage of education or training.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards in modern foreign languages are too low where much teaching is unsatisfactory.
- II. Weaknesses in the writing skills of a substantial proportion of pupils on entry to the school are not being adequately addressed and hold back progress.
- III. There is too much inconsistency in the application of school policies, preventing some from having a full impact, and at times sending conflicting messages to pupils.
- IV. The behaviour of some pupils disrupts some lessons and a small number of pupils are bullies.
- V. Attendance is below average and affects the progress of a small group of persistent absentees.
- VI. Changing accommodation for physical education is too small and affects the amount of practical lessons which can be timetabled.
- VII. Some statutory requirements are not being met in design and technology: modules in structures and mechanisms are not taught at Key Stage 3; there is no dust extraction facility on the band saw, no emergency stop in the pillar drill and safety clips are missing on some food mixers.

Currently strengths outweigh weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents of the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

There is now adequate time for music in Year 8 and to cover the Dorset Agreed Syllabus in religious education at Key Stage 4. The amount of time for physical education has increased. Assemblies are now very good. There are still deficiencies in design and technology as a result of not all modules being covered at Key Stage 3. Results in history have improved considerably but those in modern foreign languages have remained very low in most years. There are examples of work being much better matched to pupils' needs but there is some lack of consistency within and across subjects. Progress has been slow in implementing policies for literacy and numeracy although there have been improvements. There has been insufficient progress in the consistent application of school policies including rigorous monitoring, despite much action of late. The linkage between school and subject development plans has improved but not in all cases. The greatest improvement has been in the quality of accommodation overall. There have been some good results in several individual subjects but the gap between what the school achieves and national results for all schools is now wider than at the time of the last inspection. Despite the rapid strides made recently, improvement measured over the whole period since the last inspection has not been good enough. The school's capacity for improvement is however good, a judgement very much influenced by the current leadership of the school, the pace of change and the current all-round strength of teaching.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14- and 16-year-olds in national tests and GCSE examinations in 1999:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Key Stage 3 tests	D	C
GCSE examination	D	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Although overall results in 1999 in Key Stage 3 tests were below average compared with all schools, results in both mathematics and science were average compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. Overall results were pulled down by those in English which were well below average compared with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Results were better in English in 1998 when they were average compared with similar schools.

Results at GCSE in 1999 based on the average points score per pupil (A*=8, A=7, B=6, G=1) were below average compared with all schools and average compared with similar schools. The average GCSE points score per pupil has shown a downward trend since 1994, whilst the national trend was rising. There are some pupils with weak literacy skills who struggle particularly with written work and whose results affect the overall picture. Achievements in several individual subjects at grades A*-C present a more positive picture in comparison with all schools. The best results have been in drama where they have been well above average. They have also been mostly above average in science since the last inspection. Above average results were achieved in geography and physical education in 1999 and in English literature in 1996 and 1998. In history results were well above average in 1998. Design and technology too, despite staffing difficulties, has recorded mostly above average results since the last inspection. There are several other subjects where results are average compared with all schools in some years. The introduction of short GCSE courses has had mixed success but results were well above average in religious studies in 1999 and above average in information and communication technology (ICT). These results in comparison with all schools show what it is possible to achieve overall with greater consistency across subjects. The weakest GCSE results since the last inspection have been in modern foreign languages.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7 - 9	Good	Drama; art; physical education	Modern foreign languages
Years 10 - 11	Good	Drama; art; history	Modern foreign languages
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons. In 64 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in a quarter of lessons was at least very good. The school has benefited from focusing on national guidelines for successful lessons and this is being reflected in improved standards. Some examples of excellent teaching were seen. In the overall quality of teaching the school has one of the most important ingredients for moving the school on. The challenge is now to maintain and improve on those standards. Further improvements would result from a greater consistency in the implementation of school policies.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good: the behaviour of the majority is very good but a small minority behave badly, disrupt some lessons and some resort to verbal and physical bullying.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory: below the national average with unauthorised absence well above average. Most pupils are keen to attend school but poor attendance by a minority affects overall averages.
Ethos*	Satisfactory: attitudes to work and relationships are mostly good; there is an increasing commitment to high standards, but there is no guarantee in

	some lessons that the great majority who want to learn can do so without interruption by others. There is a strong and effective determination to stamp out poor behaviour.
Leadership and management	Good by the new headteacher and satisfactory overall. Some departmental heads are not monitoring the work of their areas rigorously enough.
Curriculum	Satisfactory: mostly broad and balanced; some statutory requirements are breached in design and technology.
Pupils with special educational needs	Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress but good individual education plans are not fully used. The progress of pupils with severe behavioural problems is too slow when they have lessons in the learning support area, as the work is not planned well and lacks challenge.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Satisfactory: good for moral and social and satisfactory for spiritual and cultural. Multi-cultural aspects are not developed sufficiently. Some pupils are disrespectful of cultural differences.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory: staffing is good and accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Despite some weaknesses there is some very good accommodation which is much improved since the last inspection.
Value for money	Satisfactory: a decision influenced by the current standards being achieved in the school and the quality of teaching.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>VIII. The impact made by new headteacher.</p> <p>IX. The school encourages pupils to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.</p> <p>X. Their children like school.</p> <p>XI. The attitudes of most boys and maturity of prefects.</p> <p>XII. They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems.</p> <p>XIII. The commitment of the physical education department to extra-curricular activities which are open to all abilities.</p> <p>XIV. The improved accommodation and ICT facilities.</p>	<p>XV. The quality and quantity of homework.</p> <p>XVI. Variable standards of marking.</p> <p>XVII. Some poor behaviour and some</p> <p>XVIII. They are not given a clear</p> <p>XIX. Expectations being too low for higher</p> <p>XX. The delay in responding to complaints.</p> <p>XXI. The organisation of parents' evenings.</p> <p>XXII. The condition of pupils' toilets and the</p>

Inspectors strongly support the views of parents on what they like about the school and particularly the positive attitudes of most pupils and the impact made by the new headteacher who is turning things around rapidly. The quality and quantity of homework observed during the inspection was better than parents' perceptions but there are weaknesses. Homework should also be seen as an important part of the strategy to improve literacy, with more tasks set which require pupils to write at length. Standards of marking are satisfactory but some is poor or non-existent and grammatical and spelling errors are not corrected consistently. Whilst most pupils behave well a small minority are poorly behaved and there is some verbal and physical bullying in the school. Occasionally there are pupils who resort readily to physical aggression. There are some lessons where expectations for higher attainers are too low including in mathematics and English. Delayed responses to parents' concerns sometimes result from systems which are not tight enough to guarantee that all complaints are acted upon and responses can depend too much on the member of staff involved. The school should explore why over 20 per cent of parents who responded to the parental survey considered that they do not have a clear understanding of what is taught. The issue of some parents being unhappy with the structure of parents' evenings and access to teachers is also best explored through further dialogue initiated by the school. Although vandalism is declining it still exists and affects pupils' toilets as well as other facilities. The result can be a deprivation of basic rights for all.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

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

Raise standards in modern foreign languages by: (paras 13, 16, 18, 20, 27, 36, 62, 204, 205, 208)

- XXIII. teachers using a wider and more stimulating range of teaching methods;
- XXIV. implementing a more rigorous and consistent use of assessment;
- XXV. assisting teachers in dealing with and preventing behavioural problems.

Improve standards of pupils' writing by: (paras 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 39, 40, 46, 92, 125, 126, 127, 128, 135, 189, 190, 226, 229)

- XXVI. all departments and all teachers implementing the school's revised literacy policy;
- XXVII. less reliance on the type of worksheet which demands minimal written responses;
- XXVIII. heads of subjects monitoring progress rigorously and reporting to senior management;
- XXIX. senior management making random checks on books;
- XXX. a greater emphasis on writing at length in homework tasks;
- XXXI. involving parents in assessing progress.

Secure greater consistency in the implementation of school policies by: (paras 11, 73, 74, 92, 93, 95, 131, 132, 160)

- XXXII. making it clear to staff where responsibilities lie for policies in the senior management team;
- XXXIII. all staff realising that such policies are undermined when they are not enforced uniformly;
- XXXIV. rigorous monitoring by senior and middle managers;
- XXXV. governors being informed of progress made and where there are deficiencies.

Improve the behaviour of some pupils who disrupt lessons by: (paras 26, 27, 29, 44, 129, 173, 185, 206)

- XXXVI. taking prompt and appropriate action;
- XXXVII. giving support to those staff whose behavioural management techniques need improving;
- XXXVIII. a whole-school drive to eliminate unacceptable behaviour to which every single member of staff supports uniformly at all times;

- XXXIX. learning from the best practice in the school.

Tackle problems of bullying in the school by: (paras 30, 73, 83)

- XL. giving the issue a high profile;
- XLI. introducing additional measures to unearth bullying;
- XLII. working with the bullies to change attitudes, using outside agencies where necessary;
- XLIII. always giving immediate priority to complaints from parents, not delaying responses and involving parents more;

- XLIV.introducing a central file to record instances giving a picture over time;
- XLV.learning from other schools who have addressed the issue successfully.

Improve attendance by: (paras 33, 74)

- XLVI.having a uniform system amongst teachers for reporting absences causing concern;
- XLVII.clarifying lines of responsibility for reporting and taking action;
- XLVIII.continuing the strong involvement with the education welfare officer.

Seek to improve changing accommodation for physical education by continuing to make representations to the local education authority (paras 49, 99, 105, 222).

Meet statutory requirements by: (paras 48, 81, 99, 176, 180)

XLIX. covering fully the National Curriculum requirements for design and technology at Key Stage 3 in the structure and mechanisms modules;

- L. installing dust extraction facilities on the band saw, an emergency stop on the pillar drill, and safety clips on the food mixers where they are missing.

In addition to the key issue above the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan: good individual education plans are not used consistently enough to set targets for pupils with special educational needs (paras 22, 42, 55, 158, 160, 219); the co-ordination of special educational needs requires a review to build further on the progress made (paras 94, 116); reports for all pupils do not make it sufficiently clear what pupils need to do to improve further (para 85).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Portchester School is a modern school for boys aged 11-16 in Bournemouth. It is based in the local educational authority of Bournemouth which operates a selective system of education. As a result whilst over half of pupils on entry to Portchester are of average attainment the proportion of higher attainers is below average. In some years there is also a significant proportion of pupils whose reading age is below their chronological age.
2. Pupils are recruited from a large number of primary schools but mainly four schools. There is an 11-16 school for girls adjacent to Portchester, with the two schools making joint use of a sports hall, but at separately designated times.
3. There are 822 pupils on roll. At the time of the last inspection in 1995 there were 749 on roll. The school is about the same size as other secondary schools nationally. The average number of pupils per teacher is 18.4 which is higher than the national average of 17.1. The average group size is 23. Teachers' contact ratio is 81.4 per cent which is higher than the average of 77.4 per cent.
4. The school's population is mainly white. There are 24 pupils (2.9 per cent) who come from homes where English is not the first language which is a little higher than average.
5. There are 144 pupils with special educational needs (17.5 per cent) which is slightly higher than the national average of 15.4 per cent. The majority are at Stages 2 or 3 of the special educational needs register with 90 at Stage 2. Of the 54 pupils at Stages 3-5, 33 have a specific learning disability and 20 have emotional and behavioural learning disabilities. The school caters for 15 pupils with emotional and behavioural disabilities. Twenty-four (2.9 per cent) have statements of special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average.
6. One hundred and seventeen pupils are eligible for free school meals (14.2 per cent) which is broadly in line with the national average. The local and neighbouring wards from which pupils are drawn represent a wide social mix. The majority of pupils are not socially disadvantaged but a minority of pupils have severe deprivation.
7. The school has recently revised its mission statement with the three main aims of raising achievement, promoting a 'holistic' vision of the school's purposes, and creating a culture which ensures accountability. To achieve that it sees target setting, monitoring of targets, and the school working together to achieve these aims as three key inter-linked principles.
8. The school's GCSE targets for the year 2000 are: a 35 per cent success rate at five or more grades A*-C and 96 per cent at one or more grades A*-G; and an average GCSE points score per pupil of 35 points.

8. Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
(1998)	(165)	n/a	(165)
1999	166	n/a	166

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	72	96	85
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	72	96	85
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	44(55)	58(63)	51(60)
	National	63(65)	62(60)	55(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	12(26)	34(36)	22(27)
	National	28(35)	38(36)	23(27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	59	98	111
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	59	98	111
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	40(47)	59(53)	66(62)
	National	64(61)	64(64)	60(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	7(8)	36 (27)	28(31)
	National	31(31)	37(37)	28(30)

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

Number of 15-year-olds on roll in January of the latest
reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
(1998)	(146)	n/a	(146)
1999	171	n/a	171

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	53	140	159
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	53	140	159
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	32(36)	84(82)	95(95)
	National	48(46.3)	88(90.7)	95(95.7)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	8.0
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	3.6
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	117
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	25
Satisfactory or better	92
Less than satisfactory	8

8. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

8. **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

8. **Attainment and progress**

1. Although overall results in 1999 in Key Stage 3 tests were below average compared with all schools, results in both mathematics and science were average compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. Pupils made good progress from attainment on entry to achieve these results in mathematics and science bearing in mind that the school does not have a typical intake. Overall results were pulled down by those in English which were well below average compared with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Results were better in English in 1998 when they were average compared with similar schools and the trend was better over the three years 1996-8.
2. Results at GCSE in 1999 based on the average points score per pupil (A*=8, A=7, B=6, G=1) were below average compared with all schools and average compared with similar schools. The average GCSE points score per pupil has shown a downward trend since 1994, whilst the national trend was rising. Some year groups have had a substantial proportion of pupils whose standards of writing are barely satisfactory and the results of such pupils affect the overall picture.
3. Over the same period the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in several individual subjects compared with all schools presents a more positive picture. The best results have been in drama where they have been well above average over the past four years. In science, results have been mostly above average compared with all schools since the last inspection. In history, although results were just below average in 1999 they were high in 1998. Above average results were achieved in geography and physical education in 1999 and in English literature in 1996 and 1998. Design and technology too, despite staffing difficulties, has recorded mostly above average results since the last inspection. Short GCSE courses whilst having mixed success were well above average in religious studies in 1999 and above average in ICT. These results show what it is possible to achieve overall with greater consistency across subjects. The need for greater consistency is a recurring feature of other aspects of the work of the school.
4. GCSE results in English and mathematics at grades A*-C have not been as good as those in science. Results in science were above average in 1999 compared with all schools and well above in comparison with similar schools. Those in English and mathematics were below average compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools however the performance in English was average and was above average in mathematics.
5. The weakest GCSE results since the last inspection have been in modern foreign languages. With small numbers in German and Spanish results have been well below average at grades A*-C compared with all schools and similar schools. In French although results were average in 1998 compared with boys in all schools they were very low in 1999 and 1997, and similar to the time of the last inspection. Weak results were also recorded in some short courses in 1999 in design and technology.
6. Results in individual subjects at GCSE grades A*-G have usually been in line with national averages for all schools but the percentages achieving five or more of grades A*-G have usually been below average.
7. An important first step taken by the school to raise standards has been making all teachers aware of what is recognised nationally as some of the key features of successful lessons. With a new headteacher there is currently a greater emphasis on teaching and learning in the school, reinforced by extensive classroom observations. Most staff have responded well and there are positive results.
8. Current attainment by the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is average overall. It is average in English literature, mathematics and science and standards are in line with national expectations in

design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education. Above average standards are achieved in art and they are well above in drama. Standards are just below national expectations in geography, history and music. In modern foreign languages, standards are well below national expectations and much of the teaching is unsatisfactory. A substantial majority of pupils attain no higher than the most fundamental levels in foreign languages.

9. The improvement in current standards in English compared with recent National Curriculum results is due to teaching methods which are focusing more successfully on setting targets for improvement and to a current Year 9 group which has a greater proportion of average and above average attainers than groups in recent years. The main weaknesses in English result from below average standards in writing, with the exception of higher attainers. In mathematics a systematic approach to problem solving is being well established and skills in number work are promoted through teachers taking every opportunity to encourage pupils not to resort to calculators. In science, pupils are confident in their approaches, can classify materials and conduct experiments well and in Year 7 enthusiastic pupils think scientifically in practical work.
10. Current attainment by the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is average. It is average in art, business studies, design and technology, geography, physical education, ICT and religious education, above average in science, English literature and history and well above in drama. Standards are below average in English and mathematics. They are well below average in modern foreign languages where most pupils have a limited range of vocabulary and where as at Key Stage 3 much teaching is unsatisfactory. Currently there is no Year 11 group in music but standards for Year 10 pupils are well below expectations for the stage of the course.
11. Below average standards in English as at Key Stage 4 are largely accounted for by variable standards in writing and comparatively few pupils being able to sustain good quality writing at length to extend their work. In mathematics the majority have difficulty with algebra and simultaneous equations with pupils, including the more able, lacking confidence in this aspect of their work. Currently standards are higher in statistics than indicated by previous GCSE results. In science pupils show above average skills, including in experimentation work, and planning and observational skills are good. The skills of scientific evaluation are not as good and work completed in books shows some experiments without conclusions.
12. Current progress by the majority of pupils at Key Stage 3 is good. It is very good in art and drama and good in English, science, mathematics, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Progress is satisfactory in design and technology and ICT but unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages. Progress by the majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 is also good. Progress is very good in art, drama and history. Progress is good in science, business studies, geography, music, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in English language, mathematics, design and technology and ICT. Progress is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages.
13. In English at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils make slower progress in improving writing skills than in other aspects of the subject and teaching does not concentrate sufficiently on improving these skills. In mathematics progress is better where pupils present their results orally than in writing. In art and drama at Key Stage 3 and art, history and drama at Key Stage 4 very good progress is linked with the quality of teaching and high expectations. In contrast the unsatisfactory progress in modern foreign languages is linked to weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
14. Progress by pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils and is good. Although teachers are not making sufficient use of individual education plans pupils are being taught effectively and the quality of support in lessons is good. Most when withdrawn from lessons for extra support progress well but pupils with severe behavioural problems make unsatisfactory progress when they have lessons in the learning support department, as work is not well planned or sufficiently challenging. A few of the pupils with pronounced literacy problems make poor progress as they neither attend regularly or respond positively to the help provided. As with other lower attainers deficiencies in writing skills hold pupils back in some subjects.

15. Across all subjects of the curriculum standards of speaking are good. Listening skills are not as consistent, although high standards are seen in some subjects. Standards of reading are satisfactory but as with other skills vary considerably and there is not enough encouragement for pupils to read aloud. Standards of writing of a significant minority of pupils at Key Stage 3 are barely satisfactory. There is an improvement at Key Stage 4 but not enough for such pupils to write at length. Many are poor at spelling including common words and find correct sentence structure and paragraphing difficult to achieve. As in English some pupils are held back in history, geography and religious education as a result of weaknesses in basic skills especially when required to write with accuracy and at length. Most pupils have satisfactory numeracy skills being able to work without calculators where necessary. Pupils at both key stages are confident in using ICT although greater opportunities are afforded in some subjects than in others.

23. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

16. Overall, the standard of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development is good.

17. The vast majority of boys are open, friendly in manner, extremely personable and pleasant. Most are at ease with themselves and their teachers, they approach their lessons and the world about them with equanimity. Visitors to the school are welcomed into the classroom by mostly polite boys who open doors, proffer chairs, and are keen to share and explain their work.

18. Most pupils behave very well and there is much exemplary behaviour. The school functions as an orderly community overall where most pupils move sensibly around the site, respect property and each other, but where a small minority of pupils behave badly, affecting the comfort and progress of all.

19. In lessons most pupils want to learn; they try hard and recognise and accept that success requires sustained effort and good attendance from them. They try to ignore and discourage the few pupils who engage in challenging and confrontational behaviour, which impedes their own progress and occasionally that of others. Inspection evidence supports parents' views that behaviour in lessons ranges from mostly biddably compliant to occasionally blatantly defiant. There is stark contrast between the very good behaviour of the majority and the disruptive behaviour of a small minority in some lessons. This applies particularly to lessons in modern foreign languages, where rude remarks and disobedience are commonplace and where poor behaviour adversely affects teaching, learning and educational standards. A small group of pupils in the school have challenging behavioural difficulties, which influence their involvement and concentration.

20. A significant minority of pupils with challenging behaviour respond positively and co-operatively in drama. The well-attended Key Stage 3 drama club, substantially organised by Key Stage 4 pupils, demonstrates clearly the enthusiasm pupils have for this subject. Pupils are enthusiastic and comply willingly to the established code of conduct in physical education and in art relationships between pupils are excellent.

21. The high level of fixed exclusions at 117 in the previous year, most of which were for verbally aggressive behaviour and verbal abuse, involved 67 boys. Since the beginning of the autumn term there have been 13 recorded incidents of aggressive behaviour, still too many, but an improvement on the previous year. The improvement reflects the influence of the new headteacher and his team and better supervision arrangements in the playground.

22. In assemblies pupils are attentive, respectful and reflective. They sit on the floor in a quiet and orderly fashion. They respond appropriately and empathise with the situation of others, for example when listening to Martin Luther King's famous speech 'I have a dream' or reflecting on war. Despite these good attitudes in assembly and generally good relationships within the school, inspection evidence supports the views of parents that a small number of pupils do not always show tolerance and respect to one another. There are some instances of racist name-calling and abuse, and some instances of bullying both verbal and physical. For example, during inspection week one pupil was violently

'bundled' by a group of boys and hit in pursuit of an out-of-school dispute. In the playground some pupils show poor manners and spit. The potential for outbreaks of over-boisterous and unacceptable behaviour in outside areas nevertheless remains as pupils adjust to the new regime.

23. Nearly all pupils care well for the buildings and resources, the plants and the paintwork. They value the new facilities, and treat wall displays and artefacts with pride and respect. Graffiti is minimal. Although vandalism is declining it still exists and affects pupils' toilets as well as other facilities. The result can be a deprivation of basic rights for all. In the past there has been some damage to fire extinguishers, and there are still examples of computer equipment being deliberately jammed with coins. This is the work of a small number of pupils, is unacceptable and is despised by the majority. Records show that instances of vandalism are declining.
24. Pupils respond very well to opportunities for taking initiatives and responsibilities in many lessons and in the wider life of the school. The prefects show maturity beyond their years by the way in which they operate the late system, supervise the cycle area and organise the dining hall. They maintain good relationships with most peers whilst implementing rules rigorously. Pupils take part in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities from board games to sport. Pupils in the environment club have contributed directly to improvements in the school by raising money to purchase and install more litterbins. Pupils in all years raise large sums of money for charities such as the Jeans for Genes appeal and the local Holicare Trust. Band members who are still learning their craft respond positively and courageously to the challenges of performing in assemblies and prize giving, and seek to gain the most from such exposure.

32. **Attendance**

25. Pupils' attendance is below the national average and unauthorised absence is well above the national average. Whilst most pupils are keen to come to school and have good attendance, a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 9 and Year 11, have poor attendance. This poor attendance adversely affects the attainment and progress of such persistent absentees and brings the overall figure for attendance below 90 per cent. Pupils with attendance difficulties recognise the contribution which alternative education programmes in Key Stage 4 make to their overall attendance and progress.
26. The school day starts promptly. Records show that punctuality is improving but some pupils are persistently late at the start of each day, which affects their progress and occasionally that of others as they interrupt lessons which have already started. This number increases as pupils progress through the school. During the day punctuality for lessons is generally good and lessons usually start on time.
27. A feature of the school is the large number of pupils who are absent for holidays in term time. This reflects the seasonal pattern of employment within the area.

35. **Quality of education provided**

35. **Teaching**

36. The quality of teaching is good overall. Of 157 observations during the inspection teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons. In 64 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in a quarter was very good or better. The most effective teaching at Key Stage 3 was in art, drama and physical education, and the least effective teaching was in modern foreign languages. At Key Stage 4 the most effective teaching was in art, drama and history and the least effective teaching was in modern foreign languages.
28. Teachers show in nearly all lessons that they have good subject knowledge. In drama specialist teaching is at ease, confident and able to adapt and improvise as needed. Teachers' subject expertise is very good in music. Teachers of geography provide content that reflects current information and in religious education teachers too draw on a range of experiences including topical examples, to make the subject relevant. In physical education a depth of knowledge and expertise and an ability to demonstrate correct techniques ensure that the pupils have a solid grounding in the basic games skills including rugby, football and badminton. Where lessons are timetabled specifically for ICT, or when ICT is taught as part of GCSE course, teachers are very secure in their skills and are able to guide and help pupils confidently. Some teachers timetabled in the learning support department do not have the necessary specialist skills to cope effectively with the particular learning needs of pupils with severe behavioural problems. In contrast expert assistance for some pupils with severe difficulties in literacy skills is most effective. The success of the personal and social education programmes, where teaching is consistently good and occasionally excellent, is influenced by the knowledge of teachers involved, and the commitment of the school to the programme.
29. Teachers' planning is good. History lessons are well prepared with good accompanying resources sometimes as a result of the teacher's personal research. Similarly In English the benefits of good lesson planning is realised in the range of appropriate resources used. Teachers plan their work thoroughly in modern foreign languages although lessons do not always follow the predicted pattern. In religious education more consideration should be given in planning to the different needs of pupils. Planning is generally good in music with clear objectives. In both mathematics and science the objectives of the lesson are usually shared with pupils who can therefore see clearly where they are going.
30. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. In design and technology pupils respond well to the challenges of some textiles and graphics lessons. The high quality of much of the work produced in art stems from high expectations and this is also transferred to pupils when they are evaluating each other's work. In business studies pupils engaged in ICT move on well as a result of teachers' expectations and time limits imposed. Teachers mostly have high but expectations of all pupils in physical education and continually encourage them to strive for better performance and in science too there are generally high expectations. The high standards of team work expected from pupils in drama are realised. The very good progress made by the majority of pupils in history at Key Stage 4 results from high expectations of teaching focusing on key historical skills. In several subjects there are some examples of too little being asked or expected. In geography tasks designed to meet the needs of all pupils are set in only a minority of lessons. In English some tasks demand too little writing and in religious education too there could be more opportunities for extended writing. In both English and mathematics there are examples of lessons where expectations for higher attainers are too low.
31. Teaching methods and organisation are good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Activities in drama are stimulating and challenging. The majority of pupils make significant gains in the skills of speaking and reading in English lessons through teachers' concentration on these skills and occasionally, good speaking skills are developed by imaginative teaching. Progress in writing is slower in English than for other aspects of the subject because teaching does not consistently focus on essential skills. Again in English literature good quality discussion does not often lead to writing of the same standard. Science employs a variety of strategies to suit the needs of all pupils, many practically based. The emphasis on improving teaching strategies in mathematics since the last

inspection has clearly been effective although some issues of rigour and challenge remain. Explanations and demonstrations are well presented in art and pupils are very clear on what they have to do which enables them to work largely independently. Such clarity in setting objectives is also a feature of history lessons. In physical education teachers build progressively on skills already acquired and tactics and strategies and almost all lessons are reinforced with probing question and answer sessions. Within the limitations of the accommodation, group work in music is used very well to support the lower attainers in experimental work and good use of fun exercises help in the teaching of rhythm, beat and pitch. Compared with the last inspection teaching is less teacher dominated in religious education and there is a good range of activities and use of music to aid reflection at Key Stage 3. In ICT much consideration has been given to providing suitable materials for less able and more able pupils. In modern foreign languages the range of teaching methods is too predictable and limited.

32. The use of ICT across the curriculum varies with some teachers in subjects across the curriculum making better use of this facility than others, through booking computer rooms well ahead to integrate into their teaching. In science some excellent work is achieved through teachers using ICT. Teachers in subjects such as music, modern foreign languages, art and religious education make insufficient use of ICT. The use of a computer-based literacy scheme for pupils with special educational needs is very effective in helping to improve low reading scores.
33. Insufficient use is made by teachers of good individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. This is partly compensated by the good quality of learning support in lessons and teachers otherwise knowing their pupils well.
34. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Ongoing assessment in physical education is constructive in assisting progress. In drama pupils are absolutely clear on the assessment criteria. The quality of marking varies and is inconsistent in science. Whilst much marking is done conscientiously insufficient use is made of concise comments to state what has been done well, and not so well and what needs to be done to improve further. Errors in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure are not corrected consistently enough in some poor marking. In modern foreign languages as in physical education the marking of GCSE coursework is mostly constructive but some books in modern foreign languages are rarely looked at.
35. The management of pupils is good. In art it is excellent and an outstanding feature of teaching in physical education. Class management in music is usually very good and sometimes excellent. It is also a particularly impressive feature of teaching on the Youth Award Scheme. Humour and praise is used well in religious education to encourage pupils and establish very good relationships. Most classes are managed to a good standard of discipline in English and in drama pupils whose behaviour is poor elsewhere conform to expectations. There is firm but cooperative management in the teaching of business studies. In specific ICT lessons teachers manage pupils well overall but there are examples of teaching not dealing early enough with inattention by pupils. In geography, management is mostly good but not always strong enough. In modern foreign languages teachers sometimes allow inattention and poor standards to go unchecked. Extremely poor behaviour by the minority of pupils can present the most severe challenges to teachers.
36. The use of time and resources is good. Lessons are meticulously prepared in art to make the best use of time and pace is generally lively in religious education. The quality of resources used is an influential factor in history. In ICT the overhead projector is skilfully used to build up lesson content and to challenge pupils. In geography a few less successful lessons are characterised by slow pace, too much teacher talk, lack of challenge. Resources are well organised in music but the pace and timing of work is sometimes a weakness when too long is spent on one task. Support staff including technicians and the network manager help enormously in teachers making efficient use of lesson time.

46. Homework is mostly used satisfactorily but there are weaknesses. It is well used to extend a topic or consolidate learning in mathematics, but its use to develop independent learning is largely confined to extending investigative work begun in lessons. Homework is set regularly in science but much is humdrum and of little value in developing scientific knowledge and understanding. There are missed opportunities in science. Teachers do not set enough tasks across subjects which demand writing at length from pupils.
47. Overall standards of teaching are an improvement on the time of the last inspection, with a substantial proportion of teachers new to the school in recent years but with the school also preserving a core of experienced teachers.
- 47. The curriculum and assessment**
37. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is appropriately balanced, but it lacks some breadth at Key Stage 4. Statutory requirements are not met in design and technology at Key Stage 3 where some National Curriculum programmes of study are not being followed.
38. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced. All pupils study the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, drama, information technology and personal and social education. There are however, some shortcomings. The physical education curriculum lacks some depth with the limited changing accommodation for the size of groups necessitating some theory lessons instead of practical activities. In design and technology modules in structures and mechanisms are not taught. Time allocation to subjects is in line with national averages in most subjects.
39. Pupils are placed in mixed ability groups in Year 7 in all subjects apart from mathematics, where they are arranged in ability sets. In Years 8 and 9 individual subjects and groups of subjects decide on the composition of classes by attainment within two parallel populations.
40. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is satisfactory. It is balanced, but lacks some breadth whilst the school waits for appropriate GNVQ courses to become available. All pupils follow a core of religious education, English, mathematics, science, physical education and personal and social education. Optional courses include the other subjects of the National Curriculum, business education, drama and media studies. Business studies is a popular course, attracting up to 60 per cent of pupils in some years. Within the options scheme pupils are required to choose a modern foreign language and a course in a subject within design and technology. Spanish is offered as a second modern foreign language. The option scheme is designed so that pupils follow three long courses each of four periods per week and two short courses of two periods each. Most subjects are examined at GCSE level, but Certificates of Achievement are available in history.
41. Some flexibility is achieved for those pupils for whom a full examination course would be too taxing by the provision of a Youth Award Scheme, and a range of work-related courses. The well planned Youth Award Scheme course leads to ASDAN certification. Pupils respond well to these courses, where teachers encourage pupils to develop basic skills whilst giving pupils a degree of independence to organise their own learning. There are non-examination courses in wood skills, cookery skills and art and photography.
42. All pupils follow the well-planned and successful course in personal and social education. Statutory requirements for sex and health education are covered by this course and within science and religious education. Careers education and guidance are provided satisfactorily, mainly within English in Year 10 and by withdrawal from English on a rotational basis in Year 11. All pupils undertake a two-week period of work experience at the beginning of Year 11 and have opportunities to sample further education.
43. The curriculum provides well for equality of opportunity and access, and within the constraints of timetabling and staffing, departments create teaching sets that give individuals the opportunity to fulfil their potential. There is a degree of inequality however at Key Stage 4, where those pupils not following examination courses in business education or information and communication technology have to rely more on other subject departments to give them sufficient practice in using and

improving their computer skills. The effectiveness of these arrangements varies considerably between subject departments. Some work in the Certificate of Achievement course in graphics at Key Stage 4 is not sufficiently challenging especially for the higher attainers.

44. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and meets the requirements of those on the special educational needs register. The use of individual education plans (IEPs) however is not fully developed. Most teachers are well informed of the content of IEPs but they are not always referred to in lessons, and they do not contain subject specific targets. The quality of classroom support offered by special needs support assistants is good. Withdrawal lessons are provided for pupils with more pronounced difficulties in literacy skills and a computer-based programme is used to help pupils with low reading scores.
45. Continuity and progression of learning are satisfactory overall. Smooth transfer between Key Stages 2 and 3 is made difficult by the fact that there are 22 partner schools but curriculum liaison with the five main partner schools however, is of good quality.
46. Within the school, continuity and progression are assisted in most but not all subjects by schemes of work that are logical and progressive, revisiting and reinforcing earlier learning. The school has addressed most of the curricular issues raised during the previous inspection. Most departments have revised and improved their schemes of work. The art and English curricula are particularly well planned in this respect. There are weaknesses in modern foreign languages where there is no reference in planning to what pupils have learned at Key Stage 2. Further work remains to be done in the design and technology department. With additional time for Year 8 in music since September, schemes of work are not yet complete for Key Stage 3. Work has begun in developing appropriate schemes of work in physical education. In religious education updated schemes of work are available for the autumn term for Key Stage 3, but department aims need to be updated to comply with the recently revised Dorset Agreed Syllabus. Continuity in drama throughout Key Stage 3 is affected by the absence of the subject in Year 8.
47. Pupils are given good advice at times of transition, between key stages and in preparation for the next phase of education. Liaison with the post-16 sector is good.
48. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, both in the lunch break and after school. In sport there is a very good variety of clubs and teams, with 60 per cent of pupils participating actively. Sporting activities receive good support from non-specialist teachers and non-teaching staff. There is a wide variety of activities in English, art, music, history and drama. Provision is also good in mathematics, modern foreign languages, science, information technology and design and technology. There are varying degrees of extra-curricular provision in other subjects. Besides subject-based activities there are a termly 'shut down' day, an activities week and various visits to both local and distant venues.
49. The taught week has been lengthened to comply more closely with official recommendations. New literacy and numeracy policies will shortly come into effect and the introduction of GNVQ courses is planned, which will add significantly to the breadth of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.
50. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory overall. There is a procedure laid down for the marking of pupils' work which represents some improvement since the last inspection, but there are weaknesses as a result of inconsistent application of policy.
51. At Key Stage 3 systems of assessment are mainly appropriately linked to National Curriculum levels and are well thought out in most subjects. There are weaknesses in modern foreign languages where the assessment of pupils' work is not always put to enough use. Good use is made of computerised systems in science, geography and history to record pupils' achievements at various stages. Such information provides a baseline against which subsequent performance and progress can be measured. In drama there are benefits from using assessment procedures which have been devised in conjunction with other schools. At Key Stage 4 there are good systems for assessment in most subjects mainly linked to examination board criteria.

52. The use of assessment to inform curriculum planning and improve teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. In art, some aspects of design and technology, drama, geography, history and ICT assessment is used well to modify schemes of work. It is also used to review and improve the way in which specific topics are taught, for example in art, business studies, drama, geography and history. Assessment is being used particularly well in art to help pupils at Key Stage 4 to improve GCSE results. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment is satisfactory in science, but is not used enough to inform planning and track the progress of individual pupils and in religious education there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection in this respect. There are also missed opportunities in English and music. An issue to address in ICT is the recording of pupils' attainment and progress in ICT skills across the whole-school curriculum including in departments. A new assessment procedure has been designed in physical education to track pupils' performance between key stages and provide more tangible evidence to inform and improve teaching. Assessment data is used effectively in several subjects at Key Stage 4 to set targets for individual pupils, often in conjunction with a useful self-assessment procedure. There is good practice in self-evaluation and target setting in art, where at Key Stage 4 each pupil has an individual tutorial where teacher and pupil go through the folder of work, discuss strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement. In almost all subjects assessment data is used to establish the setting structure and following that to determine the composition of those sets and movement between them.
53. There is a uniform system of grades for class work and homework and a house points system that has credibility with the pupils. Each subject reports comprehensively on each pupil's attainment in the National Record of Achievement issued at the end of Key Stage 4. The keeping of formal records has improved with additional administrative support. The school has much centralised data which tracks the progress of pupils from Key Stage 2, on entry and throughout the school and is far more advanced than many schools although the full use of this has yet to be made.
54. The identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice. In addition to tests on entry invaluable information is received from primary schools. Annual reviews are thorough. In a majority of subjects teaching programmes for special needs have been modified following assessment, particularly in English, where the good use of reading ages enables teachers to apply a corrective reading programme. In many other subjects assessment data has been used to revise teaching resources and tasks. In history there is most effective modification of the language used by teachers in lessons and worksheets to overcome the difficulties experienced by pupils with special educational needs in listening and reading.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

55. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for moral, social and cultural development, but spiritual and multicultural provision is only satisfactory. The school does not plan, analyse and review the coverage of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and there are missed opportunities, particularly to promote a spiritual and multicultural focus across the curriculum.
56. Since the last inspection the quality of assemblies has improved and they are now very good and seen as an important means of promoting consistent standards across the school. Although the school is still not meeting requirements for a daily act of collective worship there are good opportunities for reflection. Pupils attend at least two and sometimes three assemblies weekly. During the inspection, assemblies provided very good opportunities to reflect on war, peace, remembrance and prejudice. In a very good lower school assembly, the band contributed well to an atmosphere for reflection and the contribution of boys reading their own poems about a candle and barbed wire was very thought provoking. Pupils enjoyed and many were deeply moved by these assemblies. Teachers leading assemblies impressed with their delivery and conviction. Assemblies are providing a powerful vehicle for the school in improving standards, behaviour and relationships.
57. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. All pupils now study religious education which provides good opportunities for pupils to consider their personal views and the views of others, developing good empathy skills. Consideration of self and of the values of others is also covered well

in English and drama. Music makes a good contribution to spiritual awareness in assemblies and when pupils analyse views about music. However, although there are examples of spiritual provision in history and science and more isolated examples in other subjects, opportunities in the curriculum are not planned and given sufficient emphasis.

58. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. It is well promoted both in policy and in practice, not least by the good examples set by most teachers in promoting a strong sense of right and wrong behaviour. Moral themes such as the production of explosives are effectively taught in science, human rights in religious education, racism in English and the conflict between good and evil in drama. In history there is sensitive consideration of the exploitation of African slaves by Africans. Also, in physical education and music, pupils are encouraged to reach high standards in using positive, constructive criticism in evaluations of themselves and their classmates. Personal and social education lessons make a very good contribution to many aspects of moral and social development.
59. There are good opportunities for pupils' social development. Since the last inspection there are more opportunities to exercise real responsibility, especially for Year 10 boys. There is also a good programme of extra-curricular activities which is valued by parents. Prefects are trained and given good opportunities to exercise responsibility and to promote good behaviour. Year 10 boys are trained to help in sex education lessons. They also mentor some Year 7 pupils, run a reading club and through Project Trident they help in the community. Other opportunities for leadership and team work exist through year councils, charity work, assemblies and first aid and good provision through sports activities and public performances in music and drama. Since the last inspection, there are improved opportunities in some lessons for pupils to take responsibility for their learning. These include particularly effective group work and help in organising activities in physical education, art and music. There are also some good opportunities in science, drama, history and mathematics.
60. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. There is a good programme of visits in history, an exchange and well-supported visits to France and Italy in modern foreign languages, geography field work and theatre trips in English. The choir participates in Bournemouth events such as the Winter Gardens carol concert and there is a variety of careers activities including a three-day residential course. Annual cross-faculty days provide a satisfactory opportunity for Year 7 to study childhood in India and there is a potentially good link with a village in Kenya. In lessons, there are good opportunities to study Chinese, Malayan and Aboriginal art, world music at both key stages, different societies in geography and world religions such as Islam in religious education, history and geography. However, although there are ample opportunities to explore multicultural issues in the formal curriculum these are not developed sufficiently, nor specifically identified in department policies.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

61. Overall, arrangements for the support, welfare and guidance of pupils are satisfactory. This is a caring school where teachers know their pupils well and want the best for them. A particular strength of the school is its commitment to the social inclusion of disaffected pupils. Governors are well involved in this aspect of school life through the student welfare committee.
62. The school has a good behaviour policy but policy and practice are not consistently enforced throughout the school. As a result, some pupils do not always show the good behaviour of which they are capable. In many lessons pupils with challenging behaviour are well managed but systems are not in place for best practice in this area to be shared across the school. There are systems in place for recording and reporting bad behaviour but there is no whole-school system for analysing this information and using it to inform strategies and planning. Instances of bullying are recorded on individual pupils' files but there is no central file to give the school a clear picture of what is going on.
63. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory, but whereas some form tutors adhere to the system for reporting absences causing concern, others do not. Communication and lines of responsibility are not clear. This is a 'target' school for attendance. There is strong involvement with the education welfare officer (EWO) who is working closely with the management team to improve overall attendance. A multi-agency approach is being adopted to support pupils and their parents and

help them to improve attendance and avoid court proceedings. Lateness is recorded rigorously by prefects on duty. Daily letters are sent home to parents of pupils who are late. As a result, pupils' punctuality is improving.

64. The school has effective child protection procedures. Up-to-date training, high levels of awareness, some good links with outside agencies and parents and a close and sympathetic understanding of the local community, ensure that child protection concerns are dealt with effectively. Staff understand that a higher than average numbers of children on the 'at risk' register require extra vigilance on their part.
65. There are some good procedures in place for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils feel confident to ask for help in lessons and find day to day feedback helpful. They receive good homework support through homework clubs and the guidance of individual teachers. The school has amassed data on pupils' attainment, has yet to make full use of it, but there are examples of good practice.
66. Heads of school play a key role in discussing difficulties with pupils, in devising supportive strategies, and in liaising with other staff and support agencies. There is good support for pupils identified as having special needs. Information from primary schools and from testing on entry is well used to determine levels of support needed. A summer literacy school is run for prospective Year 7 entrants to help address low reading scores. Revised individual education plans are good, but some do not set out practical targets for improving behaviour and attendance, for example small achievable targets within a time limit. There is strong alternative provision for some pupils at Key Stage 4 through the Youth Award Scheme and work related programmes.
67. Pupils' personal development is promoted through personal and social education, through supportive relationships and through drama and art where pupils learn to respond sensitively to the efforts and views of others. Despite improvements since the last inspection, the quality and use of tutorial time varies considerably, depending on the individual teacher. In some sessions pupils discuss issues in depth and teachers respond well to pupils' concerns.
68. Careers advice is satisfactory. Pupils receive appropriate guidance on options, work experience and further education choices. Extended work experience and work related programmes are arranged for some pupils.
69. Provision for first aid is good. The first aid co-ordinator has established good relationships with the boys and makes a significant contribution to their welfare. By careful record keeping and analysis she is able to highlight issues and inform relevant members of staff.
70. The site and buildings are well cared for. Regular health and safety audits take place. Since the last inspection the premises manager has introduced new systems for monitoring and recording maintenance issues. There are still safety issues around the stairs, poor facilities in the physical education changing rooms and blocking of exits with bags and coats in assemblies. Some machines in the technology department do not fully meet safety requirements.

Partnership with parents and the community

71. Overall, partnership with parents and the community is satisfactory. The school, under the direction of the new headteacher, is keen to establish more effective links with all parents so that they work in partnership to promote pupils' wellbeing and educational progress and to ensure that parental concerns are met.
72. In the pre-inspection survey of parents' views 91 per cent of respondents said that they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems, but some parents feel that the school's response to their concerns is piecemeal and depends upon the member of staff involved. Communication within the school on issues such as behaviour and bullying is not always effective. Some parents complain that they do not receive a satisfactory response or occasionally any response at all to their concerns. Of those who forwarded additional written comments the majority referred to parental concerns about bullying and indiscipline and the school's poor response to them.

73. There is a good prospectus for parents which states that parents are welcome to 'pop into school' at any time. It has some omissions. There are named contact individuals for subject areas but no named individual or hierarchy of responsibility for behaviour issues and particularly for bullying. There is scant reference to complaints' procedures. New pupils and parents receive a code of conduct booklet which explains the school's behaviour policy in more detail. The home-school agreement clearly states the school's expectations of pupils and parents and its responsibilities to them. The school has a target for 90 per cent participation; information on the current level of participation is not available.
74. From the parents' survey, 21 per cent of parents say that they do not have a clear understanding of what is taught. At the parents' meeting some parents were unhappy about the organisation of parents' consultative evenings. They said that they did not always have the opportunity to talk to all teachers. Pupils' reports are issued on the last day of term, which makes feedback and discussion difficult. Reports are detailed but do not contain sufficient information on targets and what pupils need to do to improve.
75. There are some examples of good contact and support for parents with pupils causing concern. There are new initiatives between the school, the EWO and the educational psychiatrist to form a support group for parents and foster a multi-agency approach to pupils' problems.
76. Parents' involvement in the curriculum is limited. In mathematics there are plans to offer prospective parents an evening explaining the curriculum. In modern foreign languages the department avails itself of home-school liaison procedures wherever possible and contacts parents directly regarding misbehaviour or good achievement. In physical education good information is sent to parents regarding coaching courses available and sports' centre use.
77. There are some good links with the wider community and employers which broaden pupils' experiences and contribute to their personal development. The Youth Award Programme gives pupils opportunities to make contact with local services and businesses such as the police force and the Poole Aquarium and to share their experiences with their peers. There are very good links with local sporting clubs, some use of the local environment for fieldwork, strong support for the Dorset Heathland Project, and some visiting speakers in personal and social education. There are good links with Bournemouth Community Arts in drama, including pupils performing in a drug awareness play in local junior schools. Pupils from Year 7 visit primary schools to talk to Year 6 pupils about life at Portchester. Pupils are active and successful in raising sponsorship for the school and money for selected charities.

88. **The management and efficiency of the school**

Leadership and management

78. Leadership by the headteacher of the school is good. There are also examples of good leadership at all levels but there are also weaknesses and inconsistencies. Overall leadership and management is satisfactory.
79. A key feature of the current leadership and management of the school is the successful way in which the new headteacher is enabling the school to move forward through a greater focus on teaching and learning and improving standards. The school is being invigorated by good leadership from the top and nearly all staff welcome the changes. Development plans have been examined to give a sharper focus and priorities accurately identified. Senior managers are playing a key role in supporting the headteacher but some are overloaded with an excessive range of duties.
80. One of the initial strategies has been to replicate national guidelines for successful teaching into all lessons. This has had a good all-round effect and the challenge is now to maintain and improve on that whilst preserving and encouraging individuality and flair. Improved practice has also been reinforced through extensive classroom observations by the headteacher who has also set the right tone by being monitored himself. To reinforce this further the monitoring of teaching should be a permanent feature of the work of middle managers who should also be observed by their own staff.

81. One of the main challenges facing current management is to secure the consistent application of policy. Priority areas include tackling poor behaviour where it exists and in the application of the school's literacy policy to improve standards of writing in particular. Where policies do not exist or need revising the aim should be for brief pragmatic statements and solutions which are readily understood by all staff. Senior managers have a key role to play but a much greater emphasis is required on the function of middle managers in this process. There are also some staff who are not middle managers who have the necessary talent and track record to make a very important contribution.
82. At middle management level there are some very efficiently run departments but some managers do not do enough to monitor what is going on in their area of the school's work. Whilst the links between school development planning and departmental planning have improved not all subject managers have achieved that as yet. Some departmental and school policies are not monitored rigorously enough. The benefits of monitoring by middle managers is seen most clearly in art, drama, history and physical education and in mathematics the aim of working more effectively as a team is being largely achieved.
83. The leadership of design and technology and information and communication technology is the current responsibility of a school deputy head pending a review of those duties and a new appointment for design and technology. Much has been achieved in difficult circumstances, but inevitably the combined tasks coupled with other major whole-school responsibilities is too great a load and inherited deficiencies in schemes of work in design and technology still exist. Effective leadership by the same deputy has resulted in significant improvements in the provision for special educational needs over the last few years but again this illustrates problems of overload and the co-ordination of the whole of that provision needs a major review.
84. The rationale for the allocation of responsibilities amongst the senior management team is being looked at and some redistribution has taken place. In doing so the governors and headteacher should ensure that all staff realise where exact responsibilities lie within the senior team and take the opportunity to clarify lines of communication. There is too much overlap at present and systems are not tight enough to ensure that some issues are being dealt with promptly. Some parents feel that response in the school to their concerns depends too much on the member of staff dealing with their problem. In improving communications there should be greater representation of the strong team of support staff at daily staff briefings.
85. The governing body is able and committed and has a very good and clear vision of what it wants the school to achieve under the new headteacher. A strong partnership has already been forged. The way in which they are prepared to support the school is impressive and they are ready to recognise and applaud the efforts of staff. This should be supplemented by the asking of searching questions when standards are too low in their other important role as a 'critical friend' of the school.
86. The school's GCSE targets for the year 2000 are appropriate in the quest to improve standards but long-term objectives should also be considered, for example to reflect the improved intake in the current Year 7. More attention should be given to the very good data available on pupils' achievements at primary school and results of testing on entry.
87. Attitudes to work and relationships are mostly good and there is an increasing commitment to high standards but there is no guarantee in some lessons that the great majority who want to learn can do so without interruption by others. There is a strong and effective determination to stamp out poor behaviour. The fact that staff and most pupils are very positive in their support of the school gives an added incentive to solving such irritations.
88. Although rapid strides have been made recently and a much more favourable picture on standards was seen at the inspection, improvement by the school measured over the whole period since the last inspection has not been good enough and some key issues have not been sufficiently addressed. There is now adequate time to deliver the National Curriculum for music in Year 8 and the Dorset Agreed Syllabus in religious education at Key Stage 4. The amount of time for physical education has increased but problems with changing accommodation imposes restrictions on what can be taught.

Assemblies are now of a very good quality and allow time for reflection although not strictly meeting requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship. There are still deficiencies in design and technology as a result of not all modules being covered sufficiently at Key Stage 3. Results in history have improved considerably but those in modern foreign languages have remained very low in most years. There are examples of work being much better matched to pupils' needs but there is lack of consistency within and across subjects and higher attainers are neglected in some lessons. Progress has been slow in implementing policies for literacy and numeracy although there have been improvements. There has been insufficient progress in the monitoring of the school at all levels despite much action of late. Development planning has improved and documentation is thorough. The vision established has been good but the implementation too slow. The linkage between school and subject development plans have improved but not in all cases. The greatest improvement has been in the quality of accommodation overall. Despite some good results in several individual subjects the average GCSE points score per pupil has shown a downward trend whilst the national trend was rising. The school's capacity for improvement is however good, a judgement very much influenced by the current leadership of the school, changes made and the current all-round strength of teaching.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

89. There have been substantial changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection. Thirteen appointments have been made in the past two years and seven staff have left in the same period. Several teachers have spent more than 20 years at the school but there is a good balance of age and experience in the current staff profile. There is a good representation of female staff and one holds a senior management post.
90. The school is staffed adequately in terms of the numbers of teachers and they are well qualified for the subjects they teach. Some teachers who spend time in the learning support department dealing with pupils with severe learning difficulties lack the necessary experience. Otherwise only a minority of lessons are taught by non-specialists and this has no particular adverse effect on the standards. The subject-specific problems identified in the previous report have been addressed. The pupil:teacher ratio is slightly higher than average and the proportion of class contact time for teachers is above average. There is a good range of technical, administrative and other support staff who are a strength of the school. Support staff for boys with special educational needs are well qualified and provide effective in-class support.
91. Staff development needs are identified through school and faculty development plans. Staff development interviews are used to identify individual needs as the teacher appraisal system has been in abeyance for the past two years. Support staff are included in training and staff development. Records of staff development for the past few years show a reasonable balance between individual and departmental needs, but provision in and between departments is inconsistent.
92. There is insufficient analysis of staff development and training and the link between school development planning and staff development needs to be strengthened. Evaluation of staff development is largely of the training provided rather than of its impact on the work of the school.
93. There are good arrangements for the induction and support of new staff. A comprehensive mentoring and induction programme for newly qualified teachers is provided in collaboration with the local education authority. This provides strong well managed whole-school support for newly qualified teachers. In general newly qualified teachers are also well supported within faculties but support in modern foreign languages is currently weaker.
94. The accommodation is satisfactory overall allowing the curriculum to be taught effectively in most respects, but despite considerable improvements since the last inspection there are some significant weaknesses. Pupils now benefit from a new suite of science laboratories, preparation area and resources room. The spacious laboratories allow pupils to move around easily to collect apparatus for experiments. Similarly the new food technology and information technology rooms provide modern surroundings with good displays of work. In religious education, the one specialist room is too small for large groups of pupils and affects flexibility in teaching. Physical education has some very good

facilities but changing rooms are too small, showers are inadequate, and it lacks toilet facilities and hand-washing facilities. There is good use of the large sports hall belonging to the adjacent girls' school. The local sports centre is used to supplement provision for teaching at Key Stage 4.

95. The art rooms are adequate, but the department would benefit from a discrete ceramics area as this is a major strength of the department. Larger work surfaces are also desirable for art. The use of one room external to the main building in mathematics is too small for some classes timetabled there and is not good for team work as it tends to isolate one teacher. The main mathematics rooms provide a stimulating environment with some excellent displays of pupils' work.
96. In music the accommodation is poor. The specialist room is very small. There is no sound-proofing within the department so other classes can be disturbed. In one of the main history rooms inadequate blackout facilities make it difficult to use projection equipment at times.
97. The boys' toilets are frequently shut during lesson time and the individual cubicles cannot be locked or bolted, therefore there is no privacy. Toilets are satisfactory in terms of cleanliness but not in terms of provision of toilet paper. Play and recreation areas have improved but the area immediately outside the main entrance whilst being good for security of bikes is an unattractive first impression of the school.
98. Despite having to exercise stringent control to balance the budget the leadership of the school has managed its finances well to enable it to spend adequate sums on learning resources. Most faculties have satisfactory stocks of books and other teaching materials although there are some shortages. In mathematics there is a frequent sharing of books and there is also some sharing in history. There is a need to build up books in religious education as well as the collection of artefacts for the study of Buddhism and Sikhism. In ICT there has been much progress since the last inspection and particularly in the network set up. Access to the internet by the library is planned and is much needed. The school is very well provided with audio-visual equipment and there are good resources in art and design and technology.
99. The school's library is centrally and conveniently located. The stock of books is supplemented by local loan facilities which makes it satisfactory. Most of the stock is bright, interesting and in good condition but there needs to be further investment in books which treat subjects in greater depth. There are good facilities for private study and quiet reading but only a few computers are available.
100. Most faculties make use of resources outside the school with visits to museums, galleries, theatres and other local places of interest and fieldwork in geography and history and fixtures in sports extend facilities further.

The efficiency of the school

101. The school's budget is about average.
102. In recent years the school has run up a substantial deficit on its budget. The school now manages its budget well and financial planning and control are good. The school is in line to bring the budget back into balance shortly. The close working relationship between an efficient bursar and governors is a key factor in the success of the present system. This is confirmed in the very recent audit where standards of financial administration are judged to be very good. Costings and projections for the future are detailed and meticulous. Budgets are now linked more effectively to school development plans.
103. Despite having to take measures to reduce an overspend on budgets, careful management has ensured that average sums are allocated to learning resources. There are some shortages but overall the curriculum is adequately resourced. The deliberate damage done by some pupils to computer equipment should be eliminated, as should other examples of vandalism which cause a waste of scarce resources.
104. Spending on staff is about average and is efficient. Expenditure on support staff is average but that on clerical and administrative staff is above average. This is justified in the range of tasks covered

and the quality of the support they provide. Record keeping has improved as a result of some expansion of administrative staff.

105. The use of staff is good although there is an overload on particular senior staff. This is partly as a result of temporary responsibilities to plug gaps pending new appointments, but a wider review is required. Teachers are used well although the percentage of time which teachers spend teaching is above average. The pupil:teacher ratio is also slightly higher than average.
106. The site manager is very well used to maintain premises and to reduce costs including assessing any damage caused by pupils which can be recouped.
107. Good use is made of accommodation including some impressive newer accommodation. Existing deficiencies are coped with as well as possible. The library is physically located at the heart of the school but it is not sufficiently at the heart of the curriculum. Some faculty heads need to embrace the library more into their plans and usage. The levels of funding of the library should be considered as a part of this to ensure adequate sources of information for all pupils, including higher attainers. The use of the internet should be seen as a part of this.
108. The money available for staff development is above average but not used sufficiently well to link it more closely to school development plans.
109. Funds for special educational needs are used for their correct purposes and enable such pupils to make good progress overall with the exception of the time spent by pupils with severe behavioural problems in the learning support department.
110. In considering educational standards achieved particularly and the quality of education which the school provides in relation to its context and budget, the school provides satisfactory value for money. At the last inspection value for money was good.

121. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

121. English, mathematics and science

English

111. In 1999, results in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 were well below average compared with all schools and below the national average for similar schools. Results were not as good as those in science or mathematics. Results were better in 1998 when although below average for all schools they were average compared with similar schools.
112. GCSE results in English language in 1999 were below average at grades A*-C compared with all schools but average for similar schools. Although below the national average for all schools, 40 per cent of candidates achieved grades A*-C in three out of the last four years. The gap between the school's results in English language and those for all schools was wider in 1999 than at the time of the last inspection. In 1998 the same pupils who were entered for English language did significantly better in their other GCSE subjects. In 1999 results at grades A*-G were below average compared with all schools and average compared with similar schools.
113. GCSE results in English literature at grades A*-C were average in 1999 and 1997 and were well above average in 1996 and 1998 compared with both all schools and similar schools. In 1998 pupils achieved more highly in English literature than in their other subjects. All pupils entered for the examination, on average around half the total year group, have been successful at grades A*-G in the last four years. Standards in English literature have been maintained since the last inspection.
114. Current attainment by just over half of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average, and a minority of pupils achieve above average standards. The improvement in current standards is due in part to a greater proportion of pupils with average or above average levels of attainment on entry to the school but mostly to a greater focus in teaching on setting targets for improvement. Standards of attainment vary in different aspects of the subject. The majority of pupils speak and read satisfactorily. Pupils speak confidently and fluently and readily volunteer to answer questions in lessons. Occasionally, good speaking skills are developed and encouraged by imaginative teaching as in a Year 7 class which conducted a 'mock trial' based on an episode from a class reader where standards of speaking and debate were high. The majority of pupils read a good range of books with accuracy and good understanding, with higher attaining pupils able to read aloud with good expression. A significant minority of pupils, however, cannot make deductions or predictions from their reading and this hampers progress in response to more challenging literature. With the exception of higher attainers, standards of writing are below average. The skills of sustained writing are not practised enough. Teaching does not concentrate enough on the elimination of errors, resulting in poor spelling of common words, inappropriate use or absence of correct punctuation and weak construction of sentences and paragraphs. Higher attaining pupils show good knowledge of vocabulary and write with accuracy and imagination.
115. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average in English language but standards are above average in English literature. The majority of pupils read well and respond positively to a wide range of literature, including Shakespeare. Higher attaining pupils can infer meanings from their reading and discuss their work well when led by the teacher. Standards of speaking are generally high, as demonstrated particularly well in a Year 11 lesson based on a mystery story by Charles Dickens, where pupils offered good, well-reasoned opinions based on detailed knowledge of the text. Standards of writing are more variable. The majority of pupils can write in a range of styles with good awareness of the purpose of writing, but few can sustain good quality extended writing. Higher attaining pupils do not consistently apply their knowledge of literary terms. Most pupils' writing about literature is confined to basic narrative and character because teachers do not vary the written tasks to challenge all pupils. Good quality discussion does not often lead to writing of the same standard. This was demonstrated in a lesson based on autobiographies where good resources stimulated a high standard of class discussion, but writing was confined to headings and poorly constructed notes.

116. Progress is currently good in lessons at Key Stage 3 by the majority of pupils. A minority of higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress in relation to their prior attainment as work is not sufficiently demanding and does not enable pupils to extend their knowledge and skills at home. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set because teachers concentrate on basic literacy skills and pupils are well supported by classroom assistants. The majority of pupils make significant gains in speaking and reading with teachers concentrating on these skills and encouraging all pupils to participate in these activities. Average and below average attaining pupils make good progress in understanding the basic narrative elements of their reading but understanding authors' styles and intentions progresses at a slower rate because teaching rarely plans for the development of this knowledge. Progress in writing is slower than in other aspects of the subject.
117. At Key Stage 4, progress by the majority is currently satisfactory. Average and below average attainers gain good understanding of different types of writing for different audiences and these pupils also make satisfactory gains in their oral responses to literature. Higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress because teachers do not instil in them the need to strive for continuous improvement. The majority of pupils with special educational needs or lower attainers make good progress because teachers plan well for their needs and provide individual attention in smaller teaching groups. As at Key Stage 3 progress in writing is slower than for other aspects of the subject because many pupils have a negative attitude towards any written work above minimal requirements and tasks set too often demand very little writing.
118. Attitudes to learning are mainly good at both key stages. Pupils are well motivated and concentrate well, collaborating with each other productively when required to do so. Pupils are respectful and polite when talking and listening to teachers, but do not often show the same consideration towards the opinions and feelings of each other. Most pupils enjoy their experience of English and the majority behave well in lessons, showing good respect for property and materials for learning. The majority of pupils learn to work well independently as they progress through the school and are able, for example, to show initiative when required to conduct personal research in the library. However, a significant minority of pupils can be very disruptive, and although teachers deal with most incidents well, there are examples of behaviour which both hampers progress and is detrimental to the standards of attainment of other pupils because teachers' time and attention is diverted away from learning.
119. The majority of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good and it is satisfactory at Key Stage 4. There is a greater proportion of good teaching than was seen at the time of the last inspection and the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. All teachers are enthusiastic and well qualified, and the majority are experienced and well respected by pupils. All have a good knowledge of the subject and the requirements of the National Curriculum as shown by the choice of literature to match the programmes of study in full. This was not the case at the time of the last inspection. Most classes are managed to a good standard of discipline and all teachers vary their teaching methods to ensure most pupils participate fully in lessons, but higher attainers are not challenged sufficiently. The purpose of lessons is clearly expressed in terms of what pupils are expected to do, but not always in what pupils are expected to learn. Lessons are very well planned to use a good range of resources within a well-constructed subject curriculum, but the assessment of pupils' work is not consistently used to modify teaching strategies or plan future work. The strengths in teaching identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained but there is insufficient attention to varying the work set to account for a wide range of pupils' needs.
120. The faculty is efficiently administered and all teachers, including those who teach English for only some of their time, feel well supported and part of a team. However, the work of the faculty needs more careful monitoring if policies are to be applied more consistently, especially the marking of pupils' work and the teaching of writing skills. The curriculum does not have a structured and progressive approach to basic literacy skills at present, insufficient attention is paid to the needs of pupils of differing levels of attainment in the work expected of them, and plans for the future development of the faculty do not concentrate with sufficient clarity on methods to improve teaching and learning.

Reading, writing, speaking and listening across the curriculum

121. The need for a coherent whole-school policy for literacy across the curriculum identified at the time of the last inspection has been addressed. A co-ordinator for literacy oversees development across all faculties and a very good policy has been produced which indicates how each subject intends to provide opportunities for pupils to practise their skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening across the curriculum. This policy is not yet fully implemented consistently by all subjects and consideration should be given to the role of senior management in monitoring the effectiveness of this important initiative.
122. Overall, standards of speaking are good. The majority of pupils speak fluently and confidently. Most pupils readily volunteer to answer questions or offer opinions in lessons and many speak knowledgeably about their work. Good opportunities are provided in English, history, drama, science and geography for pupils to practise their speaking skills, but attention to the conventions of standard English is not consistently reinforced. Some subjects do not provide a sufficiently wide range of opportunities for pupils to talk about their work to each other, so the use of discussion to solve problems or improve written work is not well developed. Listening skills are more inconsistently practised. The majority of pupils are attentive to the teacher. Drama makes an important contribution to pupils' self-confidence and fluency in speech.
123. The standard of reading is satisfactory. The majority of pupils read fluently and mostly accurately, with good understanding of what they have read. The practice of providing time for personal silent reading and a good programme for improving the reading ages of pupils who enter the school with below average attainment in reading enables all pupils to make good progress. Many subjects, however, do not encourage pupils to read aloud so progress in the development of reading with good expression is limited to pupils of high attainment. A well-attended reading club enables pupils to practise their skills together.
124. Overall, standards of writing are barely satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but improve in Key Stage 4. In English, history, geography and religious education, however, some pupils are held back as a result of weaknesses in basic skills especially when required to write with accuracy and at length. Many pupils have poor standards of spelling, including common words; punctuation is weak and the majority of pupils find accurate sentence construction and paragraphing difficult to achieve. There is no consistent approach to how pupils acquire and consolidate their knowledge of the technical vocabulary of each subject, though this is good in design and technology. The correction of spelling and other mistakes in writing is inconsistent throughout the curriculum. A few pupils write well, with good standards of presentation, often using word processing for final pieces. Higher attaining pupils show a good range of vocabulary. The skills of varying writing styles to match purpose and audience need development with less frequent use of worksheets which demand minimal written responses.

Drama

125. GCSE results have been well above average at grades A*-C in the past four years. Nearly all pupils have been successful at grades A*-G over those years. In 1998 pupils who were entered for drama did significantly better in that subject than the same pupils did in their other subjects, and the proportion attaining the very highest grades A* and A was close to the national average. The GCSE course was new at the time of the last inspection and has proved to be very successful.
126. Current attainment is well above national expectations at Key Stage 3 and well above national averages at Key Stage 4. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils show good skills in each of the areas of creating, presenting and enacting their work. Pupils plan and present their work well in a spirit of co-operation and teamwork, as in a lesson in Key Stage 3 where pupils presented characters from a medieval village with great accuracy. The skills of thoughtful and realistic portrayal of emotion and tension were particularly well demonstrated in a Key Stage 4 lesson where pupils showed a high level of attainment in improvising relationships based on a famous execution for murder. Improvisation at Key Stage 4 is very good, with pupils well able to combine the use of voice, mime, movement and gesture to convey both narrative and emotion. The ability to watch and criticise the performance of others is not as well developed in Key Stage 3 as other aspects of the subject, but standards are good in Key Stage 4.

127. All pupils make very good progress in most aspects of drama because they are enthusiastic and well motivated and because teaching is planned to involve all pupils fully in each activity. Teachers demonstrate and reinforce essential skills so pupils always know how to improve their work. Pupils rapidly acquire the self-confidence to perform before an audience in Key Stage 3, and progress between the key stages is very good as pupils learn an increasingly sophisticated range of skills, such as how to maintain eye contact and sustain emotional reaction over a longer period of time. Higher attaining pupils make particularly good progress in developing and sustaining realistic portrayal of character. Pupils of average and below average attainment respond well to improvisation based on the study of texts and make good progress in working collaboratively to improve standards of performance. All pupils make good progress in acquiring and consolidating their knowledge of theory and technique because they are given a wide variety of opportunities to learn and practise.
128. Pupils respond well to drama. Standards of behaviour are high and pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated. A significant minority of pupils who display negative attitudes and challenging behaviour in other subjects of the curriculum respond positively and co-operatively in drama. Teachers expect high standards of teamwork in activities which are stimulating, challenging and which proceed at a brisk pace. The well-attended Key Stage 3 drama club, substantially organised by Key Stage 4 pupils, demonstrates clearly the enthusiasm pupils have for this subject.
129. The quality of teaching is very good, with a small proportion of good lessons. Specialist teaching is excellent. Teaching is well planned to demonstrate skills in interesting and imaginative ways so that pupils know that they have made progress in each lesson. Standards of behaviour and performance are expected to be high as seen in lessons in Key Stage 4 where pupils were encouraged to 'direct' the performance of others. All pupils know precisely what they are expected to learn and the basis upon which their attainment is assessed.
130. Drama is a significant strength of the school both in terms of its standards of attainment and contribution to pupils' personal development. The absence of drama from the curriculum of Year 8 prevents continuity throughout Key Stage 3 in this popular subject.

Mathematics

131. In 1999 results in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 were average compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. Results were better than those in English and similar to science. Results were better in 1998 when they were again average compared with all schools but well above average compared with similar schools. In relation to the attainment on entry, and the fact that the school has a smaller proportion of higher attainers than would be found in most schools, pupils made good progress to achieve these results.
132. GCSE results in 1999 were below average at grades A*-C compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools. Results have been similar in most years since the last inspection. In 1998 the same pupils who were entered for mathematics did significantly better in their other GCSE subjects. At grades A*-G results have been mostly average.
133. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. Low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve the levels expected in number work with some demonstrating good skills without the use of a calculator. In some classes the attainment is above average with some very good work seen in Year 7. Boys in a low ability set working in the computer room could recall previous work in LOGO, carried out tasks conscientiously and the more able could write the instruction sequences needed to draw their initials. All pupils are extended by the investigative work. A systematic approach to problem solving, looking for patterns and expressing results in formulae is well developed, with pupils demonstrating appropriate analytical skills. Many of the more able pupils reach levels beyond national expectations in their investigations and display good ICT skills for presenting tables and graphs in their work.
134. Attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is below the national average. The majority of pupils have difficulty with algebra and work with simultaneous equations requires constant reinforcement from the teacher. Work by the more able in algebra is satisfactory but slow, as much a

reflection of their lack of confidence as lack of ability. Development of work in number for low ability pupils including those with special educational needs is good with appropriate use of calculators. In geometry most pupils can measure accurately and produce careful drawings. Current attainment in lessons by average and above average pupils in work in statistics is of a higher standard than previous GCSE results. Pupils are able to work with ideas of probability and fairness and to construct and interpret frequency and cumulative frequency graphs.

135. Good progress is made at Key Stage 3. In some lessons good motivation and challenge leads to very good progress. In a Year 7 top set pupils were able to use the function command in the spreadsheet software on computers to generate sequences of numbers including the Fibonacci sequence. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress and in work involving computing it is often above expectations. By Year 9 most pupils' ability to work independently on investigations is well developed. A Year 9 class investigating various ways of packaging tea could work with surface areas and volumes of a range of regular solids and tabulate and interpret their data. Pupils are better at presenting their results orally than in writing. Progress is currently satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and with an appropriate curriculum and good in-class support many achieve a GCSE grade.
136. The majority of boys consolidate their analytical and problem solving skills and enjoy the investigative work. There is, however, less evidence of the use of appropriate ICT skills for handling and displaying data in this work than would be expected, given the quality of ICT related work in earlier years. Tasks set across the ability range do not always ensure that a sufficient sense of achievement is possible for the most able boys. There is a corresponding lack of achievement at the highest grades in the GCSE results.
137. The attitudes and behaviour of boys are good at both key stages. There was no disruptive behaviour in any of the classes seen and the few minor problems of behaviour were managed with considerable skill. Boys join in oral work willingly and are keen to answer questions posed by the teacher. Class work and example exercises are carried out responsibly and boys are willing to come to the front of the class to work examples on the board or to explain their ideas. Boys work independently on class work in most cases but some successful collaborative working in pairs and small groups was seen. Relationships between boys and teachers are constructive, boys respect their teachers who deal with them in a firm but friendly manner.
138. The quality of teaching is good overall and best at Key Stage 3 where three quarters of lessons were good or better. The emphasis on improving teaching strategies since the last inspection has clearly been effective although some issues of rigour and challenge remain. Teachers are suitably qualified and have a secure and accurate knowledge of their subject. They teach with confidence and classroom management and control is generally good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with pupils. In the most successful classes a variety of activities capture the interest of pupils and high levels of activity are sustained to the end of the lesson. Teachers use every opportunity to get pupils to use their mathematical skills without recourse to a calculator. A particularly effective lesson in Year 10 enabled pupils to progress in their understanding of a cumulative frequency curve through a large-scale demonstration using the cleared floor space of the classroom. Where teaching is less effective individual support for pupils working on examples is at the expense of sustaining the pace, rigour and challenge of the earlier part of the lesson or some tasks are insufficiently challenging for some of the pupils to sustain their interest and enthusiasm. Homework is well used to extend a topic or consolidate learning, but its use to develop independent learning is largely confined to extending investigative work begun in lessons. Teachers' expectations of boys are appropriate but could be higher for some of the more able.
139. General resources for mathematics are satisfactory, but while the range of textbooks is good there are frequently not enough for one per pupil in lessons. Whole-class access to information technology is satisfactory but again with larger classes computers are shared. There is inadequate provision of ICT for use in the classroom to deliver appropriate parts of the mathematics curriculum and to promote independent learning.
140. The head of faculty, who has been in post just over a year, provides strong enthusiastic leadership.

The ethos of the faculty is one of working as a team to improve achievement which is largely being achieved although the isolation of one teaching room does not help in team building. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning have been introduced, including classroom observations and the use of assessment to track achievement. This year the faculty is piloting the Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics Education Project (CAME) with Year 7 to see if conceptual barriers to progress can be overcome. The new schemes of work ensure that all groups are meeting national requirements but more explicit documented differentiation, and references to resources and teaching strategies would make them a more effective tool for raising standards.

Numeracy across the curriculum

141. The level of numeracy of the majority in the school is satisfactory, and most pupils can work without calculators to a considerable extent. There is evidence of the range of these skills in other subject areas. In science and technology pupils can measure and weigh accurately, handle decimal numbers and the more able use and convert fractions. In science pupils record and describe data, interpret graphical information and analyse data to predict outcomes. In technology pupils estimate volumes, quantities and costs, derive data from research and communicate through graphs, models and diagrams. In geography skills are seen in the interpretation of grid references and the measurement of scale and bearing in map reading. Pupils use line graphs, bar charts and pie charts to illustrate temperature and rainfall but there is little evidence of more advanced statistical techniques in Key Stage 4.
142. In physical education pupils show good use of numeracy skills in measuring fitness and pulse rates at various stages of exercise and presenting and interpreting the graphs of this data. Pupils' work on display also shows good use of bar charts and pie charts for the division of leisure time.

Science

143. In 1999, results in the National Curriculum assessment tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 were average compared with all schools nationally and above average for similar schools. Results in 1999 were better than those in English and similar to mathematics. Results were better in 1998 than in 1999 when they were again average compared with all schools but well above average compared with similar schools. In relation to the attainment on entry, and the fact that the school has a smaller proportion of higher attainers than would be found in most schools, pupils made good progress to achieve these results.
144. GCSE results in 1999 were above average at grades A*-C compared with all schools and well above average for similar schools. Results at grades A*-C have been mostly above average compared with all schools since the last inspection. There is an upward trend in numbers gaining higher grades particularly A*/A grades.
145. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is average. Year 7 pupils are enthusiastic in their practical work to find out which substances are acids and which are alkalis. Year 8 pupils know the main features which distinguish sexual from asexual reproduction. In Year 9, they know that metals are good conductors of electricity and can set up a circuit to test this. Higher attainers are aware of other features such as tensile strength and density which affect the properties of metals and have the confidence to explain this to their peers. Lower attaining pupils are well supported by their teachers and can classify materials into those that can and cannot conduct electricity. They understand density through flotation.
146. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average overall. As their knowledge and practical skills improve, Year 11 pupils neutralise titrations confidently with a significant majority being able to write a balanced equation for the reaction. Pupils in a lower set had a good knowledge of the effects of different types of surfaces on friction and could carry out an experiment to verify their hypothesis. In Year 10, pupils were aware of the transmission of disease through drinking water and droplet infection and knew that diseases were caused by microbes. A minority of high attainers knew the differences between bacteria and viruses, and could relate the rapid spread of disease to their very high reproductive capacity. Pupils in a lower set could draw and label blood cells and knew that there were

different blood groups. They understood the need for transfusion during surgery and a minority could link this with oxygen transport. There is a very good range of practical work and some sophisticated demonstrations. By the end of Year 11 pupils can handle scientific investigations which are part of their GCSE coursework. Planning and observation are good, but evaluation is less well developed particularly in the lower achieving pupils. Scrutiny of books showed incomplete work in some areas and experiments sometimes had no conclusion. Independent investigative work is a high priority throughout both key stages.

147. Progress is good at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In a Year 9 class pupils made good progress because their teacher had planned the lesson well and had reasonable expectations of them to set up a ray box experiment to investigate the relationship between the angle of incidence and the angle of reflection. In a lower set in Year 8 where teacher expectation was very high, pupils successfully constructed a model of the human ear which they planned by using a drawing of the ear as their starting point. Pupils of low prior attainment in a Year 10 set successfully made a transfusion card for blood typing. A high attaining group in Year 11 made very good progress and could discuss the commercial uses of nitrates in the production of fertilisers and explosives. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress across both key stages. They gain in confidence through developing improved writing, reading and speaking skills. The excellent if often unplanned support of special educational needs assistants is an important contributor to the progress of these pupils. The use of individual education plans is rare and their introduction too recent to have made an impact.
148. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about science and take a keen interest in their work, particularly the practical lessons. Their attitude and motivation is good across both key stages. They can work independently and collaborate well in pairs or larger groups while doing practical work. They share their experimental observations with one another and can argue constructively as to whether results are correct or anomalous. Year 7 pupils seize rapidly upon any opportunity to do practical work and to think scientifically when assembling apparatus.
149. Teaching is a strength of the department and the quality is good overall. The very good accommodation and resources support the teachers' organisation and management. The teachers are comfortable with their knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subject. They share lesson objectives with the pupils and praise good behaviour and response. Generally they have high expectations of the pupils and employ a variety of methods to suit the needs of all pupils. Many of the strategies are practically based and the support of two excellent technicians is of vital importance. Some excellent work has been produced at both key stages by teachers using ICT, particularly in the light and temperature sensor investigations in Year 8. Foundation and higher tier modular examination questions can be accessed on the network and ICT is used extensively in the production of GCSE coursework. Homework is regularly given in both key stages and is an effective tool for building on work done at school, but much homework at Key Stage 3 is humdrum and of little value in developing scientific knowledge or comprehension. The marking of pupils' work was identified as a weakness in the last inspection and this has not been fully addressed. Marking is inconsistent. The school marking policy is not always applied and comments are not always constructive. The marking often lacks depth and continuity. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is only satisfactory and will remain so until there is a more effective use of individual education plans to gain insight into the specific learning difficulties related to science.
150. There is a good ethos which promotes successful teaching and learning, but monitoring by leadership of the department of teaching and assessment procedures, including the marking of pupils' work, is unsatisfactory.

161. **Other subjects or courses**

Art

151. GCSE results were below average at grades A*-C in 1999 in comparison with all schools. They were well below average in 1998 compared with all schools and similar schools, and the same pupils who were entered for art did significantly better in their other GCSE subjects. In both years A*-G grades

were average.

152. Current attainment by the large majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation. This is higher than the standards indicated by teachers' assessments for the previous academic year. Standards are now higher as a result of the impact of very effective teaching across the key stage. Most pupils know of artists and their different styles. Using a good art vocabulary they can compare the partial abstraction of O'Keefe's paintings to the pure abstraction of Rothko's work. Pupils understand how visual elements like line, shape and texture can be combined effectively. This sharpens their observations when drawing. Pupils are able to develop interesting motifs for tiles based on drawings of trees. Their experiments generate interesting shapes and textures which pupils model skilfully in clay.
153. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is broadly average and higher than standards indicated by previous GCSE results as a result of very good teaching and higher expectations. A small number are above average. Most pupils know the basic tenets of the Cubist style and its major exponents. They appreciate and are able to discuss the ways these artists use shape and colour. In a still life painting the majority examine Cubist paintings closely and select compositional elements, colour and paint techniques to use to strengthen their work. Higher attainers have a better understanding and are able to apply a more skilled painting technique. Equally, in self-portraits these pupils achieve good results in drawing facial expression and gesture. Most pupils draw skilfully using line and tone. Their large expressionist portraits employing paper collage and strong chalk colouring achieve a high standard.
154. Currently progress at both key stages is very good for the majority of pupils including all those with special educational needs. Teachers' explanations and demonstrations are very good and pupils are clear on what they have to do. At an early point pupils learn to think and work in abstract ways. In Year 7 they learn how modern artists interpret what they see and gain a sharp understanding of the use of line, shape, texture and pattern. This establishes the confidence to embark on bold, large-scale observational drawing and some excellent progress occurs. In this instance higher attainers, looking at the stamens in lilies, simplify shapes and use opposite colours to create form and visual impact. By Year 9 all pupils are developing projects very well by researching widely and experimenting inventively with many materials. They become adept at transferring knowledge and skills from two-dimensional contexts into clay work, for example modelling insect forms. Reading and writing, for example, on religious and symbolic facts about masks in Chinese, Hindu and Greek cultures and collecting materials in sketchbooks such as coloured feathers and fabrics, contributes to pupils realising imaginative and well designed masks. At Key Stage 4 the large majority have acquired a serious and thoughtful attitude to making work. As a consequence of being taught very effectively pupils plan projects coherently. They have learned to make good analyses of artists' work. Many, for example, adopt the drawing and compositional approaches they find in Cubist paintings such as using light and dark contrasts and feathered brushstrokes. Pupils persevere with the difficulties of working in three dimensions. Modelling a head in clay they discover how to build a sound structure and their understanding of the solid forms of facial features increases. Higher attaining pupils move forward rapidly and begin to achieve convincing proportions.
155. All pupils have a depth of interest in art. They readily research, for example by reading and writing, and they are prepared to persevere with modifying their work over several weeks until it is improved. There is a very high level of concentration in all lessons and this is sustained for lengthy periods. The relationships between pupils are excellent. They discuss their work with each other and on a few occasions give help such as showing how clay pieces are attached to each other securely. Behaviour is very good. Teachers receive full co-operation in organising and tidying classroom materials.
156. Teaching is very good at both key stages. Expectations are exceedingly high, particularly at Key Stage 3 where pupils are being involved in evaluating each other's work. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and cover National Curriculum and examination requirements very effectively in often highly challenging activities. The bold observational drawing in Year 7 is a good example where the attention to abstract forms in flowers enables pupils to gain insight into the wide compass of visual imagery and how it is achieved. This is realised by thorough planning which sets out learning objectives that are authoritative on what pupils should learn at each stage. This allows very positive

interventions during lessons helping pupils notice and improve elements of their work. The management of pupils is excellent, promoting positive relationships and interest. Lessons are meticulously prepared to make best use of time. Explanations and demonstrations are well presented. They leave pupils very clear on what they have to do which enables them to work largely independently.

157. The subject is managed very effectively. There has been much progress in recent years. The teachers are highly committed and work closely in monitoring work and making improvements. Their behaviour management policy and literacy strategy are both very effectively implemented. Assessment is being used very well to help Key Stage 4 pupils towards improved GCSE results. They receive individual tutorials and agree targets for improvement. The ethos in the department is excellent and promotes increasingly high standards. This is being hindered by the lack of a discrete ceramics area, computers in the department and limited work surfaces generally for larger scale work.

Design and technology

158. GCSE results in design and technology at grades A*-C have been mostly above average in the last four years and have improved considerably since the last inspection. In 1999 results were about average for the electronics, food technology and graphics components of the examination but were well below average in resistant materials, as they were in 1998. The 1999 results in food technology showed an improvement from 1998. Results were well above average in graphics in 1998. In the short GCSE courses in resistant materials and graphics in 1999 and 1998 results were well below average. Results at A*-G grades in full and short courses are mostly in-line with national averages.
159. Current attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectation and matches recent teacher assessments. A minority of pupils attain above the national expectation. Pupils' design folders are mostly satisfactory but there are some weak graphical skills. In the better folders there is good use of colour, shading techniques and some use of information communication technology. The weaker folders often lack good presentational skills and research is shallow. Higher attainers can usually generate a range of ideas with careful analysis, whilst lower attainers often have difficulty in planning and applying ideas. Practical skills are usually good and pupils use tools and equipment safely and confidently. Practical outcomes are usually good but some are of limited quality. In Year 9 all pupils faced with the challenge of producing a mixed salad as a starter course were able to respond well in choosing appropriate ingredients.
160. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment by the majority of pupils is in line with national averages. In some detailed design folder work pupils use commercial material, colour, photographs and information and communication technology in presenting their work and researching their projects. On occasions design folders, as at Key Stage 3, lack depth of research with weak presentational skills and shallow evaluation. Practical skills are usually good and pupils use tools and equipment responsibly and with care. In resistant materials the majority can mark out and cut a dovetail joint accurately and in food technology most have satisfactory skills in choosing and using correct utensils, in gauging temperatures and working with volumes. Many can evaluate the end product independently and can use self-assessment constructively.
161. Progress by the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Pupils develop knowledge of concepts and processes in designing, making and understanding. Good progress is seen in lessons which have appropriate pace and where challenges are set. Such qualities were seen in a textiles lesson where pupils were engaged in making the kipper-tie, a graphics lesson on isometric projection and in a lesson on control where pupils were involved in programming a smartcard.
162. At Key Stage 4 progress by the majority of pupils is satisfactory overall including for those with special educational needs. Good progress was seen in a food technology lesson where pupils were working to a timescale in preparing a pasta product. Pupils were set clear objectives using assessment criteria for the completion of the product. Progress in graphics and resistant materials is satisfactory and all lessons are supported by effective teacher demonstrations and group or individual guidance. Completed folder work shows some pupils making good progress in graphics at GCSE with increasing

understanding and application of geometrical construction. A minority of pupils who are off-task do not make sufficient progress and can disturb others.

163. Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive. They work well and share workplaces and equipment co-operatively. There are some instances of inattention or distraction during teachers' explanations or demonstrations. Generally pupils are interested in their work and most can discuss their work with some understanding and confidence.
164. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the quality of teaching is always satisfactory or better and is mostly satisfactory. The majority of good teaching is at Key Stage 3. The better lessons are delivered with good pace, use appropriate resources with well-timed teacher intervention as seen in some lessons in graphics, textiles and control at Key Stage 3 and in food technology at Key Stage 4. There are examples of pupils being enthused and stimulated through involvement in discussion such as programming a card and how that is related to use in real life situations. Practical outcomes at both key stages are usually good as a result of pupils being encouraged to work with purpose to complete tasks. Expectations are mostly satisfactory but there are lessons where the nature of worksheets used do not challenge pupils of different abilities sufficiently. Marking is done regularly with supportive and helpful comments but there is a lack of specific individual target setting for pupils at Key Stage 3. Assessment procedures improve at Key Stage 4 when they are driven by examination board criteria. Some work at Key Stage 4 is not sufficiently challenging especially for the higher attainers in the graphics Certificate of Achievement course and in aspects of the resistant materials courses. There are two technicians who provide good support to their areas.
165. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 does not meet statutory requirements as not all programmes of study are taught. There are no structures or mechanisms modules and the use of plastics and metals is underdeveloped. The design process is not followed as required in some areas.
166. Leadership of the design and technology department lacks real direction as a result of changes of staffing and interim arrangements pending a new appointment. Staff work too much as individuals and not as a team using their own schemes of work rather than common departmental policies.
167. Since the last inspection some issues have been resolved and examination results have improved. Some improvement has been made in the teaching of graphical skills. Funding is now better and the pace of some lessons is now better. Food technology has been introduced since the last inspection and textiles, now in place in Year 7, is enlivening the curriculum and adding an important additional dimension. There is still some underachievement at both key stages mainly due to insufficient monitoring of standards and some inappropriate tasks or courses offered.
168. To improve, the department must implement the National Curriculum programmes of study at Key Stage 3, resolve the staffing problems, improve and develop CAD/CAM, plastics and metals, to develop differentiated material and worksheets and to consider alternative courses at Key Stage 4. Work remains to be done on some schemes of work.
169. There are some health and safety concerns, namely: dust extraction on the band saw, an emergency stop on the pillar drill, safety clips missing on the food mixers and some oven doors are difficult to open. A risk assessment audit is scheduled to take place soon.

Geography

170. GCSE results in 1999 at grades A*-C were above the national average compared with all schools and significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. Results were average in 1996 but in other years since the previous inspection they have been below average, although not significantly so in 1998. All pupils were successful at grades A*-G in 1999; results were average in 1998, but in the two previous years they were below average.
171. Attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is slightly below national expectations. Small minorities of pupils achieve above or in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 understand simplified theoretical models of urban structure and the associated terminology.

Most pupils can describe land use in cities, but only a minority can also explain it. A majority of pupils produce good quality enquiry work, often using out of school sources such as CD-ROM and the internet. Lower attaining pupils can describe geographical patterns but are better at doing this orally than in writing.

172. Attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average, with a minority achieving below. Higher attaining pupils produce clear annotated maps and diagrams and can discuss the economic problems of less developed countries. Most pupils produce good quality coursework, in which they set up and test hypotheses using simple graphical and statistical methods for data analysis. They extract relevant information from a variety of sources to produce clearly written notes, and have acquired a good technical vocabulary, of river basin terminology for example. Apart from the lowest attaining 20 per cent, pupils at both key stages read fluently and with understanding from detailed texts. Numeracy skills, normally well developed among geography students, are relatively undeveloped within the subject at this school. Key Stage 4 pupils have not progressed beyond relatively simple statistical techniques.
173. Progress by the majority of pupils is good at both key stages. A minority of pupils, mostly lower attainers, make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Unsatisfactory learning occurs when the pace of lessons is slow and pupils are not challenged sufficiently. In most lessons pupils recall and consolidate earlier learning and demonstrate advances in learning when responding to end of lesson progress checks. During a lesson on four- and six-figure grid references a Year 7 class made good progress with the assistance of their earlier acquired map reading skills. Year 10 pupils used their existing knowledge of river systems to good advantage in a lesson on the causes of flooding in Bangladesh. Most pupils show a gradual improvement over time in skills such as drawing sketch maps and diagrams and the ability to work independently on enquiry work.
174. Attitudes to learning are mostly good. The behaviour of a small minority of Year 9 pupils is unsatisfactory. Most pupils concentrate well, especially when offered a variety of tasks in lessons. They work collaboratively in pairs or small groups when given the opportunity. They respect school property and relate well to each other and adults. Their capacity for personal study and independent learning is well illustrated by the keenness of their approach to enquiry work and coursework.
175. The quality of teaching is nearly always satisfactory or better and is mostly good. Over one third of teaching is very good. A small minority is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. This represents an improvement in the overall standard since the previous inspection. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and understanding of curriculum requirements. Pupils gained much from the teacher's depth of knowledge in a Year 10 lesson on river hazards. Teachers provide content that is accurate and reflects current information, as in a Year 11 lesson on relations between developed and less developed countries. The best teaching enthuses pupils with descriptions and explanation of places. Most teaching shows sensitivity in dealing with controversial questions such as the inequitable distribution and consumption of resources. Expectations are high in a minority of lessons and at least satisfactory in most lessons. Year 8 pupils were challenged by a requirement to draw accurate graphs of climate statistics for three Italian cities. Most lessons start with a summary of recent learning, building on pupils' existing knowledge, after which the aims of the lesson are made clear. The few less successful lessons are characterised by slow pace, too much teacher talk, lack of challenge and, more rarely, insecure classroom management and control. Setting arrangements do not meet fully the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment; tasks designed to meet the needs of all pupils are set in only a minority of lessons. Marking is completed regularly, but makes insufficient use of helpful comments.
176. The work of the department benefits from good leadership and management and from excellent teamwork. Issues raised during the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Outcomes would be further improved if more thought were given to matching tasks to the needs of individual pupils and by the inclusion in the Key Stage 4 curriculum of more sophisticated statistical techniques.

History

177. GCSE results in 1999 were below average at grades A*-C compared with all schools but not significantly so. In 1998 results were higher and well above average with pupils achieving higher results in history than in their other GCSE subjects. They were above average in 1996 but weaker in 1997. In the last four years all pupils have been successful at grades A*-G. Overall results have improved significantly since the last inspection.
178. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is just below national expectations but a significant minority of pupils achieve at or above national expectations. This is an improvement from the well below national expectations on entry in Year 7. In the interpretation and the analysis of evidence, higher attaining pupils identify much detail and are beginning to recognise bias and to understand why evidence may be biased. Lower attaining pupils are less competent in these skills. Although they pick out a lot of detail, pupils' ability in discussion is better than their writing skills. Written work of lower attainers lacks depth and there is insufficient evidence to support judgements. In comparing the development in castle building over several centuries higher attainers are aware of how and why some things change over time but lower attainers have more difficulty. By the end of the key stage most pupils can relate the background economic and political causes of the Boer War to the immediate causes of the Jameson Raid. All pupils have developed independent learning skills through enquiry homework and assignments on topics such as the Roman army and the Armada.
179. Attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national average. A high level of independent learning was seen in good assignments on racism where pupils used researched evidence from many sources to establish its long-term causes and significance. Only higher and middle attaining pupils evaluate sources well, quoting from sources and using one source to support or contradict another and lower attaining pupils, although making good progress in this skill, tend to be more descriptive and less analytical. Too many pupils make elementary grammatical and spelling errors and write poorly. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and by Year 11 write in an increasingly mature style but still make some elementary spelling errors.
180. Progress is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs are hampered by weak writing skills but make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. In smaller classes at Key Stage 4 and with enthusiasm for the subject which they have chosen, pupils with special needs at Key Stage 4 make very good progress. The quality of the learning support staff and their positive, planned assistance are key factors in the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The very good progress made by the majority of pupils at Key Stage 4 results from high expectations of teaching focusing on key historical skills. Progress is also aided by enquiry-based learning and the quality and choice of resources. Pupils make notable progress in evaluating sources particularly in their work on crime and policing at the end of the Victorian era. Evaluation and research are linked in GCSE assignments on the lifestyle of Boscombe at the beginning of the century, using photographs, reference books and local histories. Although attainment of the majority in history skills on entry to the school in Year 7 is below average the generally above average results in GCSE indicate a considerable degree of value added in pupils' progress.
181. Attitudes to learning are mainly good with pupils responding positively to the high standards set by teachers and strict rules of what is expected. Good attitudes contribute to the progress made and the results achieved. A minority of pupils have poor social skills, their behaviour needs continual monitoring and they need encouragement to keep working.
182. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Teaching is particularly effective in Key Stage 4. Lessons are well prepared with the necessary factual content and good accompanying resources, some of which reflect teachers' own personal research and their thorough knowledge of history. At Key Stage 4 there is very effective use of extracts from nineteenth century documents to illustrate typical crimes and punishments of that period. Lessons are organised to take account of pupils' abilities with appropriate adjustments of language and explanation to support those with poor literacy skills. When pupils are required to make notes they are always clear on what they have to do as a result of teachers' instructions. Homework and coursework extends the work of the classroom and research tasks encourage the development of higher learning skills.
183. There are insufficient textbooks for pupils to use at home and in class they have to share. Leadership

is positive and enables teachers to work as a strong team supporting the new headteacher's vision. Teaching is well monitored through lesson observations and inspection of pupils' books. Assessment is used effectively to promote progress and to inform planning.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

184. GCSE results in 1999 at grades A*-C were just below the national average compared with all schools. Results were better in 1998 and well above average compared with all schools and similar schools. In both these years all pupils were successful at grades A*-G. In the GCSE short course results were above average in 1999 compared with all schools and all achieved grades A*-G.
185. Current attainment by the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectation and reflects the teacher assessments for 1999. Most pupils are competent in the basic operations of using the keyboard, mouse control and in printing out their work. In Year 7 pupils use word-processing skills in a newspaper design and use basic database skills efficiently when handling information. In Year 8 pupils use spreadsheets when modelling and can also arrange and present information in different formats including in alphabetical and chronological order. Pupils in mathematics show good ICT skills in presenting their work using tables and graphs. In a Year 7 top set pupils were able to use the function command in the spreadsheet software on computers to generate sequences of numbers. Lower ability pupils in mathematics and those with special educational needs also use computers to produce work often above expectations. Some excellent work has been produced at both key stages in science through using ICT in investigational work. In Year 9 in history pupils use CD-ROM for reference purposes in work on the British Empire. All pupils benefit at Key Stage 3 from a timetabled taught lesson in ICT covering word-processing, database, spreadsheets, desktop publishing and control.
186. At the end of Key Stage 4 attainment by the majority of pupils is in line with the national average with a small minority of pupils above the national average. In examination courses pupils can create data capture from chosen fields and justify choice of software in Year 10. Pupils use graphic skills well including colour with added art features. All pupils are autonomous users of information and communication technology. In Year 11 pupils can understand the principles of input devices and their application and are well advanced when analysing the stages in the design of a database. In the combined business studies and information and communication technology course at GCSE pupils' ICT skills are above average. There is evidence of good quality word-processing in English and very good use in science investigations where pupils use bar charts, curves, grids, diagrams and databases to present their results. The practical value of ICT can be seen by pupils in science in accessing foundation and higher tier modular examination questions on the network and ICT is also used extensively in the production of GCSE coursework. There is less use of ICT in mathematics at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Cross-curricular ICT is satisfactory overall but is not sufficiently developed in some areas such as religious education, music, modern foreign languages and art.
187. Progress by the majority is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. Their understanding of basic concepts and use of hardware improves through the key stage and older pupils at Key Stage 3 show positive progress in computer usage and in interpreting data. Pupils increase their knowledge of how and why databases are used compared with other forms of sorting information. Higher attainers develop their understanding of the meaning of cells, series and formulae. Also pupils are introduced to increased skill levels of application in desktop publishing. Progress is supported by contributions from a number of other subjects across the curriculum, including science where pupils use sensors in friction experiments.
188. At Key Stage 4 progress by the majority of pupils is also satisfactory and pupils increase their understanding of technical terminology. There is very good progress in lessons which are well supported by use of resources as in a Year 11 lesson on input devices. In the GCSE course in business studies and ICT, pupils make good progress in their understanding of how much information is held by organisations on individuals, as a prerequisite to considering what steps individuals might take to protect themselves from that information being used. Progress in the cross-curricular delivery of ICT is satisfactory but some departments such as English, science and mathematics make a greater contribution than others.

189. Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually good or very good and never less than satisfactory. Most pupils show interest and enthusiasm with only the occasional lapse of attention and concentration. They answer questions readily and can work independently especially at Key Stage 4 on project work. They share workplaces co-operatively and generally show responsibility in safe handling of equipment. The positive attitudes contribute to the overall standards of work.
190. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory at Key Stage 3 with a small minority of good teaching. At Key Stage 4 teaching is mainly good with an equal proportion of very good and satisfactory teaching. Subject knowledge is good and lessons usually have clear objectives and are well planned. Teachers mostly manage pupils well overall and intervene appropriately to give support but there are situations where inattention by pupils is not dealt with early enough. Expectations are satisfactory but need to be stated more clearly. There is good emphasis on the importance of presentation of work. In some lessons despite instructions given some pupils are insufficiently clear what they should do next. A particularly good lesson was seen in a revision lesson with Year 11 on the range of input devices where very good use was made of an overhead projector to involve and guide pupils through the lesson, allowing them to build up their answers and finally to compare them with the finite list displayed. On-going assessment in lessons is good. The main facilities are good for teaching ICT but some teachers in subjects across the curriculum make better use of this facility than others through booking computer rooms well ahead to integrate into their teaching. Computer resources are sometimes stretched with large classes resulting in the sharing of equipment. The contribution of the school's network manager is very good not only in supporting teaching but also in the running of extra-curricular clubs which are popular.
191. Since the last inspection some good staff appointments have been made, the internet has been installed, and a school network has been set up. Access to the internet by the library is planned and is much needed. Much consideration has been given to providing suitable materials for less able and more able pupils. Leadership of the department is currently under the efficient direction of a deputy headteacher who gives good direction but there are too many demands on his time. A main issue to address is the recording of pupils' attainment and progress in ICT skills across the whole-school curriculum to map their skills development more accurately and to assess the contributions made by departments. On-going staff development remains a priority and should include support staff as well as teaching staff where necessary.

Modern foreign languages

192. GCSE results at grades A*-C in both German and Spanish, with small numbers entered, have been well below average compared with all schools and similar schools. In French results were very low in 1999 and 1997 compared with all schools. In 1998 results were better and in line with the national average for boys in all schools and just higher than results for similar schools. Results at grades A*-G have usually been average in all three languages.
193. Currently, attainment in French by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is well below national expectations. No pupils achieve above national expectations and a substantial minority reach no higher than the most fundamental levels. Whilst pupils can follow lessons partly taught in French and extract details from simple texts and taped conversations some require translations to help them understand. Many give short and inaccurate answers to questions and conduct only brief dialogues making use of their textbooks or other prompts. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards when receiving help from their support teachers. Attainment by the majority in French and Spanish at the end of Key Stage 4 is well below average although a small minority of pupils are in line with the national average. The highest attainers can participate in lessons conducted largely in the foreign language and can make short personal statements or write about recent events or their future intentions. Most pupils use a limited range of vocabulary when dealing with everyday situations such as finding the way or describing the weather.
194. Progress by the majority is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. A minority, particularly higher attainers, make satisfactory progress. Within a few weeks of joining the school most pupils can ask simple questions in French and talk or write about themselves, their families and daily lives. Very few learn how to use past and future tenses correctly. At Key Stage 4 most pupils make unsatisfactory

progress in French and their ability to recall even basic items such as time and dates remains limited. The smaller number studying Spanish or those following both languages make better progress with a minority learning to understand authentic texts and acquiring a satisfactory knowledge of grammar.

195. Attitudes to learning are mainly unsatisfactory as about half become bored if the work set is too hard or activities are too long and a substantial minority spoil some lessons through disruptive behaviour. There is a widespread lack of involvement and interest. A minority are enthusiastic, behave well, show interest in their work and have good relations with their teachers. They produce attractive pieces of homework. Some enjoy and benefit from the French exchange and extra-curricular activities provided by their teachers.
196. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall and in a substantial minority of lessons is poor. Teachers have good subject knowledge and command of languages but too often revert to English if pupils do not immediately understand. Expectations for most pupils are not high enough and too often inattention and poor standards of work go unchecked. The range of teaching methods and use of resources are predictable and too limited for the length of the lessons. There is too much copying of grammar notes and opportunities to extend use of vocabulary through alternative teaching strategies such as games and competitions are missed. Work is rarely adapted to suit the range of pupils but teachers work co-operatively with support staff to help pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils' work is marked constructively, especially assignments for GCSE, but some work is rarely looked at and as a result standards of presentation slip. Homework is set regularly and teachers use examples of what pupils have completed in their own time such as posters and brochures for display purposes. Some work is marked conscientiously but results are not put to good use.
197. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection. The department has not adjusted sufficiently to the greater numbers now taking modern foreign languages. The senior management team has identified weaknesses in the teaching of modern foreign languages and there is an agreed strategy to raise standards including adopting a wider range of teaching methods. This has not worked as yet.

Music

198. Results in GCSE were well below average in 1999 compared with all schools with only a third of the nine candidates successful at grades A*-C. Only 28 pupils have been entered for GCSE music since the last inspection with seven achieving A*-C grades over that time. In 1998 results were above average for similar schools. All pupils were successful at grades A*-G in 1997 and 1998 but results were below average in 1999.
199. At the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of most pupils is below national expectations in many aspects of the course. The majority join the school in Year 7 with below average attainment. The limited and blocked time which the current Year 9 had when in Year 8 has hampered pupils' understanding of staff notation, their skills in composing and their knowledge of a variety of music styles and composers. A lack of emphasis in teaching in the use of specialist vocabulary leads to unsatisfactory standards in pupils' use of musical elements such as dynamics and texture to express their opinions. However, pupils sing tunefully with expression and clear diction in lessons and in the choir. Many, including lower attainers, perform competently and confidently in groups with satisfactory ensemble skills. Inadequate accommodation limits standards in creativity and experimentation with all classes, but some Year 7 pupils who are instrumentalists are achieving good standards in these areas.
200. There is no Year 11 music group currently. In Year 10, standards are well below national expectations for this stage of the course for all except one pupil who has instrumental lessons. Many in the group have a poor attendance record and find the GCSE course too demanding. The pupils who attend regularly are developing their knowledge and understanding of composing a melody using conventional notation and show understanding of some composing techniques, but ICT skills are not taught. Standards in listening to music and critical evaluation are well below national expectations.
201. Progress is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3 and for many in Years 7 and 8 progress is good. Where progress is unsatisfactory tasks lack challenge and pace is too slow. As a result of pupils in

Year 9 not having sufficient time for music when they were in Year 8 progress has been unsatisfactory in all aspects of music except performance and ensemble skills. Pupils' positive attitudes and mature and confident manner have led to satisfactory progress in performance for many, including lower attainers. Inadequate accommodation hinders progress in composing. At Key Stage 4 good teaching leads to good progress in composition and in listening to music to recognise musical instruments and different styles. Standards in performance by the band improved significantly during the week of the inspection with pupils sticking determinedly to the challenging task of performing in public including to a large audience.

202. Pupils' attitudes to music are positive and they enjoy their work. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are particularly keen to succeed, very motivated and concentrate well including independent work in groups. Very good and often excellent behaviour and relationships support achievement and progress. Pupils are respectful, attentive and encouraging when peers perform, giving constructive and sensitive evaluations. There is very good collaborative work in groups and whole-class activities, where shared ideas raise standards in improvisation and experimentation. Also pupils, including lower attainers, are willing to take the initiative to perform to others, building up their self-esteem. In one lesson, although pupils' behaviour was satisfactory, they do not focus sufficiently on the task or concentrate fully in paired work. At Key Stage 4 pupils are mainly passive and not responsive, but they concentrate on their work. In instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities pupils are very enthusiastic and show good perseverance in tackling difficulties. Band members willingly participate in events such as assemblies and prize giving and seek to gain the most from such exposure.
203. The quality of teaching is mainly good, an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching in extra-curricular activities and an instrumental lesson is mainly very good. Teachers' subject expertise is very good and planning is generally good with clear objectives. Within the limitations of the accommodation, group work is used very well to support the lower attainers in experimental work. Class management is usually very good and sometimes excellent and this is linked with very good relationships where pupils' views are valued. Resources are well organised and lesson activities are varied well, keeping pupils enthusiastic. There is good use of fun exercises to teach rhythm, beat and pitch. The pace and timing of work is sometimes a weakness when too long is spent on one task and teaching lacks rigour. Also, there are many missed opportunities to consolidate and extend pupils' learning at Key Stage 3 through homework and by using structured assessment to set targets and improve learning and progress.
204. Leadership, management and administration are effective. With additional time for Year 8 since September, schemes of work are not yet complete for Key Stage 3 but curriculum mapping is sound. ICT is not being used as an essential aid to learning, particularly for composing which is a weakness. With the valuable help of humanities staff, the department makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. There is very good promotion of social development including lower attainers through performing in class, school events and Bournemouth activities such as singing to senior citizens. The ethos for learning is good and there is a 50 per cent increase in the numbers taking instrumental lessons since the last inspection.

Physical education

205. GCSE results in 1999 at grades A*-C were above average compared with all schools. In other years with the exception of 1997 results have been average. Although results were below average compared with all schools in 1997 they were average compared with similar schools. All pupils have been successful at grades A*-G in the last three years.
206. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national expectations. A minority of pupils achieve above and a few below these expectations. The teachers' depth of knowledge ensures that the pupils have a solid grounding in the basic games skills of rugby, football and badminton. A significant minority of pupils have advanced ball control, good spatial awareness and well rehearsed tactics. A few are able to adapt their own performance in response to the limitations of others. They anticipate well and can control the game with good timing of moves and passes. Whilst it would be preferable for the pupils to have a second practical lesson the provision for them to study the theoretical aspects of physical education gives an added depth to the curriculum. As

a result the pupils are more perceptive in their evaluations of skills and use technical language with confidence. However their gymnastic skills are below expectations. They have a satisfactory grasp of basic moves but are not able to construct and perform complex, creative sequences of movement with control and precision. Those attaining below the expected targets have weaker ball and co-ordination skills.

207. Current attainment by the majority at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectations. A minority attain above these expectations and a few attain below. Games are a strength with pupils showing increasingly refined techniques in rugby, football and badminton. Teachers build progressively on skills already acquired and tactics and strategies. Pupils working above expectations have advanced skills and can outwit an opponent with pace and power in games such as badminton and rugby. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop their coaching and officiating skills. Those attaining below the expected targets find it difficult to apply tactics in a competitive situation. Attainment by the majority currently studying GCSE is average relative to examination requirements. A significant minority are above average. Pupils mostly have a satisfactory depth of knowledge and are confident in the use of technical language when speaking and writing. Higher attaining pupils present written work that is well structured with careful analysis. A significant minority of pupils produce work that shows poor spelling and limited subject knowledge. Practical work for the majority is average with a significant minority above average.
208. Progress is good for the majority of pupils in both key stages. A minority make very good and occasionally excellent progress at Key Stage 3. A minority make merely satisfactory progress at both key stages. Teachers devise challenging tasks and mostly set realistic targets to allow pupils to progress at their own level. A good example of this was seen in a badminton lesson where accurate, ongoing assessment of all of the pupils ensured that they were continually challenged and as a result made excellent progress. The majority of the pupils are quick to consolidate and learn new skills. This is because they are well motivated and determined to refine skills through practise. On one occasion higher attaining pupils made slower progress because they were not sufficiently challenged to improve their skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good and often very good progress. Teachers do not always refer to individual education plans but they do know their pupils well and adjust the tasks and equipment when necessary. A few make slower progress because they find aspects of team work difficult and do not readily become fully involved in a competitive game.
209. Attitudes to learning are mainly very good and contribute strongly to the pupils' progress. Pupils are enthusiastic and comply willingly to the established code of conduct. They work well together and demonstrate good sporting behaviour. They answer and ask questions with increasing confidence and respect the opinions of others. They readily accept constructive criticism from each other and their teachers. They are courteous and responsive to visiting coaches and behave well when using local sporting venues. Team captains enjoy the responsibility that is extended to them in the organisation of teams. The good response to the varied extra-curricular programme allows all pupils to further their interests and compete in inter-house, school, and county competitions. Teams and individual pupils have had county and national success in a variety of sports such as athletics. The take-up rate for the GCSE course is good among pupils at all levels of attainment.
210. The quality of the teaching is nearly always good or better, with the majority good. A significant minority is very good and a small minority of teaching is excellent. There is some satisfactory teaching at both key stages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Almost all lessons are reinforced with probing question and answer sessions to consolidate knowledge and provoke thought. The few pupils who are unable to physically participate are nearly always involved in observing and evaluating but there are lost opportunities to develop their coaching and umpiring skills. An appropriate range of teaching methods is used which encourages valuable responses. For example, demonstrations are effective in illustrating correct techniques and in developing evaluative skills. Ongoing assessment in lessons is constructive, ensuring individual and group progress and there is always sufficient time in the lessons to transfer new and consolidated skills into the final activity. Pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their creative skills in gymnastics. The teachers mostly have high expectations of all pupils and continually encourage them to strive for better performance, appropriately related to their ability. Marking of GCSE theoretical work is mostly constructive. However, the faculty does not have a policy that ensures a standardised system

between teachers. Homework assignments are not sufficiently varied to encourage a greater degree of independence in learning. Outstanding features of teaching are the excellent management of the pupils and the mutual respect that exists which helps learning.

211. Since the previous inspection a number of initiatives have been introduced, such as monitoring of teaching, which has had a positive impact on the pupils' attainment. The use of the local sports centre and links with local sports clubs and associations has added depth to the curriculum at Key Stage 4. A new assessment procedure has been designed to effectively track pupils' performance between the key stages. The amount of time allocated to the curriculum at Key Stage 3 has increased, but there is still a short fall in Year 9. Work has begun in developing appropriate schemes of work, but there are still a number of policies that require attention to formalise the existing good practice. The external accommodation has improved but there are still issues concerning the changing facility that adversely affects the coverage of the curriculum and require immediate attention. The only changing room is too small for the large groups that are timetabled together resulting in theory lessons being taught on a rotational basis at Key Stage 3. There are no toilets or hand wash basins. The showers are in a poor state of repair and do not drain efficiently.
212. Leadership of the faculty contributes strongly to the personal development of all pupils. The team works closely as a unit with a commitment to high standards in teaching and discipline, and an equal commitment to extra-curricular activities which contributes much to the life of the school.

Religious education

213. GCSE results in the 1999 short course at grades A*-C were well above average compared with all schools and all gained grades A*-G.
214. Currently at the end of both key stages, attainment by the great majority of pupils is in line with the standards expected by the Dorset Agreed Syllabus. At the end of Key Stage 4 standards for approximately one third of the year group are well above expectations, for both the Agreed Syllabus and for the GCSE short course.
215. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the main aspects of belief and practice in Islam, Christianity and Judaism and most have a good knowledge of symbolism. Most have satisfactory skills in reflection, empathy and in carrying out research. By the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils have a satisfactory grasp of moral issues when dealing with human rights and relationships. Higher attainers and some average attainers reach above average standards in their application of religious views to issues such as prejudice and suffering. At both key stages oral skills are generally good; most pupils are confident and articulate and express their views in a mature manner. Literacy skills are, however, less well developed particularly for average attainers, as limited opportunities are given for extended writing. Literacy standards for higher attainers are generally satisfactory but they are low for a significant number of lower attainers whose spelling, grammar and ability to express their views are weak and some have poor handwriting. ICT skills are not taught in religious education and there is little evidence of pupils using their ICT skills in their work. However, reflective and empathy skills are usually good.
216. Progress is good overall at both key stages for pupils of varying levels of attainment. Pupils' positive attitudes to their work, particularly their willingness to participate orally and think about issues lead to good progression in understanding, in oracy and empathy skills. Pupils' progress is also directly linked to the quality of teaching. At Key Stage 3 most pupils make at least satisfactory and generally good progress in their knowledge and understanding of world faiths and key concepts, although some lower attainers have less satisfactory recall of specialist vocabulary. In Year 7 most pupils make good progress in their understanding of music to express praise to God and in vocabulary such as 'jubilation'. Year 8 higher attainers also progress well in reflecting on the effects of Jewish beliefs on everyday family life. In Year 11, lower attainers make very good progress in understanding faith and its application to daily living.
217. Pupils usually work well and like their studies, although some Key Stage 4 pupils work from a sense of duty. At both key stages pupils listen well, concentrate and are willing to respond in discussions.

Where group work is satisfactory, as in a Year 8 top set, ideas are shared promoting more effective learning, but otherwise group work often lacks a sense of shared purpose. Relationships are often good and good behaviour supports learning and progress. Pupils show good respect for each other, such as the lower attainers in Year 9 who feel secure in discussing their personal views as a result of the reception received from others. At both key stages pupils are willing to volunteer for activities.

218. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and the majority is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually secure giving them confidence to draw on a range of experience including topical examples, to make the subject relevant to pupils and extend their learning. There is, however, insufficient challenge for pupils to reach high standards in literacy, research and analysis and in presenting an argument through extended writing. Lesson planning is generally sound, although there is often a lack of specific consideration of support and extension work to meet individual needs. Since the last inspection, teaching is less teacher dominated and there is a good range of activities including good use of music to aid reflection at Key Stage 3. Pace is generally lively and resources are well organised, with a good variety of stimuli. Control is effective as staff use humour and praise well to encourage pupils and establish very good relationships. Marking is in line with faculty policy, but there is insufficient improvement since the last inspection in using assessment to set targets for improvement and to track pupils' progress.
219. There is a good ethos for learning and the department makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Updated Key Stage 3 schemes of work are available for the autumn term, but department aims need to be updated to comply with the recently revised Dorset Agreed Syllabus. There is limited informal co-ordination of the committed staff who teach religious education and ad hoc arrangements for staff training do not fully address needs, including those of non-specialist teachers. Artefacts are needed for teaching about Buddhism and Sikhism. Since the last inspection, Key Stage 4 time is now adequate, but there is generally no improvement in other management issues previously identified.

230. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

230.

Summary of inspection evidence

The inspection was conducted by a team of 12 inspectors including the registered inspector. Forty-seven inspector days were spent at the school during the week of the inspection and 157 lessons were observed. All teachers were observed at least once and the majority on more than one occasion.

In addition:

- the registered inspector made two visits to the school before the inspection and during one of these visits met the staff, the chairman of governors, and parents at the pre-inspection meeting;
- the responses of 213 questionnaires completed by parents were considered, some of which included additional written comments;
- a comprehensive range of school documentation was used before and during the inspection including whole school and departmental development plans, school budgets, policy statements, schemes of work, examination and assessment results, minutes of the governing body, annual reports to parents and during the inspection samples of pupils' reports;
- the most recent external audit report on the school's financial affairs was examined;
- inspectors held interviews with teaching, administrative and support staff and the registered inspector and some other inspectors met governors during the week of the inspection;
- inspectors attended assemblies, registration periods, a range of extra-curricular activities and a school prize giving;
- pupils were observed arriving and departing from school and during lunch and break times;
- samples of work of six pupils in each year group were scrutinised by the team of inspectors on one day after school and these pupils were interviewed the following day;
- individual education plans, statements of special educational needs and reviews of statements were examined.

Data and indicators

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y11	822	24	144	117

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	46
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4

Education support staff (YR 7 - Y11)

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked each week	452.5

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	81.4
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	25
	KS4	20

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/9
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	£
Total Income	1722588
Total Expenditure	1761327
Expenditure per pupil	2101.82
Balance brought forward from previous year	-100137
Balance carried forward to next year	-11069

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

822
213

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	7	65	15	10	3
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	25	66	5	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	9	50	26	12	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	11	53	15	18	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	16	55	15	11	4
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	17	57	14	9	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	27	55	9	8	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	13	57	8	17	5
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	16	55	15	11	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	13	45	20	16	6
My child(ren) like(s) school	25	59	7	6	3

Other issues raised by parents

In the pre-inspection parents' meeting and in individual letters submitted to the registered inspector the main concerns were:

- bullying not being sufficiently addressed in the past;
- insufficient newsletters;
- the organisation of parents' evenings and the difficulties in seeing all teachers;
- the conditions of the boys' toilets and lack of access at times.

From the same sources parents were impressed with:

- the impact made by the new headteacher and how much the pupils appreciated his high profile around the school;
- the improved accommodation and ICT facilities;
- the commitment of the physical education department to extra-curricular activities which are open to all abilities;
- the mature attitudes shown by prefects who are approachable and helpful.

