

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE ABBEY SCHOOL**

Farnham

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125476

Headteacher: Ms. A. Scott

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax  
25439

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 223663

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Menin Way Farnham Surrey
Postcode:	GU9 8DY
Telephone number:	01252 725059
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	John Gaff
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Katharine Halifax 25439	Registered inspector	Design and technology	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key issues for action
Mary Malin 19567	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Jane Reed 27960	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Quality and range of learning opportunities
		Art	
		Personal, social and health education	
Roger Sharples 17681	Team inspector	Science	
		History	
		Music	
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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	
Information about the school	<b>7</b>
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Abbey is a day special school for boys and girls aged seven to sixteen. Pupils come from the surrounding Waverley District. There are 77 pupils on roll, almost two thirds of which are boys. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and speak English as their main language. Twenty-one pupils receive free school meals. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, mostly for learning difficulties, though there is an increasing number of pupils with additional and more complex learning difficulties and pupils who have been diagnosed as autistic. The local education authority is currently reviewing its provision for pupils with special educational needs. This has resulted in some uncertainty as to the future population of the school. On leaving The Abbey almost half of the pupils find employment and a further third transfer to local colleges of further education.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective. It provides a good range of learning opportunities. The quality of teaching and learning is good, enabling pupils to achieve well. Relationships are very good. Staff have been successful in creating an environment where pupils are well behaved and where each pupil is given the opportunity to develop as a whole person. The school is led and managed in a cost effective way Costs per pupil are average for a school of this type. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils of all ages and abilities to make good progress.
- Pupils achieve better than would be expected in English and mathematics. Their achievements in information and communication technology are well above those expected of pupils of this ability.
- Effective teamwork between teaching staff, support staff and other professionals makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are well behaved; this creates a good atmosphere for learning.
- New technology is used well by both staff and pupils.
- Good links between parents, carers and the school contribute to pupils' progress.
- The results of classroom observations by senior teachers have enabled funding to be used well for staff training to improve standards.

#### **What could be improved**

- Some parts of the accommodation limit the activities that can take place.
- Pupils are not sufficiently prepared to live in a multi-cultural society.
- The unsatisfactory attendance of a small percentage of pupils affects their rate of progress.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in November 1996. All the issues identified by the previous inspection have been addressed. In addition there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching. At the time of the last inspection teaching was unsatisfactory in almost 20 percent of lessons. Only two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory this inspection. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of good and very good teaching. Staff now plan work which is carefully matched to each pupils' ability and based on targets in their individual education plan. Achievement is recorded and this is taken into account when planning further work. There has been good improvement in pupils' behaviour with only one exclusion in the last few years. The school now meets legal

requirements in the teaching of geography, information and communication technology, and design and technology. The oldest pupils are taught religious education as required by the Surrey Locally Agreed Syllabus. Schemes of work and planning have been improved to ensure there is continuity in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire. Whilst good improvements have been made to the accommodation by the provision of specialist facilities for design and technology and science these rooms are rather cramped for groups of older pupils. Improvement in the quality of information for parents has enabled parents and carers to be more involved in their child's education.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 14	by age 16	<b>Key</b>	
Speaking and listening	B	A	A	Very good	A
Reading	B	B	B	Good	B
Writing	B	B	B	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	B	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B		

Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve better than would be expected in all aspects of English, mathematics, science and personal and social education. Standards in information and communication technology are well above those expected of pupils of this ability. In all other subjects pupils' achievement is commensurate with their abilities. There has been good improvement in the number of sixteen-year olds achieving nationally recognised qualifications. Last year pupils exceeded the school's target of nationally recognised awards in one subject with all achieving passes in three subjects. Senior managers have set additional targets for this year's group, suitably taking into account their previous performance.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Those who have behavioural difficulties make good progress against targets in their individual behaviour plans.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Older pupils respond particularly well to taking responsibility for their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The unauthorised absence of a small number of pupils

	makes attendance rates well below average for a school of this type.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11	aged 11-14	aged 14-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 97 percent of lessons. Good or better teaching was seen in 80 percent of lessons. Teaching in 25 percent of lessons was very good or excellent. The good and very good teaching was spread across the school and in a range of subjects. The very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was by teachers who also taught good lessons. Teaching for older pupils is never less than good. Where teaching is good or better pupils make at least good progress. Teaching in English, science, mathematics and personal and social education is good throughout the school. The teaching of information and communication technology is very good and enables pupils to make very good progress and achieve high standards. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective. All staff encourage pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, and this enables pupils to make good gains in these areas. Teachers make their lessons interesting and expect pupils to do well. As a result pupils enjoy their lessons, acquire new skills and produce a good volume of work. Pupils of all abilities achieve well because teachers take note of pupils' targets in their individual education plans when planning their lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a good range of learning opportunities. There are good programmes for the teaching of careers education and personal and social education.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for their moral and social development is good. Whilst the school provides well for pupils to appreciate literature and the theatre, pupils have too few opportunities to prepare them for living in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a safe caring environment. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' personal and academic progress are good. Partnership with parents and carers is good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher is strong and has a clear vision for the work of the school. She is well supported by her hard working deputy and senior teacher.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Though not a full complement governors are supportive of the school. They take an active part in planning and in helping the school to develop.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior managers and governors monitor achievement and the results of tests in order to improve standards. The monitoring of teaching has resulted in improved standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Senior managers use the strengths of individual staff well. Grants to the school are used well to raise standards. The school takes account of the principles of best value.
Staffing , accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. There are sufficient staff, rooms and resources to teach all National Curriculum subjects. However some of the rooms limit the activities which can take place. Staff work well together. The building is maintained and cleaned to a very high standard.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their child enjoys coming to school</li> <li>• The opportunity to work for nationally recognised qualifications.</li> <li>• The attitudes and values the school promotes</li> <li>• The improvements in behaviour in the school</li> <li>• The improvements to the school buildings and grounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work which pupils are given to do at home</li> <li>• The provision of out of school activities</li> <li>• Information about what their child is learning</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concerns, the amount of homework given to pupils is suitable for younger pupils. The amount of homework which older pupils receive is good and contributes significantly to their rate of progress. The school provides a good number of residential activities for pupils that contribute to their personal development. Many schools of this type provide lunchtime and after school clubs. Parents and carers receive very good information about what their child is learning.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils throughout the school achieve well, taking account of their abilities. Pupils achieve better than would be expected in English and mathematics in all age groups. Their achievements in information and communication technology are well above those expected of pupils of this ability. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, especially in information and communication technology, English and mathematics and achievements are never less than satisfactory in any subject. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress throughout the school because of effective teaching.

2. Pupils make good progress towards their personal targets in all aspects of English. There is clear progress throughout the school in the attentiveness with which pupils listen and the confidence with which they respond. Pupils wait their turn to speak, listen to the opinion of others and contribute confidently to discussions. By the age of sixteen pupils speak and listen very well. Their conversations are lively and they take account of their audience. Pupils of all ages are eager to engage visitors in conversation and speak politely to staff. Progress in reading is good throughout the school and pupils achieve well. The consistent emphasis by all staff on teaching strategies to help pupils read new words enables pupils to have the confidence to try increasingly harder text. Pupils enjoy reading; they read a range of fiction and non-fiction books, carefully matched to their ability, with increasing fluency. Pupils of all abilities confidently discuss the books they are reading, making suggestions as to how the story might end and giving their opinion of the characters. Pupils make good progress in the content of their writing as they write for different purposes. For example, records of investigations carried out in science, diaries in the style of soldiers in the trenches in World War 1 and lists of materials needed in design and technology. Younger pupils make good progress in handwriting using a neat joined up script. However, though older pupils present their work neatly, they do not make as much progress as they could in handwriting because some teachers do not write neatly and do not teach handwriting. Similarly with spelling, most pupils make good progress in spelling because of the programme they follow, but occasionally a few teachers spell words incorrectly. This year all sixteen-year-olds gained Certificate of Achievement in English, with over a quarter achieving *distinction*. Pupils were also very successful in the Associated Examining Board Literacy Award.

3. Progress in mathematics is good throughout the school. The practice of *setting* pupils according to mathematical ability is having a significant effect on progress. Pupils become increasingly confident in their use of the four rules of number. As they get older they apply their knowledge to everyday life, for example in working out bills. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in mental and oral mathematics, this is especially so for older pupils. Sixteen-year-old pupils achieve well with all pupils achieving *merit* or *distinction* in their nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement and the higher levels of the Associated Education Board examination in numeracy. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils use their skills well in other subjects, for example in science when working out the angle of a slope and its effect on the speed of a car travelling down the incline.

4. Progress in science is good throughout the school because of the range of interesting activities presented to pupils. Pupils of all ages have good opportunities to investigate all aspects of science and record their work appropriately. They make good gains in their

understanding of living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Older pupils apply their knowledge well to everyday situations. For example, they use red cabbage as an *indicator* to determine the acidity of household commodities such as washing up liquid and toothpaste. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident when using apparatus and many understand their tests to be fair. Though progress in investigative science is good, it could be even better. This is because the size of the science room and the lack of a preparation room limit the activities that can take place.

5. Pupils make very good progress in all aspects of information and communication technology and achieve far higher standards than would be expected of pupils of this ability. This is because the quality of teaching is very good and because most teachers use new technology well in other subjects; for example, in geography when recording weather details as part of a study of *microclimate*. However, though never less than satisfactory, new technology is not used as well as it could be in music, design and technology and science. The school is aware of this and has plans to improve these areas. Pupils make good progress in improving their keyboard skills and use technology well to word process and illustrate their work in most subjects. They are aware of the daily uses of technology and know how this can be used in the home and in industry and to control the environment. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good gains in their spelling and reading through the use of a commercially produced program.

6. Progress in religious education is good throughout the school. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of major world religions. Older pupils relate stories in the Bible well to modern times. For example, when studying the account of Noah and the Flood they are aware that the environment is being destroyed because people will not change their ways.

7. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards commensurate with their abilities in music, history, geography, design and technology, and art. In physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress in most aspects of the subject. Progress in swimming is good. Older pupils make good progress in outdoor and adventurous activities as a result of the wide range of activities made available as part of residential experiences. Progress in French and personal and social education is good. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well in these subjects.

8. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties and those with additional needs achieve well and make good progress because of the good teaching, the support they receive and the quality of targets set in their individual education plans.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. There has been good improvement in pupils' attitudes to school and in their behaviour since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall and contribute well to the progress they make. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to have a good attitude to learning, to value and respect each other and to behave well at all times. Throughout the school, pupils are attentive and generally settle quickly to their work as soon as they arrive in the classroom. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are clearly comfortable and secure in their school community.

10. Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of class is good and sometimes very good which has a positive effect on their learning and personal development. Pupils work well on their own, in pairs or small groups and they particularly enjoy practical activities. Pupils who have

behavioural difficulties make good progress against targets set in their individual behavioural plans. The best behaviour occurs when pupils are interested in the content of the lesson and lessons are stimulating and challenging. Pupils are keen to demonstrate their knowledge and answer questions eagerly, confidently taking part in discussions, or when summarising their findings at the end of a lesson. For example, a group of pupils plotting and naming co-ordinates in mathematics remained eager and fully engrossed for a full hour and were still bursting to contribute further when the lesson ended.

11. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good and staff present good role models. There are very good relationships between boys and girls and between pupils of different ages all of which contribute to the caring atmosphere of the school. Pupils relate well to each other in school and playtimes are generally happy times with no evidence of any bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils appreciate the headteacher and her deputy spending their break and lunchtimes in the playground in order to talk to pupils who may be experiencing problems at home or at school and resolve matters quickly.

12. There is mutual respect between pupils and staff. Pupils have a high regard for all staff and approach them with confidence. This contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make in their personal development. Pupils are confident and show care and concern for each other's feelings and help each other out in lessons. Pupils learn to work with increasing independence as they get older, undertaking personal research, taking responsibility for their learning and making sure their homework is handed in on time. Pupils of all ages handle learning resources with care, for example, when using books and computers they make sure their hands are clean. They willingly accept responsibility when it is given, for example some classes have the opportunity to take registers to the office. Pupils are proud of their school they take great care to keep the school tidy and free of litter.

13. Attendance overall is unsatisfactory averaging 82 percent. This has gone down since the previous inspection. However, much of the absence is attributable to a small number of pupils who are persistent non-attenders and who bring the overall attendance down. Other than when there are traffic problems in the area, pupils are punctual. Lessons begin on time; this makes a good start to the day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

14. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. At the time of the previous inspection teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson in five. Only two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory on this occasion. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching. Teachers begin each lesson by telling pupils what they will be learning all staff now give clear instructions so pupils know what is expected of them. Teachers plan activities that are challenging for pupils of all abilities. There has been good improvement in how staff manage pupils' behaviour.

15. Teachers have improved their planning and now plan their lessons well, taking account of what pupils have achieved in previous lessons. Where this is particularly successful, joint planning with learning support staff ensures consistency resulting in good progression in pupils' skills and confidence. Staff plan work carefully to match the ability of all pupils and take account of targets in pupils' individual education plans. For example, one pupil who has the target *to recognise initial letter sounds* is asked to give the initial sound of words in mathematics such as *h* at the beginning of *half*. A second pupil who is reluctant to speak and has a target *to utter yes each lesson* is expected to say the word before he is awarded a star at the end of a music lesson. Careful attention is paid to behavioural targets

as when one girl is reminded her target is to “*stay in your seat for ten minutes*”, this enables pupils to improve their behaviour and concentration and make good progress.

16. All lessons begin with a good review of previous work. In addition to refreshing pupils' memories it enables teachers to ascertain pupils' knowledge and understanding. In one very good information and communication technology lesson pupils were able to recall and describe how they inserted a rectangle and text into their work. They then progressed to learn the new skill of rotating shapes. This resulted in very good progress where pupils acquired the knowledge to be able to design and make a board game by the end of the lesson. This session was particularly effective because the teacher reinforced pupils' knowledge of numeracy by asking, “*if we rotate a shape all the way round, how many degrees is this?*”

17. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and the way they present their work. They create a good working atmosphere where pupils feel trusted and take a pride in their work. This results in good behaviour and a desire to succeed. Most pupils persevere even when tasks are difficult and produce a good volume of work. Some teachers set time targets for pupils to complete their work; for example pupils in Year 3/4 worked feverishly to complete their *weather record* before the sand in the timer ran out.

18. Teachers use questioning well. They ask questions of pupils of all abilities to assess their understanding and help them further their knowledge. Staff are conscious that there are far more boys than girls in most classes and ensure girls are fully involved in discussions by targeting questions to them. Many teachers ask challenging questions which make pupils think. As in a Year 8 lesson discussing *assertiveness* pupils make good progress as they describe the consequence of their actions. Where teaching is particularly successful, teachers ask questions that require pupils to give reasons for their answers. For example in a geography lesson when discussing natural hazards, pupils have to give reasons as to where to build houses. They articulate well as they explain that houses should be built on steep land away from the river.

19. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to use knowledge gained in English in other lessons. All staff place emphasis on specialist words in other subjects; for example in art when discussing *shading* and *darker, stronger tones*, and in geography when studying *microclimates* thus enabling pupils to extend their vocabulary. Most lessons end with a useful review of the learning which has taken place. This enables pupils to make good progress in speaking to others as when explaining the packaging of *stir fry* in a design and technology lesson. Teachers encourage pupils to improve their writing by giving them *word banks* and encouraging them to write their answers on the *dry-wipe board*. Pupils are expected to record their work in different ways such as tables and lists in science and imaginative writing in history. Teachers help younger and less able pupils to improve the content of their writing by providing high quality computer produced worksheets with missing words and phrases for them to complete.

20. Many teachers make good use of interesting objects to interest pupils and involve them in the lessons. For example, in a science lesson on *movement* the teacher used old toys successfully to gain the interest and understanding of pupils. Pupils were spellbound and made very sensible suggestions using scientific vocabulary when the teacher questioned them as to how the *climbing clown* would move up the ropes. Older pupils investigating *recyclable* and *non-recyclable* materials thoroughly enjoyed sorting through rubbish and made good gains in their understanding of how limited the earth's resources are and the need to recycle where ever possible.

21. In lessons where teaching is less effective or unsatisfactory, management of pupils' behaviour is not as good as it could be. In these lessons, the pace is often slow so pupils

lose interest and do not behave as well as they should. This affects the rate of progress of all pupils in the group. In some lessons such as physical education, demonstrations by pupils and teachers are not good as they should be and this reduces the effectiveness of the movement. Whilst teachers of junior age pupils write using a neat joined up handwriting and encourage their pupils to do the same, not all teachers in the secondary department write neatly or use a joined up script. This affects progress in handwriting. Similarly the spelling of some teachers is not always accurate and is not a good model for pupils.

22. Staff provide well for pupils with additional needs. Effective teamwork is a strong feature of the school. Pupils who have been diagnosed as autistic take part in a structured programme. The use of symbols and discussion at the start of each lesson gives such pupils security and enables them to sequence their day. Very close liaison with other professionals enables pupils with additional needs to make good progress. For example, learning support staff provide daily exercises thus enabling pupils who find movement difficult to maintain a good range of movement. Staff ensure that pupils who need additional equipment such as *blocks* are seated correctly. Pupils who have physical conditions that make writing difficult are encouraged to use the laptop computers provided for them. Because pupils with physical difficulties are made comfortable they enjoy their learning and make better progress.

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

23. Since the time of the previous inspection the school has made good progress in developing the curriculum. All subjects in the National Curriculum are taught, together with religious education, personal and social education, sex and relationships, careers education and drugs misuse awareness. The school has now adopted the *Surrey Locally Agreed Syllabus* for religious education and is now meeting legal requirements. Although the school had a delayed start to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies these are now in place and having a positive effect on the quality of learning and standards pupils achieve. The setting of numeracy groups for older pupils has been particularly successful and is contributing to standards. Both strategies are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. There are now schemes of work in place for all subjects, which is an improvement from the previous inspection when there were significant gaps in provision in science and information technology. Improvements have also been made to ensure that there is continuity in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire as they move through the school.

24. The curriculum is good for pupils up to the age of eleven. There is a good emphasis on English and mathematics and the balanced and relevant curriculum contributes to the good range of learning opportunities made available to all pupils. For secondary age pupils the curriculum is also good. However inadequacies in some of the rooms limits what can be taught. In design and technology for example, the lack of space and equipment restricts work with resistant materials and the music room is too small to accommodate a whole class at any one time. Opportunities for sixteen-year-olds to achieve nationally recognised qualifications have improved since the last inspection. Pupils now work towards Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics, science, geography and information technology and the *Bronze* level of *Youth Award Scheme*. At the time of the previous inspection insufficient time was given to English, mathematics and science. Senior managers now check the time each class spends studying each subject in order to provide a balanced curriculum. However, this is only partly successful because although English and mathematics now have sufficient time other subjects, pupils aged eleven to fourteen spend less time than would be expected studying science and music. This reduces pupils' rate of progress in these subjects.

25. Provision for pupils with additional needs is good. Pupils receive good support in lessons, in small groups and individually from a range of visiting specialists such as the support teacher for pupils who have been diagnosed as autistic. Programmes are carefully planned to enable pupils to make progress. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor individual education plans and behaviour plans well to ensure the needs of all pupils are being met.

26. The personal, social and health education programme has continued to develop and the overall provision is a good feature of the school. This is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress and personal development. Pupils receive an appropriate range of experiences to extend their independence skills and promote their understanding of healthy living. The school has recently been awarded the *Healthy Schools Award* for the second time. The Student Council, composed of two representatives from each class, meets termly with the headteacher and Chair of Governors to discuss issues suggested by the pupils such as wearing uniform and a request for a tuck shop. Class discussions prior to council meetings form an important part of the programme.

27. Good provision is made for careers education and guidance. There is a comprehensive scheme of work in place from Year 9 and the planned co-ordinated approach ensures progression in pupils' learning and prepares them well for life after school. The school is well supported by the Surrey Careers Consultant who conducts career interviews and helps pupils to prepare their personal action plan. At the time of the previous inspection the work experience placements for Year 11 pupils were a strong feature in the school. This high standard has been maintained because the school provides a supportive and relevant work experience programme for all pupils in their final year.

28. The school has a number of effective links with other schools in the local area. More able pupils are able to study for General Certificate of Secondary Education at the secondary school closest to their home. At the time of the inspection one pupil was enrolled on a course for mathematics. The pupil attends lessons at the school on a regular basis and is supported by a competent teaching assistant. The school shares the site of a mainstream primary school and whilst there are some links between the two schools consideration should be given as to how these links can be strengthened further.

29. Long and medium term curriculum planning is satisfactory. There have been improvements in the schemes of work for all subjects since the last inspection and this has resulted in less repetition of activities and greater continuity in learning throughout the school. All subject managers have taken note of the changes required by *Curriculum 2000* and have recognised the need to use new technology wherever possible. Procedures for monitoring what is taught are good and well co-ordinated by the senior management team. There are good procedures in place to ensure that homework is set for pupils of all ages.

30. The contribution to pupils' learning through links with the community is satisfactory. The school uses the local community for a number of activities such as swimming and work experience and through interaction with the general public successfully encourages the development of pupils' social skills. Throughout the year the school invites a number of community representatives into the school such as some of the *Thames Valley Tigers* basketball players who make a positive contribution to the curriculum. There is a satisfactory but limited range of extra-curricular opportunities offered to the pupils. There has been a consistent range of residential experiences offered to the pupils, which have contributed towards their social and personal development. The lack of after-school and lunchtime clubs limits curriculum enrichment.

31. There is a suitable policy in place for Equal Opportunities which has clear guidelines for staff to follow. The school is conscious that only a third of the school roll are female and they consequently strive to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and have equal access to the curriculum.

32. Overall, satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although the school provides good opportunities for pupils to improve their moral values and social skills, there are fewer planned activities that promote spiritual and cultural development. Opportunities to develop pupils' moral and social development have improved since the last inspection.

33. School-based and off-site activities to encourage pupils' social development are good. School assemblies consider a number of social aspects. The importance of teamwork was clearly demonstrated to pupils by showing the inadequacy of one chopstick compared with using two. This simple, but effective demonstration captured pupils' interest and illustrated the importance of working together in order to be successful. Off-site visits such as the senior school Christmas meal in a restaurant and the visit to the Millennium Dome provide good opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they will need in life after school. Residential visits for pupils of all ages to places such as Sayers Croft and sailing the Tall Ships enable pupils to work as a team and have an increased understanding of living as part of a community. Membership of the School Council provides pupils with a useful insight into committee work and sharing ideas and listening to the views of others. The personal and social education programme makes a useful contribution to both pupils' social and moral development.

34. Pupils' moral development is successfully encouraged through their day-to-day interactions with adults. All staff provide good examples of how to behave appropriately. Specific opportunities to promote moral development are presented through many parts of the curriculum. Senior pupils consider issues such as abortion in religious education, and environmental concerns are addressed in science and geography. The school supports national charities through fund raising days to support Comic Relief and Children in Need. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of people in the locality and donate pasta and sauce from their *Pasta Harvest* for the homeless. Older pupils are encouraged to care for their immediate environment when working on the reed beds at Frensham Ponds. One pupil who is confined to a wheelchair was able to advise local conservationists about wheelchair access to the pond with the result that her suggestions for a pathway for wheelchair users were acted upon. Care of animals is fostered through outside speakers such as the visitor from Blackwater Animal Rescue Centre who spoke to pupils on RSPCA Day.

35. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, although opportunities presented in assemblies to offer moments of quiet reflection are missed. For example, in an assembly considering pupils' talents and the strengths of the school, there was no period of quiet contemplation to be thankful. However, on another occasion, during an assembly for the oldest pupils, the opportunity was seized to encourage pupils to think quietly about its content and message with a clearly displayed *Thought for the Day*. Some teachers plan opportunities for pupils to be excited and amazed by their learning. For example Year 5 and 6 pupils gasped at the beauty of a Muslim prayer mat, and a group of six and seven year olds were enthralled when looking at a humming top and a kaleidoscope. However, overall pupils have too few planned opportunities to experience wonder in their learning.

36. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. The English curriculum provides well for pupils to appreciate the works of a range of authors and poets with a visit for older pupils to the Globe Theatre. Though little use is made of music other than in music lessons, an appreciation of the works of great composers and modern *pop* and

jazz is fostered through the music scheme of work. Few visits are made to places of historical interest; this limits pupils' understanding of their cultural heritage. Studies in religious education gives pupils some insight into the beliefs of major world faiths. Though pupils have watched a performance by an Indian dancer and some have made sweets for Diwali, overall pupils are not sufficiently prepared to live in a multi-cultural society.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school continues to make good quality provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has effectively built on its work since the last inspection. Staff are successful in creating an atmosphere of warmth, security and wellbeing where pupils feel valued and which provides a solid foundation for pupils to make good progress. Parents report that they and their children feel well supported by the school, and the majority responding to the parents' questionnaire stated that they find the school approachable regarding any matters related to their child. A strong feature of the school is the way staff and pupils alike care for each other.

38. All adults know the pupils well. Relationships throughout the school are very good and teachers and support assistants demonstrate a genuine concern for pupils' care, support and guidance. Staff treat pupils with respect and set good examples of how to behave appropriately. For example, when talking to pupils all adults wait their turn to speak, are courteous and genuinely interested what pupils have to say. Pupils' personal development is monitored well and suitable individual targets are set to help them improve further. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. Very good relationships exist with support agencies such as physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, school nurse and the educational psychologist who are all regular visitors to the school. Planning between therapists and support assistants ensures that pupils are able to continue with their physiotherapy and speech and language therapy daily. This works very well and contributes to the progress pupils make in these areas. Pupils continue to make progress in the school holidays when individual programmes are provided for parents.

39. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good overall. Registers are marked both morning and afternoon and comply with legal requirements, but there is a lack of consistency in how they are marked. Some staff call the register, others mark it as pupils arrive and very few classes add the daily totals. The school follows up unexplained absences quickly and this has helped to reduce unauthorised absence. However, there are a few pupils who are persistent non-attenders and this has brought the average attendance down in most classes. Whilst pupils who have full attendance each term are awarded certificates only a very small number of pupils with unsatisfactory rates of attendance have targets to improve their attendance in their individual education plan. The school works very closely with the education welfare officer and together they work hard with families to improve attendance. Where all else fails parents are taken to court where necessary.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. An individual pupil *record of occurrence* is particularly useful in enabling staff to identify progress in personal development through the recording of all incidents, both positive and negative. The behaviour policy that emphasises positive reinforcement as the preferred means of improving behaviour, is consistently applied by longer serving staff, though some staff new to the school are still developing their behaviour management strategies. Individual behaviour plans for pupils with behavioural difficulties are used effectively to enable pupils to make good progress in improving their behaviour. The school has very effective procedures to deal with any instances of harassment and bullying. However none were seen during the week of

inspection and records show that such incidents are extremely rare. The school effectively promotes and encourages positive behaviour and this contributes to the happy and orderly community.

41. Good child protection procedures are in place, with the headteacher as the named responsible person. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the event of any concerns and their training in this area is regularly updated. Procedures for promoting the health, safety and well being of pupils are good. The health and safety committee ensures regular checks take place. Risk assessments are reported to be complete though these were not available during the inspection. However the school has good emergency procedures in place and these cover most eventualities. There is a good system for identifying hazards and these are usually dealt with quickly. Fire drills are carried out every term and fire and electrical equipment are regularly tested. Good procedures are followed for dealing with and recording accidents and almost every member of staff has been trained in emergency first aid. Catering staff endeavour to provide a variety of nutritious meals and make lunchtimes pleasant social occasions.

42. Good procedures are in place to assess and monitor pupils' achievements and progress. Assessment procedures and individual education plans are now of a good quality, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has developed individual education plans and behaviour management plans well. Both contain very precise, easily measurable targets and are monitored effectively by staff, and pupils. Procedures to monitor the academic performance and personal development of pupils are good overall. Comprehensive, detailed records are maintained on each pupil and there are highly effective strategies to help older pupils develop insights into their own learning. Assessment on entry to the school and regular formal testing each year enables staff to monitor progress and to plan further learning. The school makes effective use of its analysis of test results in the setting of targets and to highlight where additional support is needed. For example, through the provision of additional literacy support where needed and for setting groups according to ability in mathematics.

43. Procedures for the review of Statements of Special Educational Needs are good. Annual reviews are carried out on time and clear targets are set to help pupils develop academically and personally. Parents are provided with detailed reports so that they are aware of what their child can do, the progress they have made, and what they should learn next. Other professionals make useful contributions to the meetings. There is a clear link between the targets set and what teachers plan to include in lessons. The use of assessment information to raise standards and to set pupils challenging targets is very good in English, mathematics and information technology, good in physical education and French, and still being developed in all other subjects. The school has suitably implemented the use of pre-National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and personal development to identify the progress of less able pupils more accurately.

44. Pupils of all ages and abilities have well organised *Records of Achievement* which document achievements and progress through photographs, certificates and samples of work. Pupils are proud to select pieces of work for inclusion in their folders referring to pieces of written work which clearly identify progress.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

45. The school continues to maintain good links with parents and carers. Most parents responding to the questionnaire and attending the meeting prior to inspection agree that the

school works closely with them, that staff are helpful and approachable, and that their children are well cared for. Though parents expressed concern regarding homework, inspection findings show that the amount of homework set for younger pupils is appropriate to their age. The provision of homework for older pupils is good and contributes to their rate of progress.

46. The quality of information for parents, especially about their child's progress, has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. The school communicates well about the work pupils are doing in school. Parents feel well informed and this enables many of them to continue the work at home thus improving their child's rate of progress. Although meetings to discuss the Literacy Strategy and to raise parents' awareness about substance misuse were not well attended, those parents who attended found the discussions very informative. The provision of three consultation evenings each year enables parents to be well informed about the work their child is doing and the progress they are making. Reports to parents are very detailed and clearly state what pupils know, understand and can do. Parents give good support to their children's learning and many help with work and reading at home. The detailed prospectus and regular newsletters are helpful and keep parents well informed about school events.

47. The school operates an *open door* policy and parents report that the headteacher and staff are approachable, welcoming and prepared to discuss their children and any related problems. Parents are actively encouraged to communicate with the school, and the school is committed to partnership with them. Regular telephone contact keeps parents and carers informed about achievement and concerns and parents feel able to contact when they have a particular problem. Fund raising activities such as the Christmas Social and Summer Fayre organised by the Parents Association raise useful sums of money which are used to provide theatre outings and other activities for pupils.

48. An appropriate home school agreement is in place. Home to school message books, homework books and good liaison with transport escorts ensure effective communications between parents and school. Good efforts are made to encourage attendance at annual reviews by sending information a month in advance and with a telephone call a few days before as a quick reminder to parents.

49. Parents are very happy with the school. They have seen improvements in their child's ability to mix with others, in their behaviour and also in their confidence and self-esteem. Most important, they believe that the school encourages their child to reach their full potential.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

50. Leadership and management of the school are good. There has been good improvement in all levels of management since the last inspection.

51. The dedicated headteacher has a very clear vision for the work of the school. Her enthusiasm and drive have resulted in an effective learning environment where every person is valued and where pupils are encouraged to achieve high standards. She is well supported by her hardworking and able deputy and senior teacher. The humanity and integrity of the deputy provides good support for staff and pupils. The analytical qualities and efficiency of the senior teacher contribute well to the smooth running of the school. The understanding of all the senior management team as to how pupils learn enables pupils of all abilities to make at least good progress.

52. Though not up to full numbers, the governing body is supportive of the school. They are a close knit team who fulfil their role conscientiously, spending a day each term observing in classrooms. Attendance at weekly staff meetings by the governor responsible for the curriculum provides useful monitoring of what is being taught. Pupils who are members of the School Council appreciate the support and advice they receive from the Chair of Governors in his role as chair of School Council. The commitment of governors and senior managers to staff and the school has resulted in the recent award of *Investors in People*.

53. Subject management is variable though never less than satisfactory. English, mathematics and information and communication technology are very well led. Monitoring of teachers' planning and work sampling has enabled managers in these subjects to ensure continuity in the knowledge and skill pupils acquire as they move through the school. Though a number of teachers are new to the school, they have an understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages the provision well and ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Money has been spent well on additional equipment and to increase the number of highly skilled learning support assistants to enable pupils with additional learning difficulties to make good progress.

54. Rigorous formal monitoring of teaching and its effect on learning has enabled management to identify areas for development in staff and to provide support as required. For example, targets in individual education plans produced by teachers who have very recently come from mainstream education were not focused or easily measurable. With help from senior staff, these teachers now set small step targets that enable pupils to make progress more quickly. Careful analysis of test results, particularly in mathematics and English has resulted in the setting of challenging whole school targets. In the light of last year's results when all pupils leaving school achieved nationally recognised qualifications in three subjects, management has set additional targets that suitably take account of pupils' previous achievements. The success of targets is demonstrated in the number of pupils requiring less adult support and the number of pupils who take up employment or further education on leaving school. The school development plan is a useful management tool and prioritises the needs of the school well. Targets are challenging yet realistic. Success criteria are clearly identified and linked to improving standards.

55. The school is committed to enabling pupils of all ages and abilities to have equal opportunities to study all subjects and take part in all activities. Senior managers are conscious that only one third of the school roll is female and they consequently strive to ensure that girls are given equal chances to answer questions, are used to demonstrate good work and have chance to play in sporting teams.

56. In common with many schools in the South East of England, the school experiences difficulties in recruitment because of the high cost of housing. Nevertheless there are sufficient staff to teach all the required subjects and to ensure class groups are of a reasonable size. Owing to recruitment difficulties and the number of inexperienced teachers in school the core subjects of English, mathematics and information and communication technology are being managed by senior members of staff. Procedures for the induction of new staff are very good. Teachers who are new to the school, most of whom have come from mainstream schools, feel extremely well supported. They acknowledge that they have been able to make very good progress in their knowledge of working with pupils with special educational needs because of the high levels of support they have received, particularly from the headteacher. The school is fortunate in its number and quality of learning support staff. All support staff are highly qualified and use their individual skills well. For example the role of the premises manager to support the teaching of information and communication technology is imaginative and efficient use of staffing, and has contributed to the high achievement in this subject. All staff are encouraged to develop professionally and have opportunity to take part in

a wide range of well organised courses. The very good teamwork between support staff and teachers makes a significant contribution to pupils' rate of progress.

57. The buildings and grounds are immaculately maintained and this contributes positively to the learning environment. Whilst most classrooms are of an appropriate size for the number of pupils, the music room is small and this limits the activities which can take place. The Year 9 mobile classroom in the playground is not accessible to people in wheelchairs and is isolated from the other classes in that age group. There are no facilities to enable the oldest pupils in school to develop independence skills, for example there is no space for them to make their own meals and to socialise. A number of classrooms for older pupils lack space to display pupils' work. In some classrooms where there is sufficient display space, there are too few examples of pupils' work to support learning and celebrate achievement. As part of the Millennium Project the school grounds have been improved to provide quiet seating areas at the request of the pupils. The adventure playground, basketball court and football pitches are used well to enhance the physical education curriculum. Good use is made of the grounds in other subjects for example, in an art lesson, older pupils studying the work of Andy Goldsworthy use natural materials such as leaves, twigs and berries found in the grounds to create their own sculptures.

58. Since the last inspection an attractive library area and an information technology room have been developed and equipped with good quality resources. A room has been provided and equipped for the teaching of science. Whilst there is now access to electricity and gas supplies, there is no preparation room and pupils work at tables rather than at benches. This limits the investigations they can undertake. The local education authority has assisted in the provision of rooms for design and technology but both these areas are too small to teach full class groups and the food technology area has no tables for pupils to prepare food or to eat as a group. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. Most are of a good quality and are easily accessible to pupils and staff. The school benefits from generous donations from the community. For example during the week of the inspection the army donated sixteen computers.

59. The educational priorities chosen by the school are well supported by careful financial planning and good financial management. The headteacher and administration officer monitor income and expenditure carefully and governors and senior managers are kept well informed about the state of the accounts. Good strategic planning for the use of resources is in place. Specific grants are used as intended and spending is monitored carefully. The principles of best value are now being taken into account. The school provides quality equipment and endeavours to acquire the best services for the money it has. Parents and pupils are now consulted as to the running of the school, for example in the wearing of uniform and break-time activities. Senior managers compare the results of national tests, attendance and unit costs per pupil with those of similar schools in order to challenge and improve their performance.

60. Very good use is made of new technology to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the school. Technology is used effectively in the analysis of test results and when setting new targets. Teachers use new technology well; for example when preparing worksheets for pupils and when using digital cameras to record achievement. School administration is of a high standard and day-to-day operations are handled smoothly by a good administrative team.

61. Given that this is an effective school, with much improved teaching, a rise in standards and good improvements since the previous inspection, the school provides good value for money. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

62. In order to improve standards whilst still maintaining the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- ◆ Continue to liaise with the Local Education Authority to address the weaknesses in the accommodation that are mentioned in the report;  
(paragraphs 4, 57, 78, 82, 87)

- ◆ Provide more opportunities to prepare pupils to live in a multi-cultural society; (paragraphs 36, 82)
- ◆ Improve attendance by
  - setting attendance targets in pupils' individual education plans
  - providing more incentives for pupils to attend regularly.
 (paragraphs 13,39)

*In addition to the above the following minor points should be included in the action plan.*

A few teachers' to improve their handwriting and spelling to provide a good model for pupils. (paragraphs 2, 21, 67)

Ensure the school's guidance for time allocation is reflected in timetables. (paragraphs 24, 78)

Consider ways to display older pupils' work to support learning and celebrate achievement. (paragraphs 57, 78)

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

### ***Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection***

Number of lessons observed

65
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

52
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### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	25	52	17	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	77
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	9.3	School data	4.3

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

### Results of teacher assessment

	Level 1	Level 2

English	2	4
Mathematics	4	2
Science	3	3

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	8	14

### **Results of national tests**

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Mathematics	6	0	5	1
Science	8	1	3	0

### **Results of teacher assessment**

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
English	1	9	2	0

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4***

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	8	4	12

### **Certificate of Educational Achievement**

Subject	Number of candidates	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Literacy	12	3	8	1
Maths	14	10	4	0
Science	12	0	0	12

### **Associated Examining Board (AEB)**

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Literacy	10	8	0
Numeracy	12	5	2

### **Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN)**

Ten pupils achieved Bronze Award

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	76
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.36
Average class size	11

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	546,223
Total expenditure	548,223
Expenditure per pupil	5,973
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,966
Balance carried forward to next year	10,966

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	77
Number of questionnaires returned	23

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	26	52	9	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	45	14	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	43	19	0	10
The teaching is good.	57	22	4	0	17
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	36	9	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	30	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	30	9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	45	9	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	61	26	4	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	45	0	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	30	13	4	13

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

### **ENGLISH**

63. Since the last inspection the school has successfully developed strategies to make standards in reading and writing more consistent throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced very effectively and this has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' achievements are good in all key stages and are better than would be expected for pupils of this ability. There is a broad range of attainment in each class. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English. Good support from other professionals, for example speech and language therapists, and the outreach support teacher for pupils with autistic tendencies, ensure that pupils with these additional needs also make good progress. The number of pupils achieving nationally recognised qualifications has improved since the last inspection. In 2000 all sixteen-year-olds gained Certificate of Achievement, with over a quarter achieving distinction. Pupils were also very successful in the AEB Literacy Award.

64. Pupils' make good progress towards their personal targets in all areas of the subject. In speaking and listening there is clear evidence of good progress in the attentiveness with which pupils listen and the confidence with which they respond. For example, junior age pupils contribute well to the shared session at the end of an art lesson using print patterns "*Mine's a fire,*" says one boy excitedly, and this initiates a discussion about the patterns produced by other pupils. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen discuss the lives of peasants and nobles, using clues from a picture and the skilful questions of the teachers. In art they discuss the effects of shading on the "*Iron Man's*" glove, and in English they use similes to describe the "*Iron Man*". Pupils wait their turn to speak; they listen to the opinions of others and confidently contribute to discussions. By the age of sixteen, pupils show that they have developed good skills when recalling previous stories and work. They explain what they remember clearly and accurately. Staff encourage pupils to make suggestions, then help them to improve their contributions using a good range of descriptive language. By the time they leave school pupils speak and listen very well. Their conversations are lively and they take account of their audience. Pupils throughout the school are eager to engage visitors in conversation and speak politely to staff.

65. Reading and writing are combined very effectively for all age groups. There is a consistent emphasis on learning sounds and names of letters and pupils make good progress in skills such as matching sounds and letters to objects. In all three key stages pupils are consolidating their learning in reading and spelling through the daily use of a commercially produced computer program and *early morning tasks*. Pupils enjoy the spelling program and the challenges it offers. Most pupils learn groups of new words each week and this helps them to make good progress with their spelling. Groups of pupils who have greater difficulties in learning to read and who use the sounds of letters to build up words have additional high quality support from learning support assistants each week. This additional support has already had a significant impact on the learning of basic skills for reading and writing.

66. Most junior age pupils know vowels in words can be changed and that they are able to change vowels to provide additional rhymes. By the age of eleven, most pupils know that verbs are *doing words* and are able to substitute them in simple poems for example, *leaves*

*crackle*, and *leaves crunch*. Younger secondary age pupils first work out sentences with the teacher and learning support assistant and later write their own sentences, for instance about the people who live in and outside the castle. They read the sentences back correctly. Whilst reading *The Iron Man* together pupils learn about adjectives and similes. Their understanding of these is enhanced by their interest in the story and their knowledge of how to use a dictionary.

67. Careful attention is paid to the development of writing skills and the correct formation of letters. By the age of eleven, many pupils write using a legible joined script for their written work and this is developed in the senior school. However, not all teachers provide good models of handwriting when using white-boards and chalkboards. The school is aware that this is an area for improvement. Pupils give greater attention to correct use of punctuation and presentation as they grow older and teachers consistently reinforce this in their marking. Pupils in between the ages of eleven and fourteen produce several sentences of creative writing and write well in other subjects for example accounts of their investigations in science and lists of materials needed in design and technology. Older secondary age pupils produce extended pieces of imaginative work, including personal diaries written by someone searching for treasure. As pupils move through the school they write increasingly complex sentences and improve their spelling. Good use is made of information technology in English in the use of word-processing to present drafted work very attractively, sometimes with inserted pictures, and for specific spelling programs. Pupils with particular difficulties with pencil control use laptop computers to produce their work. This improves their confidence in writing significantly. Teachers and the physiotherapist monitor the use of these carefully to ensure pupils have other opportunities to improve their control of tools such as pen and paintbrush.

68. Pupils of all ages enjoy books and make good progress in their reading. They enjoy choosing their own books from the library and benefit from the use of different reading schemes in each key stage. Pupils show a good level of understanding of the books they read because they match their interest and age levels well. They use their knowledge of initial sounds to help them work out unfamiliar words. More able pupils read simple stories fluently and discuss the characters and plots enthusiastically. They enjoy the opportunities to act out stories in drama lessons and are learning to make decisions, plan and rehearse their parts and to respect the work of other groups when they perform. The progress of many pupils is particularly good because parents and carers help with their reading at home. Pupils of all ages read well in other subjects, for example when completing worksheets and when researching topics using CD-ROM and the Internet in history and geography.

69. The teaching of English is good overall and is often very good for older pupils. Where teaching is particularly effective the tasks are matched very carefully to the abilities of the pupils and there are very high expectations from staff that pupils will achieve well. The enthusiasm of the staff is communicated to pupils and they are encouraged to be constructively critical. Pupils' contributions are praised and valued making them proud of their work and eager to try harder. Most teachers begin the day with *English tasks* which enables pupils to settle quickly and make a good start to the day. There is a lively pace to most lessons and the imaginative use of a variety of resources enables pupils to concentrate for a surprising length of time and make good progress. In all lessons there are very good relationships with pupils and the teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants provides very high quality support to pupils, giving them confidence to try new activities. Support from therapists and specialist teachers enhances pupils' learning effectively. Good use of a range of assessment procedures ensures pupils have appropriate targets set and these are consistently reinforced in discussions with pupils. All staff tell pupils what they will be expected to learn in each lesson. As a result pupils know what they are expected to achieve and strive hard to meet their targets thus making good progress. The results of

assessments are analysed carefully to highlight pupils who may need additional support. Teachers plan work that is matched well to individual pupils' education plans but offers suitable challenge. The use of literature to teach elements of grammar is carried out very effectively by teachers and encourages appreciation of plays and stories. Skilful questioning and encouragement for pupils to make contributions to discussions helps them to develop their thinking skills and confidence. All teachers use homework well to reinforce learning in class.

70. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has ensured that the Literacy Strategy has been adapted to reflect the needs of the school. There is a good balance between the different elements of the subject and there is an appropriate emphasis in each key stage. Visits to the theatre and the study of the works of well-known authors make a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Resources have improved since the last inspection. An attractive library area has been provided. Books have been catalogued using the *Dewey classification*. This enables pupils to develop their research skills. More visits to the theatre and the planned development of an adapted Literacy Strategy for pupils up to the age of fourteen should enhance pupils' learning further.

## MATHEMATICS

71. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively in Key Stages 2 and 3 and pupils achieve well. As the overall quality of teaching is high, with some being excellent, pupils make good progress in developing their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. The practice of *setting* older pupils according to their mathematical ability is having a significant impact on standards. The oldest pupils make good progress in their nationally recognised course, particularly in applying their knowledge of mathematics to their everyday life. Sixteen-year-old pupils achieve well with all pupils achieving *merit* or *distinction* in their nationally recognised Certificate of Achievement and the higher levels of the Associated Education Board examination in numeracy. This is good improvement since the last inspection. One pupil is currently linking with her local secondary school to study for General Certificate of Secondary Education in mathematics.

72. By the age of eleven, pupils count and write numbers to ten with more able pupils counting to twenty and beyond. A good number add and subtract single numbers. Pupils of all abilities recognise and complete simple patterns and use two-dimensional shapes such as *squares and triangles* to make pictures. Pupils in Key Stage 3 order numbers, many add and subtract two digit numbers and understand the difference between *hundreds, tens* and *units*. All name and identify two-dimensional shapes such as *triangle, rectangle* and *pentagon*. They construct *bar charts*, with more able pupils plotting a graph showing the differences in temperature over time. Pupils use analogue and digital clocks, and read weighing scales accurately. They use their skills well in other subjects, for instance when making *battering rams* in a design and technology lesson. Pupils know whether angles are bigger or smaller than right angles and more able pupils know different types of angles. They used this information well when measuring the angle of a slope in a science lesson as they considered its effect on the speed and distance a car travelled as it is rolled down. By the age of sixteen pupils are familiar with the four rules of number and use their knowledge well in every day life, for example when working out bills. Most tell the time, with a good number being familiar with the twenty-four-hour clock. Pupils use new technology well, for example when producing graphs of their favourite types of crisps. More able pupils work with fractions and sequences and round numbers up or down to the nearest hundred. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in mental and oral mathematics. This is particularly so where, as part of a *quickfire* mental arithmetic introduction, older pupils confidently count backwards and using

negative numbers.

73. Teaching is good overall across the school. On occasion the learning opportunities provided for the youngest pupils are excellent. This was evident in a lesson on *patterns* and *sequences*, when wallpaper friezes were used particularly well. This lesson had a number of excellent features, particularly in planning, very high expectations of pupils and clear learning targets. Good questioning by the teacher and support from the learning assistants encouraged pupils to describe the formation of patterns, and higher attaining pupils were able to predict what would come next. As a result of this highly organised lesson pupils learnt to recognise and describe patterns. Higher attaining pupils were able to identify how a pattern of beads could be determined and using the information recognised patterns in numbers and were able to count on and back from a given number. In lessons where teaching was very good, for example when pupils were learning about fractions, activities were well organised to enable pupils to work independently. Clear demonstrations and appropriate aids and activities ensured that all pupils were clear about what was expected of them, and therefore they learnt to recognise simple fractions and to find fractions of shapes and numbers. Where teaching was unsatisfactory or less effective planning was not sufficiently rigorous and therefore time was not used efficiently. In addition, unclear explanations, inappropriate teaching aids and activities did not challenge pupils. This caused them to lose interest and concentration. As a result pupils were confused and progress was limited. Teaching that is always good or better promotes a confident, positive atmosphere so that pupils learn well. Pupils' enthusiasm to participate is influenced by well presented activities at an appropriate level as teachers pose relevant and challenging questions according to pupils' ability. For example, these features along with very good pupil management that incorporated good use of humour were displayed in a lesson on *co-ordinates* and *plotting shapes*. Effective intervention, support and encouragement from the teacher ensured that all pupils remained focused so that at the end of the lesson they were all able to plot numbers accurately and give the co-ordinates of a fixed shape.

74. Good progress has been made in the subject since the last inspection. It is now very well led and managed with a well-organised co-ordinator who is determined to raise standards. Regular monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning has made a significant impact in moving towards this. Detailed record keeping and rigorous assessment procedures mean that teachers know pupils' achievements and can plan lessons accordingly. The half-termly analysis of pupils' progress quickly identifies those are underachieving or who need additional support.

## SCIENCE

75. Standards are good and pupils achieve well across the school. Their progress is good across all key stages because of the high number of stimulating and interesting lessons which are well presented to suit the needs of the pupils.

76. Pupils make good progress through the junior classes because they are interested in their lessons. Younger pupils are fascinated by the range of toys presented to them, for instance, a *climbing clown* and a *spinning top*, and make good progress in predicting how these move. They suggest words such as, *push*, *pull*, *turn* and *roll* to describe the toys' movements and develop an understanding of how trains have been powered from the time they were invented. By the age of eleven, pupils make comparisons between man made and natural materials. They understand the conditions necessary for the healthy growth of a plant, for example, cress. Pupils aged eleven to fourteen show a good understanding of

energy and name *gas*, *wind*, and *oil* as different sources of power. They explain their work well, for example a pupil in Year 7 with specific learning difficulties explained the workings of a solar powered windmill that she has at home in great detail. By making models of windmills and a waterwheel they make good gains in their understanding of environmentally friendly methods of producing energy. This makes a good contribution to their moral development. Through their study of *physical processes* pupils in Year 8 explain how they separate different substances, for instance by using a magnet to remove iron filings from sand and the process of filtration. They successfully complete an investigation using *chromatography* to discover which member of staff *forged* the signature on a cheque. Older pupils explain how the angle of a slope and the distance at which a model car is released influences the speed of the vehicle. By the age of fourteen, pupils have a suitable knowledge of the solar system. When studying living things they classify flowers by the difference in petal formation and animals by their habitats. Older pupils continue to make good progress in all aspects of science. By the age of sixteen, pupils confidently apply their knowledge to everyday situations. For example, they undertake investigations to determine which household products are acidic and which are alkaline. They produce their own *indicator* using red cabbage and use good analytical methods to find the exact pH values of products such as washing up liquid and toothpaste. Most have a suitable understanding of the need for a test to be fair. Using their knowledge of the properties of materials, pupils discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using different methods of waste disposal, for example, the comparison of burning rubbish to the use of landfill sites.

77. The quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good and is good overall across the school. This is reflected in the quality of learning. Teachers endeavour to make their lessons interesting and plan investigations to motivate and maintain pupils' concentration. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the activity and responded enthusiastically to the task. All lessons begin with clear instructions and investigations are explained in detail in order to give pupils the opportunity to develop their skills of prediction and deduction. In a number of very good lessons observed, pupils were set challenging questions to which they responded with clearly thought out and well reasoned answers. For example, pupils in Year 11 worked effectively when discussing the treatment of bleeding as part of their work towards Young Life Saver award. Where teaching is less effective, in a Year 7 lesson for example, pupils are not offered the opportunity to explore the types of energy through investigation and find the principle of kinetic energy related to movement difficult to grasp. In all lessons there is a good emphasis on the need for safety procedures to be followed carefully as in the wearing of plastic aprons and goggles when conducting investigations using chemicals. Because teachers are consistently delivering well-focused lessons, pupils display interest, good behaviour and concentrate for long periods of time.

78. Since the last inspection, the appointment of an experienced and well-qualified specialist to teach and manage the subject has led to good improvements in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum. Though there has been an audit of the time pupils spend studying science, the time allocation in some classes falls short of that recommended. A specialist science room has been provided as the result of the last inspection. The room is small and whilst it has been equipped with gas and electricity, pupils work at tables and there is no preparation room. This limits the investigations pupils can undertake. Though there has been improvement in the number and quality of resources, equipment such as balances to enable the oldest pupils to weigh accurately are not available. Pupils use the Internet to research information but little use is made of computers for data recording. The range of displays in the science room does not reflect the range of pupils' work or the variety of investigations taking place. The introduction of nationally recognised qualifications through Certificate of Achievement has contributed to the raising of standards.

## ART

79. Standards of achievement in Art are satisfactory overall. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection week. However through discussions with staff and looking at pupils' art work, displays, teachers' records and files it is evident that progress in art is satisfactory.

80. By the age of eleven, pupils have used a satisfactory range of techniques and are beginning to develop an understanding of colour, patterns and symmetry. Younger pupils make very good progress as the result of well-planned and stimulating teaching, which built on previous learning from an information and technology lesson. Pupils produced lines using a range of media, the activity enhanced the pupils' spiritual development because there was a moment of awe and wonder when yellow lines go across purple ones. Pupils developed their idea as they experimented with the formation of line patterns on a computer program and compared their work with that of the artist Miro. By the age of fourteen pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. They use a range of media such as chalks and pastels to produce different skin tones effectively. In the two lessons observed pupils made good progress, which was the result of a demonstration of the activity, which enabled them to understand the skills required. Pupils were able to roll out clay using strips of wood as gauges to produce the correct thickness and width. They then progressed to manipulating the clay around a newspaper mould and then by cutting the edge with a knife created a face shape. By using designs from a previous lesson pupils created a relief feature in the clay by adding eyes, nose and a mouth. Older pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall. Only one lesson was observed which was part of the *Youth Award Scheme* creative arts module. During this lesson pupils made good progress because the staff gave a clear introduction to the session and suggested some design techniques. Pupils working in the style of the artist Andy Goldsworthy created their own natural sculpture in the school grounds using leaves, berries and twigs. The sculptures were photographed using the digital camera to enable pupils to extend this work further.

81. In the limited number of lessons observed the teaching of Art was good overall. Good teaching is evident when lessons are well planned and when a demonstration of the activity is given as part of the introduction to the lessons. There is good teamwork between teachers and support staff which gives pupils the confidence to succeed. Relationships are good and potentially difficult behaviour is managed well, giving clear explanations why certain behaviours and language are unacceptable. Time is used well and pupils are given good opportunities to practise skills independently. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and particularly strong in the youngest pupils when they gleefully respond to the lesson. Older pupils work well in pairs on their landscape sculpture, assessing each other's contribution and making sensible suggestions for improvement. Pupils exhibiting work in the *Farnham Schools Art Exhibition* and proud to discuss their work and delighted by the recognition it received.

82. A useful art policy and long and medium term plans are now in place, which is improvement since the previous inspection. Though the framework is satisfactory more consideration needs to be given to three dimensional work, pottery and textiles. At the time of the previous inspection it was noted that pupils' portfolios of work require further development. There has been unsatisfactory progress in this area and this needs to be addressed to ensure individual assessment to enable staff to support pupils' achievements. There are good procedures in place to ensure that pupils who are achieving well have

access to GCSE courses. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to create more suitable accommodation for art lessons. Although their efforts have been considerable, the accommodation for art is still unsatisfactory because the room is too small for the age range and number of pupils in each class group and it is also shared with the provision for design and technology. Whilst the study of the work of artists makes a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development, overall pupils have too few opportunities to appreciate or work in the style of artists from beyond Europe.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

83. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection.

84. By the age of eleven, pupils design and make *leaf pickers* to use in the park and explain how they used string and sticky tape to join the parts together. Others make models of *legionnaires* as part of their studies of the Romans. Pupils of this age make good improvement in their fine motor skills through the use of a range of construction kits. Pupils make good progress in their designing and making skills as they move through the school. By the age of fourteen they use a range of materials such as dowel, card, wood and paper to make a *tank*, a *pop-up get well card* and a *land yacht*. They make good use of knowledge gained in science as they design and produce a *notice board* in the style of a *mouth* and use their knowledge of *pneumatics* to produce *wobbly teeth*. When using cogs to make moving vehicles, more able pupils explain which way cogs turn and what happens to the speed when using smaller or larger cogs. Whilst pupils make good progress in the designing and making processes, they have too few opportunities to record their designs and their evaluations.

85. In food technology, younger pupils make a fruit salad and talk about their choice of fruit, for example the colours they have used. Older pupils prepare and make *fairy cakes*, pizza and sandwiches. They combine both elements of the subject well as they make their own pasta and discuss a design and materials to make a *spaghetti server*. In preparation for cooking *stir fry*, pupils discuss the contents of commercially produced packets, recognising a good range of vegetables such as bean sprouts, peppers and sweet corn, and discuss how the texture, taste and colour contribute to the product.

86. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school in both elements of the subject. Pupils are managed particularly well. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and plan carefully to match pupils' abilities and to provide opportunities for pupils to use skills acquired in numeracy and literacy, for example measuring accurately or through opportunities to extend their independent writing. Very good discussions at the start of all lessons enable pupils to recall previous learning and extend their thinking. For example through skilful questioning, pupils in Year 7 realise how a *battering ram* works, where to position the wheels and the need for the operators of the ram to be protected from the soldiers they were attacking. Good demonstration with suitable emphasis on health and safety enables pupils to improve their skills such as using a paper drill, and using *axle hangers* for fixing wheels. Teachers and support staff work well together, reminding pupils of their individual targets such as *to make your letters bigger* or *find words in the dictionary*. All lessons end with a good review of the learning that has taken place, giving pupils a good opportunity to speak in front of a large group and to reason their answers.

87. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Schemes of work are now in place and the teaching of design and technology meets legal requirements. New rooms have been provided for both aspects of the subject. Whilst these provide useful resources, both areas are small and with insufficient space to teach a whole class group.

There are no preparation tables in the food technology room and no provision for pupils to eat the meals that they have prepared. There are few displays to celebrate achievement and support learning. Whilst plans are in hand to extend the use of *control technology*, other than for research, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Good links with other subjects such as the use of levers linked to science and the construction of *battering rams* linked to the history topic *Castles* contribute well to pupils' progress. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. A useful photographic record provides good evidence of progress.

## GEOGRAPHY

88. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection with National Curriculum requirements now being met. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory.

89. Younger pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of where places are and the differences between localities. They gain a useful knowledge of other countries through postcards sent by *Barnaby Bear* from places such as France and Sweden. Most recognise and name features such as *roads, bridges and rivers*. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen extend their knowledge and understanding of places as they examine how, and why, places change. They understand the importance of rivers in the development of early settlements, for example in the growth of London, and consider the importance of natural resources in the growth of industries. By the age of fourteen pupils know that industries of today still need the four elements of raw materials, power, labour and a market, but they are able to relocate because of better communication and transport systems. Pupils gain an understanding of the human impact on the environment as they study the destruction of rain forests. Pupils' appreciation of global issues is encouraged through the study of South Africa, so that they understand the difficulties faced by developing countries.

90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory for younger pupils and those aged eleven to fourteen. Teachers' knowledge has improved since the last inspection. This is reflected in the quality of learning. However, some opportunities for learning are missed. For example, a lesson to compare the pupils' own environment with that of coastal resorts was effective in encouraging pupils to identify features of their home area and of seashores they had visited. However, pupils were not asked to name any of these locations and the opportunity to introduce globes and maps to show where these places are was not taken. Teachers provide useful opportunities for pupils to improve their observation and numeracy skills, as was shown in lessons examining *microclimates* using the school grounds. Good pupil management and appropriate activities encouraged joint decision making as pupils measured and recorded readings of temperature, wind speed and direction, and cloud cover. Teaching for older pupils is of high quality and therefore pupils achieve well and make good progress as their enquiry skills and geographical understanding are developed. A lesson with Year 10 pupils examining natural hazards provided an example of good teaching enabling pupils to develop real insight into urban development and the problems associated with predicting and controlling flooding. After viewing video footage of the recent floods, pupils were required to suggest where they would build their houses and amenities on an outline map showing the site of a river and contour lines. More able pupils improved their communication skills as they were expected to give reasons for their choice of site. Pupils' interest was maintained as they considered and budgeted for improved flood defences. The use of very good strategies and activities required and encouraged pupils to make predictions, to amend their views in response to all available information, and to identify priorities. Teachers in all age groups provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their

information and communication technology as when using a database to record weather readings and in Year 10 group when pupils entered the results of their investigation of river velocity and used a program to print out graphs.

91. Pupils now follow a broad and balanced curriculum and now have the opportunity to work towards nationally recognised qualifications at the age of sixteen. Care has been taken to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. Residential visits are used effectively for pupils to gain an understanding of the features of areas such as Chepstow. However, opportunities for pupils to experience, identify and describe their immediate environment are limited. Resources have improved and are now satisfactory. Assessment procedures are not yet consistent, therefore, when some teachers plan their work they do not have adequate records of pupils' previous knowledge. The teaching of geography makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development.

## HISTORY

92. Standards have been maintained in history. Pupils' achievement and progress is satisfactory.

93. Younger pupils use the language of time such as *old* and *new* and compare toys from fifty years ago to those of today. They take note of the different materials and make sensible suggestions as to how they might be used. By the age of eleven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the Ancient Greeks. They compare the symbols of the gods and study maps of ancient Greece. In their art lessons they decorate plates in the style of the Ancient Greeks and design costumes. By the age of fourteen, pupils have a suitable knowledge of the passage of time and construct a time line from 43BC to the present day indicating major historical events. They compare the houses of the rich and poor in medieval times. Pupils use their knowledge well in other subjects. For example, in design and technology they use their knowledge to design and make models of a battering ram. Pupils in Year 8 have an awareness of the industrial revolution. They understand the dangers of coal mining and know that *fire-damp* is a gas that causes explosions underground. They recall the work of George Stephenson and discuss the differences between domestic and industrial production levels of coal. By the age of fourteen, pupils have a suitable knowledge of World War 1. They develop confidence in speaking as they describe conditions in the trenches to their classmates as *water-logged*, *dark*, *cold* and *muddy*. Pupils of all ages know that information can be found in a range of sources such as photographs, books, CD-ROM and real objects with older and more able pupils knowing the difference between *primary* and *secondary* sources.

94. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use imaginative resources to maintain pupils' interest. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher makes effective use of *stick puppets* to represent the characters in the story of the Trojan horse. The pupils are fascinated by the activity and make good gains in their learning. Questions are used well to ascertain pupils' understanding as to the size of the horse and how the soldiers managed to get inside it. Real objects are also used well with older pupils. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen became aware of the dirty and dangerous conditions miners had to endure as they handled different types of coal and a Davy lamp. Teachers produce good quality worksheets which are matched to pupils' abilities to encourage pupils to write descriptively, for example about conditions in the mines. The use of photographs, interesting objects, video and story telling by the teachers is effective in maintaining the interest and concentration of pupils of all ages and abilities.

95. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Senior staff now monitor teaching and its impact on learning. There has been good progress in the type of worksheets provided resulting in more opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes and more opportunity to express their opinions. The scheme of work ensures continuity in pupils' learning however, assessment procedures are still under developed. The co-ordinator has plans to include more visits out of school to enrich the curriculum.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. Information and communication technology is a strength of the school. There has been very good progress since the previous inspection when the subject did not meet requirements.

97. Pupils are now making very good progress throughout the school and achieve standards well above those expected of pupils of this ability. By the age of eleven pupils have developed the necessary skills to enable them to use the keyboard and mouse effectively. They use the *mouse* to locate *icons*, open and close files and execute changes. Pupils recall their *password* to enable them to have access to a program. They select tools for drawing such as a *paintbrush* and use the *eraser* to remove unwanted lines. Pupils develop their skills well between the ages of eleven and sixteen because staff have high expectations of the work pupils produce and provide them with well thought out activities, which give the pupils confidence to learn new skills. By the age of fourteen, pupils name, select and use key features on a word processing tool bar, such as *bold*, *underline* and *italic*. They format text and make changes to the font size and style. They use technology well to handle data and produce bar graphs. Pupils of this age meet the expectations of staff at the end of the lesson by *logging* their document, saving their work in a group file and quitting the program. Pupils' word processing skills are extended further by using a commercial program to make cards for special occasions and by designing a scroll template to write a letter to King William as part of their history project. Older pupils continue to make very good progress. Many work independently and succeed well because of the stimulating and challenging learning environment. They use technology well to support their learning for example when using a commercially produced program to help improve their spelling. Pupils in their final year of school are working towards nationally recognised qualifications in this subject and use their word processing skills effectively in compiling their *Record of Achievement*. Pupils of all ages use digital cameras to record their work and use CD-ROM and the Internet for research purposes.

98. The quality of teaching is very good and this is reflected in the quality of learning. Good professional development has enabled staff to gain confidence in teaching and in using new technology. Teachers are extremely well supported by a highly skilled technician who makes a significant contribution to all lessons and to pupils' progress. There are high expectations for pupils to succeed and this can be seen from the planning and the range of activities pupils are expected to complete. All lessons begin with a very good review of previous learning. For example, in one very good lesson pupils were enabled to recall skills learnt in the previous session and then progressed to learn how to rotate shapes to design and make a board game. This session was particularly effective because the teacher reinforced pupils' numeracy skills by asking, "*if we rotate a shape all the way round, how many degrees is this?*" Staff encourage pupils to be active in their learning. For example, younger pupils made very good progress in a lesson when they were reminded of how to open a program. Using a computer linked to an overhead projector they were expected to prompt the technician to click on the correct icons and demonstrate their knowledge prior to carrying out the task on their own machines. All staff manage pupils well and encourage them to have the

highest respect for equipment. Staff praise pupils' work and let them know that their efforts are valued. As a result of this pupils work hard and are keen and eager to complete their work. Pupils are very well behaved and have a very good attitude to the subject because they are challenged in their learning. They are enthusiastic and totally absorbed in the activities. Pupils are proud of their achievements and are eager to show their work to others. Teachers use new technology well in other subjects in their classrooms. Many use the equipment well to produce high quality work sheets that are carefully matched to the ability of individual pupils. Pupils are encouraged to use the Internet, for example to support work on the Ancient Greeks in history.

99. Subject management is very good. The policy is of a good quality, provides helpful guidance for staff and ensures that all pupils have access to their entitlement. A suitable scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection. Whilst the scheme of work has been reviewed in the light of Curriculum 2000, and information and communication technology supports most subjects, the school recognises this is still an area for development in music and design and technology. Good systems are in place to assess pupils' achievements and these are used when planning further work. In addition a detailed portfolio of pupils' work provides a very good record of pupils' progress. The computer technician is highly skilled. He makes a significant contribution to the subject and provides an on-going programme of professional development for staff, which has an impact on the quality of learning. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation and range of equipment since the last inspection. This has had a positive impact on standards. The technology suite is maintained to a very high standard.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

100. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection because of the sudden illness of the specialist teacher. However, from discussions with the co-ordinator, scrutiny of planning and pupils' files, it is clear that pupils achieve well. Care is taken to ensure pupils have the opportunity to improve their spoken, written and reading of French in each lesson.

101. Pupils aged eleven to sixteen achieve a good standard in their written work and when answering questions in response to audio-tapes. Pupils of all ages respond to simple questions giving their name, address and details of their family. Most know the days of the week, some the months of the year, and many name colours. Pupils make good progress in learning to read and write the language and relate their work to classroom activities. For example, pupils in Year 9 prepare and label their timetable in French.

102. The French course has been revised this year. Certificate of Achievement has been introduced for older pupils and this is already contributing to improved standards. Assessment for all ages is systematic and used effectively to enable the teacher to match work carefully to the range of abilities within each class group. Pupils had a useful opportunity to improve their spoken French when playing games and buying French food and drinks at a very successful French Day held in the Spring term. This provided a good opportunity to motivate younger pupils towards learning the language as they get older.

## MUSIC

103. Standards for junior age pupils are satisfactory. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen are currently studying the drama element of their *creative arts* programme with music not being taught until later in the year. As such it is not possible to make a judgement about standards for pupils of this age. The previous inspection team was unable to judge standards it is therefore not possible to comment on progress since the last inspection.

104. Younger pupils make good progress in all aspects of music. Pupils are familiar with the routine of music lessons. They enter the room quietly and listen carefully to the taped music. They identify instruments such as bells, flute and piccolo and know that these instruments make the music sound *Christmassy*. Pupils successfully play rhythmic accompaniment using chime bells and tambourines to reflect the sounds of Christmas. Pupils are familiar with a range of traditional songs and nursery rhymes and join in songs such as *Twinkle, twinkle little star* tunefully. Pupils with an interest or talent for music have individual tuition. One Year 10 pupil who is learning the cornet is currently working for Grade 5 and shows confidence in sight-reading.

105. The teacher is a visiting music specialist and is very confident in her subject. She plans a range of activities to encourage pupils to enjoy music and to enable them to improve their composing and listening skills. Good use is made of learning resources to interest pupils and to enable them to make progress. For example, through *playing* the flute and the trumpet, pupils recognise they are played differently, and comment that the flute is played *sideways* and that keys on the trumpet *have to be pushed*. Pupils respond well to the enthusiasm of the teacher and handle musical instruments with great reverence. They are eager to participate, especially in practical activities, and wait patiently for their turn to use the instruments. Though only in school for an afternoon each week the teacher has familiarised herself with pupils' individual education plans and knows the behavioural targets of all pupils. Because of this behaviour is managed well.

106. There has been no significant improvement in music since the last report but with the recent appointment of an experienced co-ordinator, work has commenced on devising a relevant curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 3. This is being developed in consultation with the visiting music specialist in order to provide continuity in pupils' learning. Whilst there is a specialist music room, the room is too small for the number of pupils in the classes and there is insufficient space for pupils to play instruments in comfort. Though there is a range of resources, these limit what can be taught. For example, resources such as compact discs are not available for the development of musical appreciation and a number of keyboards require new adapters before they can be used. As at the time of the last inspection, a system for assessing pupils' achievements has still to be developed. Very little use is made of music in other activities; for instance, there was no music or singing in two of the three assemblies observed during the inspection.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Pupils' progress is at least satisfactory in all aspects of the subject. Their progress is good in swimming and outdoor and adventurous education. Pupils achieve standards commensurate with their abilities. Standards in physical education have been maintained since the last inspection.

108. Pupils of all ages know the need to *warm up* before exercise and to *cool down* when exercise is over. Many pupils know that their hearts beat faster when they exercise. In games pupils improve their skills as they move through the school taking part in football, *unihoc* and basketball. By the age of fourteen most pupils take part in an organised game and make good improvement in their moral development as they understand the need for rules and the meaning of *fair play*. By the age of sixteen pupils receive and send the ball with reasonable accuracy in most team games. More able pupils are able to shoot from both the left and right hand side of the court in basketball. In dance younger pupils move backwards and forwards in time to the music by themselves and with a partner. They perform a simple sequence of three movements. Pupils of this age are developing an understanding of their cultural heritage through dancing traditional English country dances. Pupils aged eleven to fourteen make satisfactory progress in gymnastics as they balance, jump and roll.

109. Pupils in all key stages make good progress in swimming. By the age of eleven, pupils are confident in the water. All swim on their backs and fronts with the aid of floats. Over half swim 10 metres without buoyancy aids. Pupils continue to make good progress as they get older. By the age of sixteen over one quarter of pupils achieve Personal Survival Level 1, swimming in their clothes and treading water. All pupils are able to swim at least 10 metres by the time they leave school. Pupils aged eleven to sixteen make good progress in outdoor and adventurous activities through a wide range of residential visits. They ski, climb and take part in raft building exercises. Each year a number of older pupils learn to sail as they navigate a *Tall Ship*, the *Queen Galadriel*, around the Channel Islands and to France. In addition to improving pupils' physical skills, such activities make a very good contribution to pupils' social development as they learn to live together, to work as a team and to support each other when the going gets tough. Pupils with physical difficulties make good progress in the range and quality of their movements through a structured programme of physiotherapy. A number of pupils throughout the school make good gains in their confidence and in their physical well being through *Riding for the Disabled*.

110. The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good, being good overall across the school. Where teaching is very good not a moment is wasted and pupils are expected to be physically active the whole time. In addition to maintaining their interest this also improves their stamina. Demonstration is used especially well to enable pupils to improve their skills. For example, following an excellent demonstration on *dribbling* in basketball, pupils of all abilities quickly improve their technique and successfully *dribble* the ball at a fair speed using both hands. In these lessons very good provision is made for pupils who are unable to participate. For example, in a Year 10/11 lesson pupils unable to take part for physical reasons were expected to complete a worksheet underlining which muscles were used in particular exercises and identifying equipment. This enabled these pupils to make progress in their knowledge of the human body as they locate muscles such as biceps and flexors. Where teaching is less effective or unsatisfactory, the pace of lessons is slow, pupils lose interest and their behaviour is not as good as it should be. Though teachers in these lessons use demonstration it is not effective because the demonstration is not always good and pupils are not told how they can improve their movement. For example, when *stretching*, pupils do not stretch to their full extent thus reducing the effectiveness of the exercise. In most lessons teachers pay good attention to the safety of the pupils ensuring they remove jewellery and tie back long hair. However, in one lesson the teacher ignored a written instruction on a damaged mat *not to be used for PE* thus putting pupils at risk. All staff use assessment well. Support staff and pupils are used to record achievement in each aspect of the subject and this information is used when planning the next lesson.

111. Though the subject manager is new to the post, she has received good support from senior staff and knows how the subject will be developed. Overall resources are good. The school makes very good use of professional sportsmen to enrich the curriculum. Younger

pupils working with a local school for pupils with severe learning difficulties thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon with the *Thames Valley Tigers*, all were greatly impressed by the *trick shots* with several pupils trying to emulate their movements. The teaching of physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. The school has responded effectively to the issues raised by previous inspection. Improvement is particularly noticeable in subject content, planning, monitoring classroom practice, and in the quality and range of resources. Standards have improved and pupils achieve well.

113. Effective teaching ensures that pupils make good progress throughout the school. Younger pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of different religions as they consider the idea of things being *special*. They discuss celebrations such as birthdays and know that festivals such as Easter, harvest and Christmas are important special occasions for Christians. Pupils talk confidently about visits to the local church and mosque, and know that each religion has its own *special book* such as the Bible for Christians and the Qur'an for Muslims. Older pupils extend their knowledge of Christianity and begin to learn about other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. By the age of fourteen pupils have studied a number of Bible stories and their attention has been drawn to modern day comparisons. For example, the story of Noah is used to demonstrate a contemporary problem. The idea that the Flood happened because people did not listen is brought up-to-date by thinking about the destruction of the environment and the damage that results because people do not change their ways. Older pupils make very good progress in their understanding of *beliefs and values*.

114. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have high expectations and use a range of activities to stimulate pupils' interest so that they make good progress. A well organised, managed and resourced lesson enabled a group of ten and eleven year olds to learn about the Muslim tradition. Good teaching, and effective role-play by learning support assistants ensured everyone was involved and helped pupils understand why the Qur'an is regarded as a special book. The oldest pupils achieve very well and make very good progress because teaching is very good. Topics are very relevant to pupils and are presented in ways that stimulate their interest, as teachers use a range of activities and strategies that make pupils think. A very good lesson about the role of charities demonstrated many aspects of high quality teaching that developed pupils' understanding of *giving*. The teacher respected the age and maturity of the pupils, and their full participation in the lesson was achieved as the teacher skilfully combined the giving of information with careful questioning. Praise and encouragement were used well and activities presented were challenging to pupils with a variety of different needs.

115. Subject management is good. There is now continuity in pupils' learning. Pupils over the age of fourteen now receive a curriculum that is broad and balanced and devotes sufficient time to world religions. Though teachers keep a record of what pupils have been taught, there are still no assessment procedures and the school does not maintain ongoing records of pupils' achievements. Careful planning ensures that religious education is used to reinforce important moral and social issues such as the emphasis in Judaism on caring for the world.

## PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

116. Pupils across the school make at least good progress in personal, social and health education. This is because teachers constantly remind pupils of their social targets and because of the good example set by all staff.

117. By the age of eleven, pupils are beginning to work independently and take some responsibility for their own learning. Most are aware of the need to cross the road carefully. Pupils aged eleven to fourteen consider working together as a group and are able to identify key features, such as sharing, listening and talking to others. Older pupils consider how their behaviour might affect others and they understand the difference between behaving *assertively*, *passively* and *aggressively*. Older pupils often make very good progress because the personal, social and health programme is enhanced by the requirements of the *Youth Award Scheme* with pupils completing the *St. John's Ambulance Young Life Saver* course. Pupils of all abilities respond appropriately to a number of emergency situations such as dealing with a cut or how to help a person who has fainted. Pupils in their final year of school make very good progress in preparing for life after school. As pupils move through the school they make good progress in their understanding of their bodies and the effects of substance misuse such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs.

118. The quality of teaching is consistently good and on occasion very good. Teachers are very confident when teaching the subject and are sensitive when teaching aspects such as sex education. In many lessons staff are successful in creating a relaxed atmosphere where pupils are confident to make contributions and discuss their concerns. Teachers aim to make lessons relevant to pupils' needs. For example pupils preparing for work experience made good progress in their understanding of the need to *look presentable* and take care with personal hygiene through humorous role-play. Throughout the school day pupils are consistently reminded about their individual personal targets and are encouraged to evaluate their success in this area. During the review of the day Year 10 pupils were very honest about whether or not they met their targets. This review is good practice and makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal development. The provision of homework for older pupils and the expectation that they will complete and organise their *planner* contributes well to pupils' personal development.