

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PETER'S SCHOOL**

Bournemouth

LEA area: Bournemouth

Unique reference number: 113908

Headteacher: Mr Anthony McCaffrey

Reporting inspector: Mr Tom Ferris  
4344

Dates of inspection: 18 – 22 September 2000

Inspection number: 223804

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Catherine's Road Bournemouth
Postcode:	BH6 4AH
Telephone number:	01202 421141
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Angus MacMillan
Date of previous inspection:	18 March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tom Ferris (4344)	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards – the school's results and pupils' achievements? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Sally Hall (19693)	Lay inspector		How high are standards – pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Roger Samways (16434)	Team inspector	English	
Robert Allan (19278)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Laura Lindsay-Clift (11481)	Team inspector	Science	
Keith Simmonds (3238)	Team inspector	Design and technology	How well are pupils taught?
Martin Graham (15089)	Team inspector	Information and communications technology (ICT)	
Felicity Shuffle-Botham (30427)	Team inspector	History Equal Opportunities	
Helen Feasey (30215)	Team inspector	Geography	
Geoff Grigg (8189)	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
Celia Holland (24026)	Team inspector	Music	
Caroline Runyard (23030)	Team inspector	Physical Education	
Graham Langtree (16546)	Team inspector		
Lyn Paine (19667)	Team inspector	Performing Arts	
Julian Nietrzebka (15592)	Team inspector	Art	
Mike Young (4345)	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Anthony Boyden (13048)	Team inspector	GNVQ Business Studies	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Peter's is a voluntary aided Catholic comprehensive school. There are 1592 pupils on roll, 820 boys and 772 girls. There are 404 pupils in the Sixth Form. The school serves the Catholic community of Bournemouth and the New Forest. The school's status as a specialist arts college began in September 2000. The school is on two sites, the Iford site (Years 7 and 8) and the Southbourne Site (Years 9 to 13). The ethnic mix of the pupils is predominantly white. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are generally favourable. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also below average. The main needs are specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), emotional and behavioural difficulties, and speech and communication difficulties. A very small number of pupils have English as an additional language.

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

St Peter's is a good school with a number of very good features. The pupils' attainment when they enter the school is above average. By the end of Year 9 standards are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. By the age of 16 standards are generally well above average at GCSE. Results at A-level and in the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) are also well above average. The overall quality of the teaching is good, as is the quality of leadership and management. The school provides good value for money. Its large Sixth Form is cost-effective. The school's strengths considerably outweigh its weaknesses.

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

- Very good teaching and a rich curriculum ensure that the vast majority of the pupils achieve particularly well in the Sixth Form.
- Very good teaching, together with very good leadership and management, result in high standards in English in all years and in the GNVQ courses in the Sixth Form.
- The quality of relationships in the school underpins a strong sense of community.
- The quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that most make very good progress by the end of Year 11.
- The strong provision for the moral development of the pupils makes a major contribution to their personal growth.
- Successful pastoral care results in very effective support and guidance for the pupils as they progress through the school.
- The school's very good relationships with partner institutions ensure that the pupils are well prepared when they arrive and for the next steps in their education.

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

- The provision for and the standards achieved by the pupils in information and communications technology (ICT).
- Standards in science at GCSE, particularly of pupils of average to slightly above average ability and prior attainment.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. It has made sound improvement since then. It has maintained the well above average performance in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, further improving performance in English. The very good achievement in English in Years 10 to 13 and in the GNVQ courses has been maintained, as have the overall well above average results in the Sixth Form. The trend in the GCSE results has, however, been static, held back by the recent decline in the science results. The overall quality of the teaching has improved. The school's response to the issues identified in the last report has been satisfactory. Very good improvement has been made in respect of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Less progress has been made in respect of ICT. Although there has been improvement in the provision of resources for ICT, the levels of attainment of the pupils are not as high as they should be.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	B
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

**Key**

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

The school's results at GCSE are well above average, to a large extent but by no means solely, because of the school's success with its lower attainers. In 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more passes at A\*-C (at 54 per cent) dipped to above average compared to all schools and to below average compared to schools with similar intakes. This is explained mainly by the weaker performance in science. In the 2000 examinations, the proportion achieving the higher grades rose to 59 per cent, though again a significant number of pupils performed less well in science than in their other subjects. The subjects in which the pupils did best in 1999 were English language and literature, mathematics, French, geography and history. In 2000 there were significant improvements in art, physical education, music and religious education. Results in Spanish were poor, largely due to staffing difficulties in the previous two years. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for further improvement at GCSE.

The school achieves well above average results at A-level and in the GNVQ assessments. The subjects in which the pupils perform best include English literature, art, sports studies, biology, politics and psychology, and in GNVQ business and health and social care. In physics the results have been below average. Overall in the Sixth Form, the pupils' achievements are very good, the result of high expectations and very good teaching.

At the age of 14 the pupils' performance in the national tests in English, mathematics and science is well above average. This is so when compared to the results obtained in all



schools nationally and in schools with similar intakes. The trend has been in line with the national trend in mathematics and science, and above in English. The pupils' achievement is very good in English and good in mathematics. From the evidence of the inspection it is satisfactory in science because of the relative weakness in the pupils' investigative skills, which are not assessed in the tests.

In the other subjects the pupils make good progress in history and in design and technology at both key stages. In ICT most pupils do not do as well as they should. This is largely due to expectations of their performance, which are not high enough, and to the patchy provision at Key Stage 4.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Many are enthusiastic about their work. They concentrate well, respond positively to their teachers' questions and are keen to express their own opinions. A small minority are less enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The vast majority behave very well in lessons and around the school. A small number misbehave in some lessons. Movement at the Iford site, while generally satisfactory, is not always as orderly as at the Southbourne site.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. The pupils value the strong sense of community in the school. They support one another in lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the average. Punctuality is very good.

Most sixth formers have a very mature attitude to their work. In Year 8, however, the immature behaviour of a small number distracts others in a minority of lessons. In all years, the pupils raise considerable sums of money for charity and participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They enjoy taking responsibility and initiative and would benefit from having even more opportunities to do so.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very good

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

The good quality of the teaching overall ensures that the vast majority make good progress in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. In most lessons their interest is engaged and they work at a good pace. Very good teaching is the key factor in the very good performance of the pupils in English, in the GNVQ courses and generally in the Sixth Form. The teaching is good throughout in mathematics, design and technology, music, physical education and in art. Most of the teaching seen in science was good. However, weaknesses over time in the teaching of science include insufficient opportunities for investigative work and expectations

of pupils of average to slightly above average ability, which need to be higher. In ICT, not enough of the teaching is aimed at improving the pupils' skills.

During the inspection 98 per cent of all lessons seen were judged to be at least satisfactory; 68 per cent to be good or better; and 27 per cent to be very good or better. Three per cent of lessons were judged to be excellent. The teaching is strongest in the Sixth Form in which over 80 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better. Although satisfactory, the teaching is weaker in Year 8, in which a much smaller proportion of lessons were judged to be good or better. Key factors in the best teaching are strong subject knowledge and expertise, enthusiasm, effective planning, high expectations and very good relationships. In the small number of less than satisfactory lessons the teachers' objectives were not clear or there were difficulties in managing the pupils' behaviour.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, as is the teaching of literacy. The teaching of numeracy is sound; more attention needs to be given here to the needs of the least competent.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Very good in the Sixth Form. Planning is good in almost all subjects. The main weaknesses are in the provision for ICT and the lack of sufficient time for art and music at Key Stage 3.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Very good in Years 10 and 11 where many make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small number of pupils are well supported and have made good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for spiritual and social development. Cultural development is sound. Moral development is very good, a key strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support and guidance is very good. Monitoring of the pupils' academic and personal development is good.

The school works well with parents. The quality of information for parents is generally very good. However, the reports, though broadly satisfactory, are at times confusing in the range of different ways in which subjects report on the pupils' progress. A particular strength in the curriculum is the breadth and depth of coverage in both English and the GNVQ courses. The relative lack of time in art and music restricts the breadth and depth possible. The school does not meet the National Curriculum requirements for ICT because of the patchy provision at Key Stage 4. The heads of year and the deputy heads with responsibility on each site provide very good support for pupils. The school has very good links with schools abroad.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very clear direction for the work of the school. The school's aims and values are very well defined. Management has a positive impact on the quality of the teaching and on the good achievement of the vast majority of the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a clear view of their role and good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have been influential in defining the school's strategic direction and in ensuring good financial management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. Some appropriate procedures are now in place. However, the data used is largely based on previous performance at the school. There is a need to make more consistent use of available national data.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Management of available resources is generally efficient.

Staffing is good. The match of qualifications and expertise to the subjects taught is very good. Overall accommodation is adequate. However, the accommodation for music is not satisfactory on either site. The quality and quantity of resources are good in most subjects. They are very good in English and physical education; they are insufficient, however, for music. The principles of 'best value' are well understood and used effectively in identifying priorities and in ensuring value for money in purchases.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The progress made by their children.</li> <li>• The quality of the teaching.</li> <li>• Being able to contact the school with queries and any problems.</li> <li>• The expectation that their children will work hard.</li> <li>• The quality of leadership and management.</li> <li>• The personal development of their children and the positive attitudes encouraged.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in the setting of homework.</li> <li>• Management of the pupils' behaviour in some middle and lower ability groups.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views. Overall, they judge that homework makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' progress at Key Stage 3 and a good contribution thereafter. However, it is not always set when scheduled and the timing of coursework deadlines in Years 10 and 11 can cause difficulties and stress for pupils. Inspectors agree that in a small number of classes some teachers are experiencing difficulty in managing the behaviour of some pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The pupils' attainment when they arrive in the school at the start of Year 7 is above average. In the national tests at the age of 11, their performance is above average in both mathematics and science; in English it is well above average.

2. At the age of 14 (at the end of Year 9), the performance of the pupils is well above average in the national tests in English, mathematics and science. This has been the pattern over the last three years. The results are well above average in comparison to all schools nationally and to schools with similar intakes. In English, the results in 1999 were very high compared to similar schools. In 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades in English increased further. The trend in the three subjects has been in line with the national trend in mathematics and science, and above the national trend in English. Overall, the school has maintained the good performance in mathematics and science and improved performance in English. The pupils' achievement, including their progress over the three years, is very good in English and good in mathematics. In science it is satisfactory overall because standards are below average in investigative work, which is not assessed in the tests. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in mathematics and science. Girls perform better in English, though the gap is narrower than the national gap. Very good leadership and very good teaching are at the heart of the very good performance in English.

3. The 1999 GCSE results were not as good as in previous years. The results were well above average in respect of the pupils' average points scores. This was largely because of the school's success with its lower attainers, including many who have special educational needs. In respect of the proportion of pupils attaining five or more passes at A\*-C (54%), however, the results were above average in comparison to all schools but below average when compared to schools with similar intakes. The difference is explained largely by weaker performance in science. In science, a significant number of pupils of average to slightly above average ability failed to achieve C grades and did less well than in their other subjects. In the 2000 examinations, for which there are as yet no national comparisons, the headline figure for 5+ A\*-C grades improved to 59 per cent. In the six years up to and including 1999, the trend in the school's GCSE results was below the national trend. The improved 2000 results are likely to bring the trend back in line. The results of both boys and girls are well above the averages for boys and girls nationally. Although girls do better, the gap is narrower than the national gap.

4. In the 1999 examinations, the subjects in which the pupils did best, i.e. in comparison to their results in their other subjects, included English language and literature, mathematics, French, geography and history. They did less well in art, science, physical education, religious education and Spanish. In 2000, there were significant improvements in English literature, art, physical education, music and religious education. Results in Spanish were poor, affected by staffing difficulties over the two years of the course. During the inspection, clear improvements were seen in the quality of the teaching of Spanish at Key Stage 4. Results in science improved slightly in 2000, though again a significant number of pupils did not do as well as in their other subjects.

5. The school's targets for future performance in GCSE, for a 65-67 per cent rate of success at 5+ A\*-C grades in the next two years, represent appropriately challenging goals for further improvement.

6. In the 1999 A-level examinations, the school's results were well above average. In the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ), the results in 1999 were very high compared to the national average. In 2000 the results at A-level were very similar to those gained in 1999. While still well above average they were not quite so high in GNVQ. The subjects which did best in the most recent examinations include English literature, art, sports studies, biology, politics and psychology. Good results are also achieved in mathematics, design and technology, French, Spanish, economics, music, chemistry and history. In physics the results have been below average. Overall, the pupils' achievements in the Sixth Form are very good, the result of high expectations and very good teaching in almost all subjects.

7. In English, standards are well above average and the pupils' achievement is very good in all key aspects of the subject in all years. In speaking the pupils respond confidently and with enthusiasm to their teachers' questions. By Key Stage 4, and then into the Sixth Form, many are able to present their ideas convincingly in more formal presentations. Many read widely at both Key Stages 3 and 4. In the Sixth Form most have developed a very good ability to analyse and interpret an increasingly demanding range of texts. From Year 7 most are able to improve their writing through drafting, revision and proof-reading. By Key Stage 4, many produce an increasingly impressive range of good quality writing in their coursework for GCSE. Some of the literary critical essays written by sixth formers are of high quality.

8. In mathematics, standards are above average overall and the pupils' achievement is good at each key stage and in the Sixth Form. In Key Stage 3, most achieve good levels in numeracy. By the end of the Key Stage the vast majority have made good progress in their work in shape, space, measurement and in data handling. Through Key Stage 4 they improve their numeracy further and can use their mathematical knowledge and skills effectively in, for example, geography, science and in design and technology. Some of the lower attainers, however, have poor recall of multiplication tables and weak mental strategies when calculating. This inevitably limits their achievement in mathematics.

9. In science, standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 3, average at the end of Key Stage 4 and above average in the Sixth Form. The pupils' achievement is sound at Key Stage 3, less than satisfactory at Key Stage 4 and good in the Sixth Form. By the end of Year 9, most of the pupils have a very good knowledge of scientific facts. The higher attainers have good understanding of key concepts. Through Key Stage 4, they add to their knowledge and understanding, though for pupils of average to slightly above average ability this is at a slower rate than for the other pupils. A significant number do not do as well as they should. There is a clear need for the teachers to raise their expectations of these pupils. Through both key stages the teachers provide too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills in scientific investigation.

10. In the other subjects at Key Stage 3, the pupils' achievement, including the gains they make in lessons and their progress over time, are good in geography, history and in design and technology, largely because of good leadership and teaching in these subjects. They are satisfactory in art, modern languages, music and physical education. Most pupils, however, do not do as well as they should in information and communications technology. Although they experience all the key strands of the National Curriculum for ICT, low expectations of what they could achieve have held back significant improvement in their skills.

11. At Key Stage 4, many pupils improve rapidly in art as a result of good to very good teaching. The pupils' achievement is also good in design and technology, history, music and in the physical education GCSE course. It is satisfactory in all other subjects with the one exception of ICT. Here, provision is patchy and, apart from the minority who study the subject to GCSE, most have insufficient opportunities to develop their skills to a satisfactory

level.

12. In the Sixth Form, the pupils' achievements are very good in English literature, art, sports studies, history, biology and in the GNVQ courses. They are good in almost all other subjects, including both politics and psychology.

13. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good. They make particularly good progress at Key Stage 4. Many achieve five or more passes at GCSE, some at C grade. In the 2000 examinations, all achieved at least one GCSE grade. Progress, though satisfactory, is not so good in Years 7 and 8. Though most progress well in reading and writing, some mark time in numeracy. For example, in one class, the pupils were perfectly able to read their worksheet but could not complete the simple calculations it contained. The school has a small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. All are making, or have made, good progress. Particularly talented pupils do well in music and sport, performing in county and regional orchestras or in county, regional and national teams and events, for example in rugby, netball and athletics.

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

14. Overall, the pupils' attitudes to school are good. Sixth Formers have a particularly mature approach to their work and this has a very positive impact on their learning. They show a genuine interest in their studies and persevere with their tasks. This was seen, for example, in a business studies lesson when some Year 13 pupils would not give up on grasping a difficult concept. The pupils in Years 7 to 11 are generally enthusiastic about their work. They listen attentively to their teachers and concentrate well. The pupils often respond well to the teacher's questions and are keen to express their opinions. For example in an English lesson, Year 9 pupils were very enthusiastic about the novel 'Stone Cold' and became very involved in the narrative. The attitudes of pupils with special educational needs are very positive, particularly at Key Stage 4. They respond well to what is expected of them and are willing to take responsibility. For example, pupils in a Year 10 class were able to find information in the library with no need for supervision. Many examples were seen of pupils supporting one another in lessons that they clearly found challenging.

15. The behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around the school is generally good. The vast majority behave very well. They understand that the teachers have high expectations of good behaviour and respond well to the system of rewards and sanctions. The behaviour of pupils at the Iford site is generally satisfactory, but not as good as at the Southbourne site. As the Year 7 and 8 pupils move around the school some do not always behave in an orderly way. In a small number of lessons, more so in Year 8 than in other years, the behaviour of a few distracts others and slows the pace of the lessons. Temporary exclusions last year were mainly for unacceptable behaviour. The rate of fixed-term exclusions was in line with that found at similar schools; there were no permanent exclusions. Bullying is not a problem at the school. However, Year 7 pupils expressed some concern at the attitudes of a small number of Year 8 pupils to them.

16. The pupils' personal development is good. Relationships are very good, a clear strength of the school. The pupils value the sense of community. Boys and girls work well together in groups and the vast majority show respect for each other and for adults working in the school. Pupils support each other in lessons. This was seen, for example, in a Year 7 physical education lesson when one pupil sensitively supported a pupil with a hearing impairment by giving added explanations and helping him complete some of the tasks. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility within the tutor group. During a Year 8 tutor period, for example, the pupil elected as 'secretary' used her initiative and quietly and efficiently gave out paperwork before the tutor arrived. The pupils raise considerable sums of money for charity

and take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm. Sixth Form pupils value the range of opportunities to organise fundraising and social events and benefit from the sports leadership scheme.

17. The pupils have maintained good attendance records over the past four years. The attendance rate of 93.3 per cent for 1998/9 was above the national average and all year groups have an attendance rate of above 92 per cent. Truancy from school or individual lessons is rare. Some sporadic unauthorised holidays and poor attendance amongst a few pupils account for a large proportion of the unauthorised absences. Very few pupils are late for school and the school day begins promptly. The pupils' good attendance rate and punctuality have a positive impact on their attainment and progress.

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

18. The teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and very good in the Sixth Form. During the inspection, 97 per cent of all lessons seen were judged to be at least satisfactory, 68 per cent to be good or better and 27 per cent to be very good or better. Three per cent of all lessons seen were judged to be excellent. At Key Stage 3, 98 per cent of the teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory, 58 per cent to be good or better and 22 per cent to be very good or better. Whilst the overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is good there is a marked difference between Years 7 and 9 on the one hand and Year 8 on the other. In Year 8 a small but significant number of lessons lack the clarity of objective and high expectation of the majority. At Key Stage 4, 96 per cent of the teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory, 67 per cent to be good or better and 29 per cent to be very good or better. In the Sixth Form 99 per cent of the teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory, 84 per cent to be good or better and 33 per cent to be very good or better. Overall, the quality of the teaching is a key factor in the above average standards and in the good achievement of the majority of the pupils.

19. The teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. The teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subject they teach, effective planning, high expectations, effective methods and good use of their time and available resources ensure that the pupils' acquisition of knowledge and understanding is good and in the Sixth Form often very good. Pupils work at a good pace in the vast majority of lessons, sustaining concentration well and showing a high level of interest in their work. The pupils' learning is good at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and very good in the Sixth Form. In a small minority of the lessons seen, mainly but not exclusively in Year 8, weaknesses in the management of the pupils meant that their interest was not fully engaged and that they made relatively less progress in the lesson. A lack of expertise on the part of some teachers in ICT holds back the pupils' learning in this subject.

20. A number of parents expressed some concern about the amount of homework set. The inspectors found that the teachers set appropriate homework tasks to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning. On occasions, homework is not set when it is scheduled to be. At Key Stage 4 coursework deadlines can cause the load to be heavy. Nevertheless, the judgement of the inspectors is that homework makes a sound contribution to the pupils' overall progress in Key Stage 3 and a good contribution in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form. The teachers' ongoing assessment of the pupils' learning in lessons and the quality of their marking are, however, inconsistent. The best and most consistent practice is seen in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form, where pupils are often clear as to the level at which they are working and their expected examination grade. In the best practice, the teachers' comments and feedback, particularly in the Sixth Form, are evaluative and set clear direction for improvement. At Key Stage 3 pupils, particularly in Years 7 and 8, are insufficiently aware of their achievements in relation to the National Curriculum levels and marking often lacks clear

targets for improvement

21. The subjects in which the teaching is very good are English and in the GNVQ courses. The extent of good teaching seen in this inspection points to improvement in the overall quality since the last inspection. The two areas of weakness in the teaching are in ICT and the lack of sufficient attention to investigative work in science. The teaching is very good in English and in the GNVQ courses. It is good in mathematics, design and technology, music, history, art and in physical education. In science the overall quality of the teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form; it is sound at Key Stage 4 as a result of a relative lack of challenge for the average pupils and insufficient preparation for investigative work. Good teaching was seen in all subjects in the Sixth Form, including in the A-level courses in politics and psychology. In ICT at Key Stages 3 and 4, though the teaching ranges from outstanding, in one lesson, to unsatisfactory, it is overall unsatisfactory. Too often when ICT is taught within the context of another subject the teachers give insufficient attention to the demands of the requirements of the ICT curriculum. As a result, the tasks often lack challenge and insufficiently promote the pupils' progress in ICT skills over time.

22. In the best teaching [i.e. in approximately one lesson in four], the key characteristics are:

- very good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject which communicates itself to the pupils and increases their motivation;
- thorough planning that builds on the pupils' previous learning and ensures that their knowledge, skills and understanding are extended;
- skilful questioning and intervention with individuals and groups that challenges and extends the pupils' understanding and confidence;
- high expectations of all pupils, with good support of those with special educational needs and English as a second language;
- very good relationships, good management of the pupils and lessons conducted at a brisk pace, all of which ensure that the pupils want to do well and that they concentrate well.

23. For example, in a Year 12 business education lesson, the teacher's choice of interesting resources and the very effective use of support materials focused the pupils' attention and learning. Very good quality discussion and questioning in small groups led to a very good understanding of market research techniques. In a Year 7 personal and social education lesson on individual differences, the teacher's high expectations, organisation and encouragement of all pupils, whatever their ability, ensured good respect for each other's views. Effective quiet reflection contributed to the pupils' understanding of themselves and the uniqueness of the individual, promoting positive spiritual development. Exceptionally, a Year 9 lesson in which ICT was used in English to investigate website design was outstanding. Very effective use of the computer and software resources achieved a high level of motivation. Challenging questioning and the pupils' interactive composing of their own web designs promoted both the acquisition of skills and individual creativity. In a Year 10 physical education lesson the teacher's outstanding management and organisation, together with skilful questioning and evaluation of performance, encouraged pupils to make considerable gains in their performance.

24. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons seen, the main characteristics were a lack of clarity in the objectives for learning and weaknesses in the management of the pupils. For example, in a Year 7 art lesson insufficient time was given to the relationship of techniques of other artists' to the skills required for the composition task. As a result pupils were not challenged in their learning and progress was restricted. In a Year 10 business education lesson the teacher gave too little attention to reinforcing the learning from the



previous lesson, the pupils were not kept on task and overall learning gains were low. A Year 7 ICT lesson was insufficiently planned in relation to the ICT curriculum; as a result the pupils' task was undemanding and the teacher spent too much time in direction to allow effective learning to occur. In a minority of otherwise satisfactory lessons, in Year 8, the effects of boisterous behaviour, particularly following morning break, and the lack of consistent routines to prepare pupils for the next session slow the pace of learning.

25. The pupils with special educational needs are taught well in most subjects, and particularly well in English. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy is good. This results in good learning. Together with the effective use of learning support assistants, this represents a significant improvement from the last inspection. In the best lessons, the work is well matched to the pupils' needs, the teacher maintains a brisk pace and talk is used effectively to stimulate the pupils' learning. Good use is made of the clear individual education plans and the supplementary advice provided by the special needs staff. Relationships between the teachers and pupils are good, and effective dialogue and questioning help the pupils to understand their tasks, as in a Year 11 English lesson. When ICT is used, as in design and technology, this is effective in providing these pupils with alternative ways of recording their work and maintaining their interest. Praise and encouragement are consistently used and this is effective in raising the pupils' self-esteem and creating an attitude of 'can-do' in their learning. The teaching of numeracy skills is sound. However, the teaching of some pupils with special educational needs in the lower mathematics sets gives insufficient attention to their prior attainment, particularly in developing and securing knowledge of multiplication tables. The classroom assistants usually provide good support in lessons, enabling the pupils with special educational needs to take a full role in the lesson and to make good progress. Liaison and planning with teachers is good and much improved since the last inspection. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, though small in number, are well supported and make good progress over time. One pupil was particular in his praise for the teaching support he had received since joining the school.

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

26. The school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities for its pupils, based on its overall goal of entitlement for every pupil. Reflecting this, the school's arrangements for equal access to the curriculum are, generally, one of the strengths of its curriculum, really only limited by some issues of gender in physical education. The school also provides ten per cent of its curriculum time for religious education, in keeping with its Christian character, but this does put pressure on the curriculum time available. Other strengths include the range and quality of Sixth Form provision, the range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in the arts and physical education, and the breadth of curriculum available to all pupils, including those with special needs. Pupils with special needs have very good access to the full curriculum and are expected to produce an equally full range of work. A group of seven to ten pupils is withdrawn at Key Stage 4 from one GCSE option to support their achievement, with considerable success.

27. While breadth is a strength, there are some weaknesses in the balance of the curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4. The school was criticised at the time of the last inspection for its arrangements for art, music and drama at Key Stage 3. While time has been increased and better arrangements for progress in learning put in place, the provision for these subjects at Key Stage 3 remains limited to one period a week, restricting the development of performance skills and the breadth and depth of work possible. The school curriculum meets statutory requirements in all respects except one, which is the provision of ICT at Key Stage 4. Only 12 per cent of the pupils follow a course designed to improve their

ICT skills. For the vast majority, their experience is provided within subjects. The provision at this key stage is, however, too patchy to provide a coherent experience for all.

28. In a broad and relevant curriculum at Key Stage 3, equality of access is generally good except for some choices in Year 9 in physical education. Here girls cannot take football or rugby, or boys gymnastics. The banding and setting arrangements used in Years 7 and 8 on the whole succeed in meeting the different needs and aptitudes of pupils. These are replaced in Year 9 by a simpler and more effective system in which pupils are set according to their capabilities in different subjects. Care is taken to ensure pupils are in the right set. Lessons in personal and social education (PSE) at this key stage make a significant contribution to the pupils' awareness of themselves and of moral issues. Appropriate attention is paid to health education including drugs misuse and, shared with science, to sex education. All aspects of the ICT requirements are taught at this key stage. However, most pupils are using the same skills over again, without developing or extending them further.

29. Improvements have recently been made at Key Stage 4 to enhance the match of the curriculum to different needs and aptitudes, through the provision of additional choices in one option block, which allows for increased specialisation, and through the successful provision of a special needs support group. The possibilities offered have not all been taken up, however, as the numbers opting for a second foreign language remain low. Some 30 pupils study Latin as an after-school activity. A sound programme for work-related education and careers advice runs from Year 7 to Year 13. Arrangements are now more effective than previously reported and the school works hard to ensure that guidance is provided for disaffected pupils at Key Stage 4 and for those who drop out at Sixth Form level. At Key Stage 4, PSE is taught within the religious education programme (religious education is evaluated in the separate Section 23 inspection report).

30. The Sixth Form curriculum, already of very good quality in its range and breadth of choice, has been further enhanced in Year 12 by high quality provision for GNVQ and core skills. This allows the school to provide for its full ability range and the recruitment for the Sixth Form reflects this. The school is successfully introducing a curriculum well matched to the new requirements into Year 12, based on the large numbers the school attracts from its own, and other schools', pupils.

31. The school's partnership with the community is good. These links have a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and personal development. Good quality foreign exchanges, the links with schools in Italy and Germany and the Year 7 trip to Normandy enrich the pupils' social and cultural development. The school encourages pupils to think of others. Pupils raise money for charities and have developed close links with a de la Salle Order's work amongst the poor in India. The links with the local pyramid of Roman Catholic schools are very good. Staff meet together regularly for discussion and training. Sixth Formers work with primary pupils. The arrangements for the induction and transfer of the Year 6 pupils from the feeder primaries are very good and are particularly valued by the parents.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

32. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Although the school has no overall policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and schemes of work in subjects do not explicitly refer to these aspects, the school provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and develop social skills. The school's mission statement of "educating the whole person socially, spiritually, and morally" is successful in practice, particularly in terms of moral development.

33. Provision for spiritual development is good. For example, in music and design and

technology there are good opportunities for personal reflection. In geography pupils reflect on the importance of the environment and field visits are well used to develop pupils' creative responses. In English the skilful use of texts enables the pupils to reflect carefully on their own feelings and those of others. Acts of worship are well planned and led, rooted in the Christian ethos of the school, and make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school chaplaincy team plays a significant and valued role in the spiritual life of the school.

34. The school's provision for moral development is very good. In physical education pupils demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong and the importance of fair play. In history, pupils consider moral issues related, for example, to the slave trade and dictatorship. The school's personal, social and religious education programme (PSRE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral awareness. Year 9 work in drama highlights important moral issues of prejudice and homelessness. In an observed lesson in Year 9 pupils were able to consider ethical issues related to families and land ownership.

35. The provision for social development is good, particularly in the overall quality of relationships between staff and pupils. In English, physical education and the school's personal, social and religious education programme, effective use is made of paired and group work. The school is very involved in supporting a range of charitable activities, particularly in the developing world. The pupils themselves often initiate this support. Pupils with special educational needs are very supportive of one another and are encouraged in this by their teachers who effectively demonstrate mutual care and respect. However, the opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility beyond the classroom are limited.

36. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. In art pupils explore artwork from a range of cultures and in design and technology the pupils study food from differing cultures. The school's Christian ethos is strongly committed to helping pupils' understanding of issues in the developing world. This is reflected in the powerful images of Christian art found in both chapels. In subjects, however, the range of texts used to promote awareness of differing cultures is limited.

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

37. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. It embraces the ethos of the school's mission statement and provides very good support and guidance for the pupils. In discussion with inspectors, many pupils said the best thing about the school is the feeling of community and the way in which they can turn to members of staff for help. The mentoring programme for Year 11 pupils works well and helps many to achieve their potential in examinations. The support for disaffected pupils is good. The chaplain adds a valuable dimension to pastoral care, for example through the work with pupils who have suffered bereavement. Most tutors know their pupils well, but difficulties in timetabling teachers at the two sites sometimes results in tutors only seeing their tutor group once a week.

38. The school has good procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The two designated members of staff (one each site) carry out their duties effectively and most adults working in the school have received basic awareness training. The school has drawn up a brief draft policy which, however, does not fully address issues such as raising pupils' awareness and links with outside agencies.

39. The arrangements for first aid are generally good. Three members of staff are qualified in first aid. The arrangements at the Iford site are very good. A well-qualified welfare assistant and well-equipped medical room enable the school to provide a high quality of care

to pupils. At Southbourne, the medical room is situated some way from the office on a busy corridor. The door is left open, as the pupils cannot always be supervised. This means that there is at times a lack of privacy.

40. The school pays high regard to health and safety, particularly in the design and technology department. All the issues raised in the previous report have been addressed. A number of minor concerns were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection, including the fact that soap is not freely available to pupils on the Iford site. The health and safety policy is generally satisfactory, but is vague about frequency of inspections and lacks details of procedures. The policy is currently being reviewed.

41. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Two members of the administration staff have responsibility for electronic registration and they closely monitor pupils' absences. They provide good quality information, which is followed up by tutors and heads of year. The school aims to reduce unauthorised absence still further by the recent appointment of an 'in-house' educational welfare officer.

42. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The school has drawn up a good behaviour policy and codes of conduct. In line with the school's mission statement, they promote mutual respect and good behaviour. Clear systems of rewards and sanctions are in place and pupils value the system of comments and certificates. Movement around the Iford site is not as well managed as that at Southbourne. Orderly routines at the change of lessons are not always well established and some pupils are at times boisterous at lesson changeover times. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. The brief anti-bullying policy does not give details of how staff should deal with anti-social behaviour. However, parents and pupils say that reported incidents are dealt with effectively.

43. Procedures for assessing the pupils' progress and for using the results of assessment in planning future work are satisfactory. The best practice is in English and in the GNVQ courses. Here, the pupils' progress is tracked closely against National Curriculum and external assessment criteria and used well in planning work for both whole classes and individual pupils. Procedures are good in physical education and in design and technology and are sound in almost all other subjects. The one exception is in ICT where there is no systematic procedure, except in Year 7, to assess the pupils' levels of attainment in relation to National Curriculum levels. The progress checks that take place every ten weeks are a strength in the whole-school procedures. These are effective in the early detection of pupils who are not achieving as well as they should be.

44. Assessment of special educational needs is good. Detailed assessments are made using data from the national end of Year 6 and 9 tests, from national cognitive ability tests and from reading and spelling tests. These provide clear measures of progress towards the targets of individual pupils. The records kept of their progress are much improved since the last inspection. There are now examples of good practice, such as the detailed logs kept by the learning assistants.

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

45. The parents' and carers' views of the school are very positive. They have all chosen to send their children to St Peter's and feel that the transfer from primary school and the induction arrangements are very good. They value the Catholic and Christian ethos of the school and are impressed with the support and advice given by the staff. Parents feel that the teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard. A few parents have concerns about behaviour and others are not happy about the format of pupils' annual reports.

46. The school has effective links with its parents and carers. The vast majority of parents feel that staff are approachable. The homework diaries are often used as a useful means of communication between home and school.

47. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. The Parent Teacher Association acts as a sounding board, for example when the school drew up the home/school agreement. Parent governors make significant contributions to the life of the school.

48. The school provides good quality information to the parents and this helps them to take an active part in their children's education. Very good curriculum guides are sent to parents giving helpful information on the topics that their children will be studying during the year. In addition, the school invites parents to useful information evenings on topics such as aspects of health education, managing finance in higher education and helping your child to succeed in examinations. The newsletters are informative and celebrate the school's successes. Overall, the pupils' reports are of a satisfactory quality, but the differing methods of reporting on attainment are confusing for parents. This is especially so for reports for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 10. The school sends parents useful interim reports on their children's attainment and effort. The school invites parents to an annual parent/teacher consultation and some additional meetings with tutors for some year groups. These meetings provide valuable opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress. The school contacts all parents who are unable to attend these meetings.

49. The parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. Attendance at parents' meetings and information sessions is above 90 per cent. The vast majority of parents are very willing to support the work of the school in overcoming academic and personal problems. The parents view their children's homework diaries and all have signed the home/school agreement.

50. The school now involves parents much more effectively than it did previously in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Parents' comments are invited and recorded during the regular reviews of progress. Where behaviour is the issue, close working between the teacher responsible and the parents helps to keep the pupil in school and in lessons.

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

51. The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is good. It has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on the good achievement of the vast majority of the pupils.

52. The headteacher, the deputies and other members of the senior management team provide good leadership. They are a cohesive and complementary team. A major strength is the clearly defined educational direction for the school. This is enshrined in the school's

mission statement which highlights the school's Christian ethos, its ideal of community and the importance of each individual in the school community, and its commitment enabling all to achieve their potential. In reality, all of these are positive features in the life of the school.

53. Senior managers have a good awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the work of the school. In the course of the last year they have begun to put into operation more formal procedures for the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work. Senior managers have observed the teaching of heads of faculty who in turn have observed teachers in their faculties. Senior managers have also scrutinised the work of pupils in all years. These developments are entirely appropriate though in terms of their impact on teaching and learning they are still at an early stage. In subjects, good practice in monitoring exists in English, GNVQ, and in design and technology. The close links that senior managers have with individual subjects enable them to keep 'their finger on the pulse'. Over time there has been sensitive and effective intervention when the performance of a teacher or subject manager has given cause for concern. Further strengths in the work of the senior management team include financial management and the quality of the management of care and guidance for the pupils through the pastoral system. Very good guidance is provided for staff on aims and procedures and there has been some monitoring of tutor sessions.

54. Planning for future development is good. A thorough process involves staff and governors fully. The plan is manageable and the key whole-school priorities are appropriate. These include raising the pupils' performance further; ensuring that the Arts College commitments are met; improving provision for ICT; establishing the new courses in the Sixth Form; and ensuring that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, benefit fully. A weakness in the plan, however, is that the hoped for outcomes are not clearly defined, so that they can be relatively easily measured. A further weakness in the plan itself is that the costs are not always clearly identified. However, key costs, such as that of improving ICT, have been fully taken into account in setting the budget. Subject plans are of mixed quality. At best, for example in English, they show clearly how the subject will contribute to the whole-school priorities and also define appropriate subject priorities. Other plans, such as in modern languages, focus mainly on resource needs.

55. Since the last inspection, senior and other managers have put into place a number of appropriate improvements in procedures for monitoring the pupils' progress and evaluating the gains they make. For example, Key Stage 2 and 3 results are used to set targets for English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3 national tests and for GCSE. GCSE results are used to recommend targets at A-level in all subjects. A weakness in the process, however, is that the analysis is based largely on past performance in the school and does not yet fully use data available on performance in schools nationally. As yet, the analysis of data has not in itself had a significant impact on raising expectations further. Nevertheless, good to very good teaching ensures good results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3, in almost all subjects in the Sixth Form and in many at GCSE. The potential remains, however, for the use of data to make a greater impact in other subjects at Key Stage 3 and in those subjects not performing as well at GCSE.

56. Senior managers have been instrumental in ensuring that issues identified at the time of the last inspection have, overall, been satisfactorily addressed. Improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs (see paragraph 58 below) has been very good; provision for the arts has been reviewed and entitlement for all has been established at Key Stage 4 though it is too early to judge the impact of the Arts College status; the match of work to pupils' needs is now good in almost all subjects; appropriate steps have been taken to improve the performance of boys; and improvement in the provision of careers education and guidance has been satisfactory, as has the use of data in evaluating the pupils' progress. The one area where much remains to be done, particularly in relation to the pupils'

attainment, is in ICT.

57. Within subjects, the quality of leadership and management is very good in English, GNVQ, design and technology and in physical education. Key features here include: very clear direction; rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation; good use of data in target setting; very good relationships and team work; good quality resources; and effective planning. Leadership and management are good in history and geography and in art. In modern languages, business studies, science and mathematics leadership and management are sound. Key factors here are: monitoring and analysis of data that are still embryonic and have yet to have much impact; and action to improve teaching which is not clearly focused. The one area of clear weakness in subject management is in ICT. Here, the school's procedures are not sufficiently robust to ensure adequate provision in Key Stage 4 or to ensure progression in the pupils' skills at Key Stage 3.

58. The special needs co-ordinator, well supported by senior managers, provides very effective leadership for this aspect of the school's work. The improvements since the last inspection, when the school was criticised for not fully meeting the requirements of the national Code of Practice, have been considerable. The provision of both teacher and assistant support has risen dramatically and is very well managed. The school now fully meets, and in some respects exceeds, the requirements for good practice. However, not all developments have been as systematically monitored as they could be. For example, a more systematic review of what the teachers have done with the excellent supplementary formation and advice provided to them would be beneficial.

59. The governors have a good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have a very clear view of their role. They have been influential in defining the school's strategic direction, for example in successfully acquiring Arts College status. They have provided effective scrutiny of the examination results achieved. They have also ensured good financial management and good planning for improvements in the school's accommodation. With the one exception of the provision for ICT at Key Stage 4 they have ensured that all statutory requirements are met. A particular strength is the extent of the governors' involvement in training for their ever-developing role and the quality of their documentation of procedures.

60. The school makes good use of its financial resources. Prudent financial planning supports educational priorities. The budget is effectively prepared, involving the close co-operation of the governors and senior managers. Spending is carefully matched to the school development plan priorities, as, for example, in the improvements in the equipment provision for ICT. Spending plans for 2000-01 appropriately aim to reduce the overall surplus to below five per cent. Good procedures, as with the recent subject bidding for additional funded curriculum projects, ensure a whole-school focus. Specific grants are well used for their designated purposes. For example, the funds available for special educational needs have been wisely spent in securing significant improvement since the last inspection. Financial systems are secure and overall control is very good. The most recent auditor's report is complimentary of the school's systems and the school has promptly acted upon the recommendations of the report. New technology is effectively used to support management and administration. The efficiency gains of its impact are most notable in the school's financial administration. The principles of best value are understood and effectively used to identify priorities and ensure value for money in purchases. They are not consistently applied, however, to the rigorous measuring of the impact of decisions and actions on the achievement of pupils and the overall improvement of the school.

61. Staffing in the school is good. There is a very good match of expertise and experience of the teachers to the needs of the curriculum. The non-teaching staff play an

effective role in supporting the teachers. They feel valued and appreciated in their various roles. The school provides appropriate training opportunities for its staff, closely linked to its development priorities, for example in ICT. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are very good. A weakness in the deployment of staff is the relatively small amount of teaching by heads of subject at the Iford site.

62. Overall, the schools' accommodation is adequate. There is one important exception to this. For music, the accommodation is not adequate at either site. There is insufficient space for group work and noise from adjacent drama classrooms disturbs lessons. This has an adverse effect on the quality of the pupils' learning. At Southbourne the need to move instruments between the music room and the theatre is increasing wear and tear. The school plans to relocate the accommodation for music in two years time. In the meantime, the current provision is having a negative impact on the pupils' experience.

63. The quality and quantity of resources for learning are good in most subjects. This has a positive effect on teaching and learning. Resources are very good in English and in physical education. The school is effectively maintaining two libraries, both of which are well used. In music there are insufficient resources at either site. For example, the small number of computers available severely restricts the opportunities for the pupils to create, manipulate and refine sounds; facilities to plug in keyboards are very limited at Iford; and at Key Stage 3, the pupils have to share textbooks. Again, this has a negative impact on the quality of the pupils' learning. Plans to improve provision are appropriate but require urgent implementation.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to improve further the quality of the education provided, senior managers and governors should:

(1) **Improve the provision for, and the standards achieved by the pupils, in ICT, by:**

- raising the teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve;
- ensuring all pupils have adequate opportunities to develop their skills at Key Stage 4;
- improving assessment;
- improving the planning for progression in the pupils' learning;
- improving further the skills of all teachers;
- improving the management of the subject.

See paragraphs 10, 11, 19, 27, 28, 57, 124, 125 and 129.

(2) **Improve standards in science at GCSE, particularly of pupils of average to slightly above average ability, by:**

- raising the teachers' expectations of these pupils;
- providing sufficient opportunities for investigative work as the pupils move through the school;
- improving assessment and the use of information from assessment;
- ensuring better co-ordination between the three sciences.

See paragraphs 3, 4, 90, 92, 93, 94 and 95.

65. Other weaknesses, which are less serious but which should be considered by governors in drawing up their action plan, are: inconsistencies in the quality of marking (paragraph 20); inconsistencies in how subjects report to parents on pupils' progress (paragraph 48); the provision of more opportunities for the pupils to exercise responsibility (paragraph 35); management of the movement of pupils at the Iford site (paragraphs 15, 24 and 42); improve the behaviour of a small number of pupils in Year 8 (paragraph 15); improve time for art and music (see paragraphs 27, 99 and 146); and improve accommodation and resources in music (paragraph 146).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	232
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	24	41	29	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	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
	Number of pupils on the school's roll	1188
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	110	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth Form
	Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	203	9

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	93.3
National comparative data	91.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	124	113	237

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	105	94	90
	Girls	101	93	88
	Total	206	187	178
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 [79]	79 [75]	75 [74]
	National	63 [65]	62 [60]	55 [56]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	51[31]	57 [55]	41[44]
	National	28 [35]	38 [36]	23 [27]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	93	93
	Girls	87	93	100
	Total	165	186	193
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 [70]	78 [80]	81[81]
	National	64 [61]	64 [64]	60 [61]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 [28]	57[55]	46 [49]
	National	31 [30]	37 [37]	28 [30]

### 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
	1999	136	95	231

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	70	129	131
	Girls	52	93	94
	Total	122	222	225
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	54 [62]	96 [97]	97 [97]
	National	47 [45]	91 [90]	96 [95]

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	45 [47]

per pupil	National	38 [37]
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of the Sixth Form**

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	150	116	266

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	20.8	21.9	21.4 [19.2]	2.3	1.5	2.1 [2.6]
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 [17.6]	2.7	2.8	2.8 [2.8]

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	28	100
	National		73

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	10
White	1570
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	72	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	99.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7– Y13**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	107

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7– Y13**

Key Stage 3	23.6
Key Stage 4	19.6

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	4,474,816
Total expenditure	4,309,347
Expenditure per pupil	2,600
Balance brought forward from previous year	155,483
Balance carried forward to next year	320,952

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1792
Number of questionnaires returned	426

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	50	4	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	42	42	1	0	15
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	46	5	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	46	8	0	21
The teaching is good.	39	47	1	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	38	8	1	16
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	36	3	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	1	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	34	49	7	1	9
The school is well led and managed.	45	43	2	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	39	3	0	12
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	43	10	1	16

### **Other issues raised by parents**

At the parents' meeting some parents felt that teachers of some middle and lower groups were experiencing difficulty in managing the pupils' behaviour.

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

### **ENGLISH**

66. The pupils' attainment on entry is well above average. They maintain this high standard through Key Stage 3, achieving results in the National Curriculum tests which are well above average. Compared to schools with similar intakes, the results were very high. Girls perform better than boys do. However, both boys' and girls' results are well above average, and the gap is narrower than the national gap. This very good performance is reflected in the lessons observed and in the scrutiny of pupils' work. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress from Year 7 to Year 9; this represents very good achievement.

67. At Key Stage 4 the 1999 GCSE results in English language and English literature were well above average, compared both to all schools nationally and to schools with similar intakes. It is particularly good that the performance of boys is above the national average in both Key Stages. In lessons observed and in the scrutiny of pupils' work attainment is consistently well above average in both subjects. As at Key Stage 3, high standards are maintained. The pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils at all levels of ability, including the school's lower attainers and those with special educational needs, do well.

68. A-level English literature results in 1999 were well above average. In lessons and in the work seen the standards of attainment are equally high and this is shown especially in the depth of analysis in some of the literary-critical essays written by A-level pupils.

69. The teachers' planning ensures that all pupils experience a very good range of speaking and listening tasks. In whole-class situations most pupils respond confidently and with enthusiasm to their teachers' questions. As they move into Key Stage 4 and face the demands of GCSE, most pupils are increasingly able to present their ideas more formally in presentations to the whole class and in smaller groups. In many English and drama lessons the pupils work successfully in pairs and small groups – exploring ideas and responding orally to both printed and on-screen texts. Pupils in a Year 9 English lesson, for example, evaluated a range of Internet web pages, considering their purpose and audience before writing a guide on designing a website for younger pupils. Year 10 drama pupils worked most effectively in groups to decide how best to interpret a dream-like sequence from play scripts. In another lesson, Year 13 A-level pupils collaborated successfully to produce and present some excellent ideas for adapting Orwell's novel '1984' as a stage play. The teachers should now build on this good practice by developing ways of tracking and recording progress in oral work at Key Stage 3. There is also considerable scope for closer links with the drama department in teaching and assessing pupils' speaking and listening.

70. Most pupils show a willingness to read for pleasure and this is particularly evident in Key Stage 3 where the beginnings of some lessons provide good opportunities for individual private reading. At Key Stage 4, this is complemented by a range of good quality literature, including work by pre-twentieth century authors, Shakespeare and other major writers. A relative weakness, however, is the provision of contemporary writing at Key Stage 3. Whilst pupils read texts from different cultures and traditions as part of their GCSE work at Key Stage 4, there is a need to increase such provision at Key Stage 3. A-level pupils develop considerable knowledge and understanding as they read, analyse and interpret an increasingly demanding and stimulating range of texts. The outcomes of their work are often expressed in a range of excellent displays, where graphics and visual images are combined with close textual references to demonstrate very good knowledge and interpretation. The school libraries provide very good support for the pupils' reading at all levels and the English

faculty makes good use of these facilities. However, beyond the obvious use of computers for word processing and the web page work already mentioned, the faculty has yet to realise the full potential of accessing and reading ICT texts.

71. Pupils in each key stage cover an increasingly wide range of writing, well exemplified in their files and in classroom and corridor displays. From the start of Key Stage 3 they improve their writing through drafting, revising and proofreading, responding well to the teachers' marking. There is an effective spelling programme in place for the lower attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8. Many pupils make good use of computers and are able to word process their writing, presenting it in a variety of interesting and attractive forms. There is some really impressive biographical writing in Year 9, when pupils research the lives of members of their own families. At Key Stage 4, most pupils make very good progress in writing across a range of forms. Year 10 pupils develop their literary critical skills in response to drama, poetry and prose texts and are able to write effectively on important social and moral issues. In Year 11, pupils produce an increasingly impressive range of very good quality writing for their GCSE coursework. Some of the best learning in writing occurs when pupils are encouraged to investigate and describe how good writers create effects and then to apply the same techniques to their own writing. Year 9 pupils, for example, analysed how Swindells creates suspense in his novel 'Brother in the Land'. Much of the GCSE coursework shows how pupils develop their skills in a range of forms for different purposes and readers – writing in argument, narrative, journalistic and personal styles. The writing of literary critical essays by A-level pupils is often of exceptional quality.

72. The English faculty has introduced an effective programme to improve the literacy skills of underachieving and lower attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8, where pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress. Meanwhile, a school working party has been set up to address broader elements of literacy in all subjects, with priority being given to work in humanities and science. There are pockets of good practice in the development of literacy in a number of subjects, with good examples of imaginative writing in geography, impressive technical writing in design and technology and good attention to subject-specific vocabulary in mathematics.

73. A key factor in the high standards achieved is the very good quality of the teaching. The teaching is never less than satisfactory, most is very good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching in each key stage. Teachers know their subject in depth and they inspire pupils with their own enthusiasm. The best teaching is characterised by thorough planning, high expectations and skilful variation of teaching and learning strategies within well-paced and purposeful lessons. This results in very good learning by the pupils who concentrate very well, work at a brisk pace and apply considerable intellectual effort. The teachers make good use of a range of assessment data on individual pupils, developing very good procedures for recording progress and achievement. There is now a need to develop this further by ensuring that pupils understand the criteria for different levels of attainment and that targets for improvement are clearly focused. Homework is set regularly and marked with considerable attention to detail.

74. Since the last inspection the standards achieved by pupils at all levels have improved steadily. The faculty has successfully addressed the issues of ICT, resources, literacy support and pupil independence raised in the previous report. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

75. English is a strength in the school. A second key factor in the high standards achieved is the very good quality of the leadership and management of the faculty. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very good, resulting in positive gains in the professional development of staff. There is a strong sense of



direction and teamwork in the faculty, with a clearly stated and shared philosophy and a well thought out development plan. There is a good range of resources and the suited accommodation is enhanced by some excellent displays of pupils' work. Priorities now are to develop further the procedures for target setting, to improve the quality and range of reading resources at Key Stage 3 and to strengthen links with the drama department.

## **Drama**

76. Drama is a very popular subject throughout the school, taught separately from English at both Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the Sixth Form. Standards of attainment in the most recent GCSE examinations are broadly in line with the national average. In A-level Theatre Studies the results are very good, with a much higher proportion of pupils gaining A-B grades than is found nationally.

77. In the small sample of lessons seen, the quality of teaching is consistently good or very good. Teachers are experienced and have a good knowledge of their subject. They vary the pattern of work within lessons, encouraging pupils to reflect on their learning. The pupils respond well and work most effectively in mixed groups, improvising on issues and interpreting scripts through imaginative uses of voice and movement. This was shown particularly well in a Year 7 lesson on chorus work in Greek theatre and in Year 10 lessons where pupils interpreted the scripted opening of a play most effectively. It is clear that pupils benefit from having regular drama lessons throughout the school. There is a clear progression in their skills as they proceed through the school. This was nicely demonstrated in a Year 12 lesson where pupils were also exploring the idea of chorus in drama at a much more advanced level.

78. Drama makes a very significant contribution to the life of the whole school, both in developing pupils' personal, social and moral learning and also in providing an impressive range of opportunities for pupils to be involved in theatrical productions.

79. The department is well managed and is strongly placed to make a major contribution to the newly formed faculty of performing arts.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. Standards in mathematics are above average overall. Throughout the school, the pupils rise to the demands made on them by good teaching, thereby making good progress and achieving well.

81. Attainment in mathematics on entry to the school is above average. In 1999, the national test results at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above the national average and those of similar schools. This has been the picture in recent years. Almost all current Year 9 pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and have made good progress during this key stage. Since the last inspection, the difference in attainment of boys and girls has decreased to an insignificant level.

82. At the end of Key Stage 4 in 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving A\* - C grades was above the national average, and above that of similar schools. Girls' results were lower than boys' but reflected the differences that existed at the beginning of the key stage. Attainment has been above average in recent years, and there has been a steady improvement in line with national trends. The standard of current Year 11 pupils is above average. Achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs, and particularly that of high attaining pupils, is good.

83. A-level results are also above average. The overall pass rate is high and the proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades is close to the national average, with girls doing better than boys in 2000. The proportion of boys to girls entered for A-level is similar to that found nationally. Those pupils following GNVQ courses all attain the required levels in Application of Number; Advanced GNVQ pupils do so by the end of Year 12. The achievement of the pupils currently in Year 13 is good.

84. At Key Stage 3, strengths in the pupils' attainment include their knowledge and use of technical vocabulary. Almost all achieve good levels of numeracy. Most learn algebraic techniques effectively; many apply these successfully to solve problems. The great majority can follow reasoned arguments and justifications of general results in their work on shape, space and measures. Early in the key stage, however, progress in aspects of data handling is hampered by over-repetition of elementary work. By the end of this key stage, pupils are very well prepared for Key Stage 4 and the mathematical demands of other subjects in the curriculum.

85. By the end of Key Stage 4, the great majority of the pupils have improved their numeracy skills sufficiently to allow them to use mathematics effectively in other subjects including geography, design and technology and physical education. However, for some, hesitant recall of common equivalences between percentages and fractions, slows their progress in science. Most pupils continue to make good progress in the development of abstract ideas in algebra and achieve well overall. The poor command of mental strategies and very poor recall of multiplication tables limit achievement by the least competent pupils. Otherwise, those with special educational needs make good progress. The highest attainers benefit from special lessons devised to extend their learning.

86. The teaching is good in all key stages. There is nevertheless a clear gap between the best teaching, which is very good, and a minority of lessons, which are satisfactory. Many pupils benefit from well planned and managed lessons where the teachers maintain a brisk and demanding pace, as in the case of a Year 11 lesson in which pupils were expected to solve problems of algebraic proportionality jointly with the teacher. By persistently asking probing questions, the teacher ensured that all pupils concentrated intensely throughout the lesson. By the end, almost all were able to tackle complex problems themselves. In a few lessons, the teachers' planning is less concise and the pace much less challenging. In one instance, a teacher's indecision and lack of clear planning initially gave rise to confusion in the pupils' thinking which hampered their progress. Once the teacher provided them with a clear structure and a narrower range of alternative procedures, they succeeded in applying their knowledge of transformations to sketch graphs of polynomials.

87. As a result of the good teaching, most pupils learn well and make good progress in most lessons. They pay close attention, thereby taking full advantage of the clear expositions provided in most lessons. They present their exercises well and take account of the written advice where teachers provide this. Many of those pupils who find learning difficult are less successful in applying their knowledge to the solution of problems. For example, several Year 10 pupils successfully learn formal procedures for short multiplication and division but are unable to use them without reference to written tables. There are very few instances of pupils' inappropriate behaviour. The teachers deal firmly with those that arise, so allowing no serious disruption to occur.

88. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and has some good features. A small team enthusiastically manages the faculty. They have introduced sound improvements since the last inspection to ensure standards have risen in line with schools nationally. Work is well in hand to incorporate the National Numeracy Strategy from September 2001 and its teaching strategies are already being applied successfully by some teachers. Data on past

attainment is being used to identify targets for Key Stage 3 pupils. As yet, however, procedures for evaluating progress rely mainly on prior school data. They do not relate sufficiently to national data to provide a reliable basis for planning further improvements in the pupils' performance.

## SCIENCE

89. The pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has been well above the national average for the last four years. The results are also well above average compared to those of schools with similar intakes. The current standard of work of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 3, in terms of knowledge and understanding, is well above the national average. The standard of investigative work, however, which is not tested in the National Curriculum tests, is below average. Currently, overall attainment at Key Stage 3 is thus above the national average but not well above. Given attainment on entry at Key Stage 3, achievement, including progress over time and gains in lessons, is satisfactory.

90. The percentage of pupils attaining A\* to C grades in double award GCSE science in 2000 was just above the national average for 1999, and was a slight improvement on the school's attainment in 1999. These standards in science, however, were below the average GCSE standard for the school. The percentage of A\* to C grades in science has fallen significantly since 1998 and 1997, when attainment was well above the national average. Standards in science in 1999 and 2000 were not as high as they should have been. The current standard of attainment of the oldest pupils at Key Stage 4 is broadly in line with the national average. Given attainment on entry at Key Stage 4, the pupils' achievement, including progress over time, is unsatisfactory. Underachievement is mainly on the part of the average and slightly above average pupils. Achievement of the high ability pupils and of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Factors contributing to this underachievement include: a lack of consistent practice in scientific investigative work throughout the school, until the time of formal GCSE assessment; insufficient co-ordination in the assessment of the biology, chemistry and physics aspects of the double science course across the three sciences; a lack of rigour in the monitoring of the overall academic progress of individual pupils; and the uncooperative behaviour of a minority of pupils who disrupt learning, together with weaknesses in managing this uncooperative behaviour.

91. In the A-level examinations in 2000, achievement in biology was well above the national average for 1999; in chemistry it was above; and in physics it was below. During the last three years, the results in biology has been consistently above or well above the national average; in chemistry in line with, or above; and in physics, just above (one occasion), or below. Given the pupils' overall prior attainment, most are achieving well, particularly in chemistry and biology.

92. At Key Stage 3, the majority of the pupils have a very good knowledge of scientific facts. The higher attainers are developing a good understanding of scientific concepts such as particle theory applied to solids, liquids and gases and how the structure of living cells relates to their functions. At Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils add to their knowledge and understanding. Higher attainers, for example, readily understand the concept of rates of reactions and the principles of Hooke's Law. Throughout the school pupils successfully carry out directed practical work but are not offered enough opportunities at Key Stage 3 and 4 to carry out scientific investigations. As a result, their standards in planning investigations, in analysing the results and in drawing conclusions are below average. Higher attainers at the end of Key Stage 4, however, are becoming competent in planning, carrying out, and evaluating such investigations. Sixth Form pupils carry out investigative work proficiently and produce good quality reports. Throughout the school pupils make good use of graphs and charts to present information. The higher attainers at Key Stage 4 are learning to apply

mathematical principles to science, for example calculating molar concentrations of solutions from titration data, and voltage, current and resistance from circuit data. In the Sixth Form many apply mathematical concepts competently and confidently. However, the middle and lower ability pupils often struggle with the application of mathematical concepts. The majority of pupils produce good quality written work and are learning effectively to use and spell scientific vocabulary. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in science.

93. Since the last inspection, well above average standards in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 3 and overall above average standards at A-level have been maintained. GCSE standards have fallen significantly. Shortcomings in the teaching of science investigations were highlighted in the last inspection report; these shortcomings have not been remedied. Overall improvement since the last inspection is therefore judged to be less than satisfactory.

94. Overall, the teaching in the lessons seen was good, particularly in the Sixth Form. However, at Key Stages 3 and 4 there are shortcomings in teaching over time relating to the lack of a consistent focus on scientific investigative work. The teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear expositions and engage pupils' attention, enabling them to gain knowledge and understanding quickly. They question pupils skilfully, encouraging them to think through ideas for themselves. In many lessons, teachers show much enthusiasm for their subject, thus stimulating the pupils' interests. In one very good lesson with high ability pupils in Year 8, the focus was on explaining the cooling curve of salol. The teacher started by thoroughly revising work on the arrangement and movement of particles in solids, liquids and gases; pupils responded keenly and showed a very good understanding of the topic. The teacher, working at a good pace, carefully questioned them on the graph of the temperature as the salol cooled, introducing new ideas and encouraging the pupils to extend their thinking. This work challenged the pupils to make considerable intellectual efforts to understand these complex ideas. The teacher then provided a helpful worksheet to consolidate the learning thoroughly. Characteristics of the teaching of the less able groups include: a good variety of activities to maintain pupils' concentration; a patient approach and good relationships, facilitating co-operation; and continual reinforcement of factual learning. Shortcomings in a minority of lessons include: weaknesses in managing the behaviour of uncooperative pupils; a lack of challenge; and missed opportunities to reinforce learning.

95. The leadership and management of the department is sound. The head of faculty regularly monitors teaching. However, there is insufficient sharing of ongoing assessment information between the three constituent departments and amongst teachers dealing with the same classes. The practice of setting personal targets for pupils, formally monitoring their academic progress, and intervening in cases of perceived underachievement is not established. Since the last inspection there has been considerable refurbishment of the accommodation, thus the learning environment has been greatly improved. At the Iford site there are insufficient computers in the science department and they are out of date and becoming unreliable. Also at the Iford site, over one fifth of lessons are not taught in laboratories; this is unsatisfactory.

## ART

96. By the end of Year 9 the pupils' attainment in art overall is in line with what is expected of pupils of this age nationally. A number of able and talented pupils produce some very good work. Less able pupils achieve well against their prior attainment. The achievement of most other pupils is sound. For example, Year 7 pupils explore different media and colour and can use a variety of techniques well to make marks, such as collage, paint, string and wax resist. Year 8 pupils understand the concepts of depth, height and width in composition and represent this through collage. Year 9 pupils create good work based on faces in the style of Picasso. By the end of Year 9 most pupils have a solid technical base on which to embark on GCSE.

97. GCSE results are above the national average. These above average standards are reflected in the work of the oldest pupils currently in Year 11. Given broadly average attainment at the start of the course, the achievement of most of the pupils in this key stage is good. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well. Almost all pupils take effective responsibility for their learning and can sustain a study from the initial idea through to final work. They use sketchpads well to research natural forms through drawings, photographs and collage. They make appropriate reference to the work of other artists.

98. Standards being attained by the oldest pupils currently in the Sixth Form are well above average. Their achievement, including their progress since starting the course, is very good. Their attitudes to learning are excellent. The pupils show strong research skills and a highly developed sense of aesthetics in the creation of work and in undertaking their personal study. For example, the pupils use complementary colour to good effect to explore feelings and emotions.

99. The below average amount of time available for the teaching of art at Key Stage 3 adversely affects the progress made by the pupils. Nevertheless, the pupils develop basic skills in the use of colour, form and shape in both two and three dimensions. They work with enthusiasm and effectively develop these skills, for example, while designing fish and creating African masks. Above all, the limited time restricts the opportunity for imaginative composition and in-depth study of artists, which results in the pupils' understanding of these areas being less strong. At GCSE and A-level, the pupils have much more opportunity for self-expression. A strength of their work is their own creative response to a starting point or theme, which they then develop. They apply themselves very well to the work and effectively use a wide range of media such as creating life-size sculptures using wire and plaster. However, their constructional drawing, though satisfactory, is not as good. Their research skills are good and sketchpads are used well.

100. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 is sound. The teachers have good subject knowledge and ensure that appropriate resources are provided. Along with the setting of homework that builds on work undertaken in the class, this results in pupils making appropriate gains in developing skills within the time available. Some lessons, while overall satisfactory, are not conducted at as brisk a pace as they could be. Most of the teaching at Key Stage 4 is good; some is very good; some, however, is less than satisfactory. In the best lessons, good questioning by the teacher challenges the pupils' thinking and extends their skills and their understanding of key concepts. The teachers encourage pupils to work in appropriate media and scale in accommodation that is very cramped with very limited storage space. In the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching, the level of challenge is too low. As a result, the pupils make insufficient gains. The teaching at A-level is good. The teachers are effective in helping the pupils in developing their own ideas and in challenging their thinking. The leadership and management of the subject is sound overall, with some good aspects and some weaknesses. For example, the range of resources available for the pupils on the

Southbourne (Years 9-13) site is good. The display of pupils' work in the department and around the school is good. There has been some monitoring of teaching though as yet this has not led to specific improvements.

101. The department has maintained the standards being achieved at the time of the last inspection. However, the last inspection report identified insufficient time at Key Stage 3 and also a limited use of ICT. Insufficient progress has been made on either issue.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Good teaching and effective leadership and management ensure above average standards. The pupils produce good quality products, reflecting a well-applied range of manufacturing and design skills. The pupils' graphic representation of their design ideas is a strong feature in Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form courses. Weaknesses in both manufacturing and designing, at entry in Year 7, are largely overcome by the end of Year 9. Most progress is made in Year 9 where the teaching and planning is stronger than in Year 8.

103. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils achieve standards that are in line with the national expectation. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons and over the key stage. However, some lessons in Year 8, for example when pupils were designing an egg cup holder, lack clear objectives and the appropriate sequencing of skills to ensure effective learning. By the end of Year 9, most pupils develop good knowledge and understanding of the subject and their ability to research, analyse, plan and realise their ideas is good. For example, pupils in a Year 9 food lesson were able to express their ideas clearly when talking about quality control and the changes they would make when putting their biscuits into batch production. Computers are regularly and confidently used by the pupils to support the presentation of their designs. Given their below average attainment in the subject when they enter the school, the pupils' achievement is good over the key stage.

104. In Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form the standard that the pupils achieve, both in class and in their examinations, is above average. In the 2000 GCSE examinations 63 per cent of pupils gained A\*-C grades and in the 1999 examinations 58 per cent of pupils gained A\*-C grades compared to 49 per cent nationally. The GCSE results have consistently improved over the last three years and are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Manufacturing skills are effectively taught and practised. The quality of Year 10 projects and Year 11 coursework is of a high standard in all the materials that the pupils work with. Good support materials provide effective guidance for the pupils in organising their work and are a key feature of the success achieved in Year 11 coursework. Well-managed and resourced lessons, as for example in Year 11 textiles, enable the pupils to make good progress in their designing. The pupils' achievement over time is good and both boys and girls do equally well in the subject.

105. The A-level results are consistently above average. However, because of the small group sizes they show some year-on-year variation across the different materials. Over the last three years there has been steady improvement and the standards evident at the last inspection have been well maintained. Achievement over time is good. The demanding and effective teaching supports the pupils' learning, as for example in a Year 12 design lesson where pupils were investigating systems design in relation to emergency exits in a building. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of their material area is good and well applied in their discussion and written work. A-level coursework is of a high standard in food and textiles, displaying a good depth of intellectual thinking and creativity in design.

106. The teaching and the pupils' learning in all key stages and the Sixth Form are good.

The teachers have very good subject expertise and they are generally effective in helping the pupils to rise to the challenge of the high expectations set, as for example in a Year 9 graphics lesson on film posters. The pupils respond well to this positive learning climate. Most are confident and self-reliant in their work, organising coursework and meeting deadlines effectively. Good questioning and thoughtful strategies of intervention with pupils support pupils of all abilities in doing their best and producing products of good quality. For example, pupils in two Year 7 food and graphics lessons made very good gains in their learning through the teacher's use of short demonstration and question/response sessions followed by individual or small group support. The pupils' discussion of design ideas is robust but respectful of one another's opinions. Safety routines are well established. Relationships are very good and often a mutual respect exists between pupils, teachers and other adults. Pupils know what they can do and how to improve their work. The quality of guidance and clear feedback to pupils in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form have contributed significantly to the standards achieved at GCSE and A-level. Behaviour is good, though occasionally management of the beginnings of lessons and the effects of boisterous break time behaviour can cause minor problems in a minority of Year 8 lessons. Similarly, the teaching in a minority of Year 8 lessons, whilst satisfactory, is not as effective, lacking the clarity of objective and match to the pupils' needs, as in most lessons in the other years.

107. The subject offers an effective and varied curriculum. The leadership is clear sighted and rigorous in seeking improvement and demanding high standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Planning is rigorous and teaching is well organised. All pupils can follow a full GCSE course in Key Stage 4 and most benefit from the good quality range of learning opportunities offered. Similarly the Sixth Form A-level programme is of a good quality though the lack of a vocational course limits the breadth of provision offered. Relative weaknesses of the Key Stage 3 curriculum, in ensuring progression in the skills pupils develop, are being actively addressed, alongside the development of tasks to avoid gender stereotyping in the pupils' option choices at the end of Year 9.

108. The pupils' achievement benefits from the subject's clear view of itself and priorities for improvement. Strengths and weaknesses are well known and planning for future improvement is very good. Where weaknesses exist as in aspects of accommodation, resourcing for computer-assisted design and monitoring and library provision, there are good plans for improvement. All health and safety issues identified at the last inspection have been effectively dealt with. Health and safety have considerably improved since the last inspection and are now given appropriate priority. A small number of ongoing and minor issues were notified to the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. Standards of work at the end of Year 9 are above the national average. This position has been maintained since the last inspection and there is very little difference between the performances of boys and girls. The pupils' achievement throughout Key Stage 3, including the progress that they make over time and the gains in lessons, is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, helped by the use of a wide variety of appropriate resources.

110. At the end of Year 11, results in the GCSE examination at grades A\*-C in 1998 were just below the national average. In 1999 they improved to a level which was above the national average. In the last two years, the relative performance of boys and girls has fluctuated. Successes at the highest grades of A\* and A are below the national average. During the last three years, the pass rate at grades A\*-G has been well above the national average. The pupils' achievement is good at Key Stage 4. Lower attaining pupils entered for the Certificate of Achievement achieve well and produce good individual coursework.

111. Large groups of pupils study this subject in the Sixth Form. Results at A-level for the last three years have been above the national average, both for the proportion of passes at grades A-E and for the higher grades of A-B. There is no discernible difference between the performances of boys and girls over time. Achievement is good, particularly for those pupils who begin this course with modest results in their GCSE examination.

112. Pupils in Key Stage 3 acquire and use essential geographical skills well. For example, in a good lesson in Year 7, higher attaining pupils successively completed map exercises of increasing difficulty that had been carefully prepared by their teacher. A field trip to Lulworth Cove in Year 8 enables pupils to appreciate the stunning nature of local landscapes. They produce imaginative writing and poetry based on their visit, together with accurate descriptions of coastal processes. Pupils with lower levels of attainment are provided with material that is adapted to their needs so that they have access to the same learning experiences. This has a positive impact on their attainment and progress. In a very good lesson in Year 9, the teacher's skilful use of resources, practical tasks and essential vocabulary enabled pupils to understand and wonder at the forces at work in the formation of earthquakes and volcanoes. The teachers mark pupils' books and assignments thoroughly, often with helpful comments, which enables pupils to understand how to improve their work. Lack of concentration and poor behaviour by a small proportion of pupils in Year 8 restricts their learning and distracts those around them.

113. Geography is a popular optional subject in Key Stage 4, attracting pupils with a wide range of previous attainment. Examples of written work, particularly course work, show that most pupils can cope successfully with data collection, with presentation using statistical and graphical techniques and with detailed written analysis. They undertake presentations of topics in groups and evaluate their own and other pupils' performance. They occasionally use ICT for research and for eye-catching presentations of work, for example on the impact of earthquakes. However, the relatively low level of ICT skills amongst many pupils does restrict the use that can be made of this activity in lessons. Some lower attaining pupils have difficulty in using geographical skills such as the interpretation of maps.

114. In the Sixth Form, pupils learn good habits of independent work, helped by the extensive range of textbooks and library resources. The department runs a successful residential field work course in Year 12 where pupils learn essential techniques for the completion of their own individual studies. They understand theoretical models and can apply them in their detailed case studies and essays. Pupils have a realistic view of their achievements and performance through constant dialogue with their teachers and thorough assessment of their work.

115. The quality of the teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good overall. Within Key Stage 3 it is better in Years 7 and 9 than in Year 8. The best teaching was seen in the Sixth Form where all of the lessons seen were judged to be good or very good. The most effective lessons proceed at a lively pace, with carefully planned activities using a wide range of resources that appeal to all pupils. Teaching is less effective when discussion is curtailed in favour of an overemphasis on written work in class. Consequently pupils lose opportunities to share ideas and to learn from each other. Occasionally teachers find it difficult to manage some pupils' disruptive behaviour so that time is lost and the output of work reduced.

116. The head of department provides good leadership. The department has made good progress since the last inspection on all the issues that were raised, particularly on the provision of work for pupils with lower levels of attainment and on the enrichment of schemes of work to include imaginative writing.



## HISTORY

117. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is above the national expectation. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils can rationalise and respond well to open-ended questions about the period studied. They are able to weigh up alternative points of view, such as 'Was Churchill responsible for the failure of the Gallipoli campaign?' The most able pupils recognise that historical sources are not always reliable and can evaluate their usefulness to an historian. All pupils extract information from these sources effectively. The more able pupils support their statements well with appropriate evidence. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when learning support teachers are present. Overall, the achievement of most pupils in this key stage is good.

118. The attainment of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national average. The GCSE results for both boys and girls have risen over the last three years. The pupils have a firm understanding of the development of medicine over time and can compare attitudes towards medicine in the past with attitudes today. They have a good understanding of the conditions for the poor in industrial England and can identify similarities in society's response to them. They recognise that history can be seen from different viewpoints and that these may all contain elements of truth. The pupils can select and arrange information in response to questions and present the information in extended writing that is fluent and reasoned. Higher attaining pupils identify links between events and can recognise that there may be several contributing factors that give rise to change. Although the pupils use source material to identify opinions of the time, they rely too much on their teacher to direct their thinking. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are developing a sound understanding of the periods studied and recognise the main characteristics of the time. They use this knowledge to respond to questions. However, they demonstrate little independent thinking or enquiry. Most achieve satisfactorily at this key stage.

119. The attainment of pupils who follow the history course to advanced level is well above average. This is evident both in the A-level results and in the work of the current Year 12 pupils. Strengths in their performance include the following: fluent and well-written essays, where views are well reasoned and expressed, are common features of their work; they consider questions about the events of the past; higher attaining pupils can stand back and view history from alternative perspectives; they enjoy discussion and are willing to present opposing views with confidence; they are independent of the teacher whilst still prepared to accept guidance. Their achievement is very good.

120. The teaching and the quality of the pupils' learning are good. The teaching is sound at Key Stage 4; it is good in Key Stage 3 and in the Sixth Form where there is less concentration on covering content and more opportunity to develop skills and concepts. The teachers provide more opportunities for independent learning in the Sixth Form, and more opportunities for investigation at Key Stage 3. This has a positive impact on standards and the quality of the pupils' learning. Where the teaching style is too didactic, for example in some lessons at Key Stage 4, the pupils become passive and cease to question or to follow lines of independent enquiry.

121. The teachers have secure subject knowledge, which enables most to add colourful detail to lessons and to use the pupils' responses positively. The rapport between teachers and pupils is very good and encourages pupils to respond to questions. Lessons are generally well planned. The teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and in most lessons the atmosphere is businesslike and secure. Good teaching, including good management of the pupils, leads to good attitudes and behaviour. Most pupils display interest in their work and remain 'on task' with little need for teacher intervention. Their work is usually well presented although there is little evidence of re-drafting or correcting work.

There is a lack of pace in some lessons however. On a small number of occasions in Key Stage 4, there is a lack of challenge for pupils of higher ability whilst they wait for less committed pupils to complete work. In some lessons there is insufficient time for active learning and tasks set within the lessons lacked stimulation. The teachers use ICT well in Year 9; in the other years this is much less evident.

122. The department is well resourced with textbooks, an improvement on the last report, but the use of visual stimulus to support the pupils' understanding is limited despite a wide range of videotapes in the school. Display is well used in Years 7 and 8 to extend learning, but is less apparent elsewhere. An excellent visit to Corfe Castle benefits pupils in Year 7. There are insufficient opportunities for first hand investigation of historical sites in other years.

123. The management of the department is good, but there is insufficient time for the department to meet to exchange ideas and good practice particularly as teachers are moving between the two school sites. Assessment using National Curriculum levels is, however, a weakness and there is little moderation between teachers in Key Stage 3. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

124. At the end of Key Stage 3 standards are below national expectations. When compared to the increasing confidence and competence in ICT of the pupils entering the school, the pupils' achievement during the key stage is unsatisfactory. Pupils are entering the school with increasing levels of confidence and competence in ICT. At the start of the Year 7 course most pupils confidently write about themselves combining their text with pictures from encyclopaedias, clipart or from the Internet. The skills of the majority are insufficiently developed in Year 8. Opportunities for the pupils to use ICT across the curriculum have improved since the last inspection, but there is still insufficient emphasis on the teaching of the higher levels of ICT. This depresses the actual performance of many pupils, particularly but not only that of the higher attainers. The level of skill in Year 9 is often not much more sophisticated than is now evident in Year 7. Overall therefore, the pupils are not achieving as well in ICT as they should be.

125. At Key Stage 4 there has been no examination course until this term. A group of 28 pupils, from a larger group of 60 pupils wishing to study the subject, has just started a GCSE course. These are the only pupils who have a programme aimed at improving their skills in using ICT. For the vast majority of the pupils ICT is met through other subjects. Provision is patchy. Some of the teaching uses ICT imaginatively but it is not aimed at helping the pupils to do more difficult or complex tasks with ICT. Inevitably, the majority of the pupils do not have access to the higher levels of performance in ICT. As at Key Stage 3, the majority of the pupils are not achieving as well as they should be. Several pupils are experienced users of ICT, some run their own website creation businesses. However, their skills and those of many other pupils are not sufficiently extended or harnessed by the current teaching of ICT at Key Stage 4.

126. In the Sixth Form the attainment of pupils studying A-level and AS-level courses is broadly average. Their achievement is satisfactory. GNVQ pupils make considerable use of ICT in their work; all formal assignments are word processed, some to a very high standard. Other Sixth Form pupils make competent use of ICT in some subjects to present coursework combining text, pictures, spreadsheets and databases. They use graphs and charts effectively to illustrate presentations and to summarise research findings. Nevertheless, other Sixth Form pupils are less confident about their ICT skills than those some years younger.

127. The subjects in which ICT skills are used satisfactorily as part of the pupils' learning at Key Stages 3 and 4 are mathematics, science, English, geography and design and technology. The extent to which the pupils experience ICT in other subjects depends too much on the level of interest and expertise of individual teachers.

128. Since the last inspection there have been considerable developments in the provision for ICT. There has been an increase in the number of computers. The electronic whiteboards and data projectors to enable teachers to use ICT in whole-class teaching are an innovative addition to the resources available. The ratio of computers to pupils is now only slightly less good than for similar schools (1:8). There are appropriate plans to improve this figure during the Autumn Term 2000. The appointment of ICT support staff and a network manager is beginning to make resources more easily available for pupils and teachers. All of the above is positive. They have yet, however, to make a significant impact on the pupils' overall attainment in ICT. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore judged to be unsatisfactory.

129. The teaching of ICT in Year 7 is sound. In the other years the teaching of ICT is not satisfactory; expectations are not high enough. The pupils do not learn sufficient new skills that extend their capability. At Key Stage 4, the teaching of ICT skills is again unsatisfactory. Most teaching of ICT is by non-specialists whose knowledge of higher levels of ICT skills is limited. The teaching of the GCSE course in Year 10 and the teaching in the Sixth Form are sound.

130. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 just meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in that all pupils have sufficient breadth of experience of the key strands of the National Curriculum. There are however few opportunities for study at higher levels. In Years 10 and 11 requirements are not met. Pupils do not have regular planned opportunities to further enhance their ICT skills.

131. In several respects the management of ICT in the school is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient monitoring of standards based on evidence of pupils' work. Reports to parents are unsatisfactory; they often do not contain either helpful detail or pupil targets. There is also insufficient co-ordination of the teaching of ICT across subjects.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

132. All the pupils study either French or Spanish to GCSE and both languages are also taught to A-level. Approximately one third of each year group learns Spanish. A very small number of pupils study a second foreign language in Key Stage 4.

133. Standards in both French and Spanish are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. The majority of the pupils have a basic knowledge of a range of topics and more able pupils are beginning to be confident in the use of tenses. While achievement overall is sound, some pupils in middle ability groups do not do as well as they should, and are not able to manipulate the language they know or to begin to use tenses. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards. There is no discernible difference in the standards reached by boys and girls.

134. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards at GCSE in French and Spanish are broadly average: a strength is that all pupils are entered and all gain a grade (a significant achievement for some pupils with special educational needs). The proportion of pupils entered for GCSE and gaining grade C or above has been generally at or above the national average, particularly in French, but last year's results, in Spanish especially, fell below. Again, the problem in both languages is the number of pupils in middle ability groups who

gain grade D when they should have obtained at least grade C. More able pupils achieve highly (28 pupils achieved grade A or A\* in 2000) and the pupils in lower sets, including those with special needs, all achieve grades. Again, there is no notable difference in the results of boys compared to those of girls.

135. The strengths in the standards achieved by the pupils in both Key Stages are the extensive basic knowledge of a wide range of topics and vocabulary and their ability to understand the spoken language through listening to the teacher or to a recorded text. The weaknesses are in going beyond the minimum in speaking and writing. Only the more able have the understanding and confidence to do this. The other pupils can generally only manage short, spoken responses to prepared questions, do not know how to start a conversation or ask a question, and can only write short sentences with help on the topics they are currently studying. Some pupils of middle ability are capable of achieving more. The key weakness in both languages at GCSE is in the written examination, followed by speaking, especially in Spanish. Overall achievement is satisfactory except for some pupils of middle ability.

136. Standards at A-level have been consistently above average in both languages and the work seen during the inspection confirmed this. The pupils achieve good standards in all skills, progressing from the limited range of language at GCSE to the more complex and sophisticated use of language needed, for example, to discuss literary texts in French or Spanish. There are a number of boys who study a language at A-level and this reinforces the fact that, contrary to the national trend, boys as well as girls achieve good standards in languages in the school.

137. Since the last inspection, standards have remained broadly the same. Sound improvement has been made in the achievement of boys, and the development of resources for listening and reading.

138. The teaching of French is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good at A-level. Teaching in Spanish is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, good in Key Stage 4 and good at A-level. This represents a considerable improvement in Spanish at Key Stage 4. In the best teaching, all the pupils are fully involved and the teacher uses a variety of activities with pace, enthusiasm and humour. In a Year 9 French lesson on 'parts of the body', the teacher recapped the language needed using a pupil at the front as a visual prompt, then put pupils into groups to practise the vocabulary by playing a dice game and finally showed them how to incorporate that vocabulary into sentences in the written form. In a Year 7 Spanish lesson, the teacher led vigorous chanting of the Spanish alphabet, followed by a song which led to pupils spelling aloud in Spanish. In both lessons, pupils with special educational needs responded enthusiastically and all the pupils achieved good standards of pronunciation and recall. A major strength of all the teaching is the good use of resources, which enable all classes to be taught efficiently a core of vocabulary and phrases. However, the key weakness in a number of lessons is that the teaching often does not extend pupils beyond simple basic acquisition. During the inspection, for example, there were few examples seen of pupils practising role-plays or speaking in pairs; few question forms were taught, even at a simple level; the teachers used the foreign language in the classroom but pupils were rarely required to use it for the most basic request; there were no consistent strategies for extending pupils' responses beyond a one- or two-word answer; written work consisted of copywriting phrases and vocabulary and adapting texts slightly, for example, by gapfilling.

139. There is sound leadership of the department. Currently, both teaching and pupils' work are monitored but the outcomes are not directly used to target weaknesses and to improve performance. Similarly, assessment, though thorough, is not focused sharply on improving standards. The department has already reviewed its performance since the last

GCSE results and the action plan for improvement begins to address all these issues. The annual French exchange is very well supported by pupils.

## **MUSIC**

140. Standards at Key Stage 3 are below average for most pupils although, for those who have instrumental lessons, the standards are higher. This decrease in standards from the previous inspection follows a period of difficulty in staffing. The performing skills of Year 9 pupils are weak and they have difficulty playing simple chords correctly. Their musical listening experience and knowledge is limited and patchy. Skills in using music technology have not been developed and opportunities to work in small groups to develop musical ideas are very limited. Compared to prior attainment, the pupils' progress in lessons is now good and there are signs of improving standards across the key stage in some areas of the National Curriculum. Most pupils can internalise and maintain their line satisfactorily in part-songs and can sing with control and pleasing tone. They use terminology appropriately to describe musical elements and a few can identify their expressive use.

141. At Key Stage 4 GCSE results have varied widely in the last three years but were in line with the average last year. In lessons, the pupils' achievement and progress in Year 11 are good in performing and they demonstrate satisfactory and better technique on their chosen instruments. They also understand skills of balance and precision in ensemble playing. Composition work is satisfactory overall. In listening and appraising, Year 11 pupils can describe structure, texture and speed with accuracy but have more difficulty in recognising chords and melodic pitch. In Year 10, understanding and knowledge of musical elements is limited by low standards in prior attainment for some and these pupils have difficulty in describing texture, pulse and instrumentation using appropriate terminology. By the end of Year 11 standards are satisfactory and the pupils' achievement, including progress over the key stage, is good.

142. In the Sixth Form standards have varied in recent years with good results last year. Performance skills are good. For a few pupils they are very good. Standards in chorale writing, aural and history and analysis vary for individual pupils but are satisfactory overall. The various courses offered allow pupils to maximise their strengths.

143. Across all key stages pupils of all levels of ability achieve and progress equally. In Years 10-13 the option groups have an equal balance of boys and girls with no large discrepancy in their results.

144. No instrumental lessons were observed during the inspection but examination results suggest that standards are good. Similarly, no extra-curricular music activity could be observed as this had yet to start. However, rehearsals for choirs, orchestras, a jazz band, madrigal group and percussion group are planned.

145. Teaching is a strength of the department. It is good overall. Some very good and indeed outstanding teaching was observed. This good teaching is resulting in the improving standards seen in the inspection. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and presentational skills that promote good quality learning. Their high expectations and good day-to-day assessment ensure that appropriate and challenging targets are set for pupils of all levels of ability with questioning well used to check that all pupils understand their tasks. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and the variety of tasks linked to different attainment targets ensures pupils work with interest and develop a wide understanding of the subject. The increasing difficulty of the tasks meets a good response from the pupils who mostly work well throughout. Lessons are lively and relationships are good, encouraging

pupils to respond with pride and confidence in their work. In the best lessons the pupils are encouraged to think musically.

146. The last inspection reported that the curriculum time for music was low and that the option system at Key Stage 4 was limiting for music. The school has responded and there have been some improvements in both areas. However, curriculum time at Key Stage 3 is still insufficient. This adversely affects both the development of the practical skills for performing and composing and also limits the breadth of study required by the National Curriculum. Accommodation for music is poor for Years 7 and 8 and unsatisfactory for Years 9-13. It is not possible for pupils to work in 'groups of different sizes' as required by the National Curriculum in Years 7 and 8 and it is difficult in Year 9. Across all year groups lessons are disturbed by sound contamination from adjacent classrooms which particularly affects listening and aural work. Resources for ICT are limited with no functioning computers in the music room on the Iford site and only three in the music department at the Southbourne site. Textbooks are also limited. Plans to improve resources through the Arts College funding are appropriate but require urgent implementation. Large classes limit contact time with the teacher in individual or small group performing and composition work in the option groups particularly. Standards of music making are adversely affected by the above across all key stages.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

147. Standards reached by the majority of the pupils in Year 9 are in line with the national expectation for pupils of this age. A significant minority attain above these expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A particular strength is rugby, in which the boys have good ball handling skills and are able to apply advanced tactics in competitive situations. Many can outwit an opponent with acceleration of pace and timing of pass. A minority of girls have advanced trampolining skills. They perform sequences of complex moves with increasing accuracy and refinement of shape. The use of technical language is encouraged by most of the teachers and in these lessons the pupils are generally confident in asking and answering questions using subject specific vocabulary. Pupils working below the expectation have a poor recall of technical terms and limited co-ordination.

148. Standards reached by the majority of the pupils in Year 11 (those who take physical education as a core subject, but not to GCSE) are in line with expectations. A few are working below the expectation and a minority above. Overall, this represents sound achievement through the key stage. Most pupils have a good understanding of strategies in games such as football and netball and can adapt their play when necessary. Those pupils working above the expected levels have advanced ball skills and consistently show precision, control and fluency in sports such as football, netball and trampolining. Their coaching and officiating skills are, however, not sufficiently developed.

149. GCSE results have been above average and, despite a dip in 1999, the trend has been upwards. Standards reached by the majority currently studying GCSE are equally above average. This represents good achievement over time. A particular strength is the pupils' depth of knowledge in both practical and theoretical aspects and their ability to link them. They write fluently, with good use of technical vocabulary. Their general knowledge is good. They have advanced skills in rugby, good levels of fitness and a satisfactory grasp of weight lifting techniques. Those pupils who are below average are less confident in the use of technical vocabulary when speaking and writing. GCSE dance has just been introduced and the present Year 10 pupils have a solid grasp of the elements required for composition.

150. In 2000, A-level results were very high compared to the national average. Half the pupils achieved A or B grades. Many of the pupils achieve higher grades than in their other

subjects. The attainment of the majority of pupils currently studying the course in Year 13 is well above average. This represents very good achievement over time. Particular strengths are their depth of knowledge and their ability to present work that is well researched, fluently written and logically argued. This is particularly evident in their project work, which is outstanding. They make good links between practical and theoretical aspects using physiological terms with confidence. The few pupils who are below average do not have the depth of knowledge that is required. Their independent research is limited and their notes are not sufficiently detailed. Standards achieved by the majority in the varied Sixth Form games programme are above average. Particular strengths are again in netball, football and rugby.

151. The teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning are very good at GCSE and A-level and good for core Key Stage 3 and 4. In almost all lessons the teachers use probing question and answer sessions to provoke thought and encourage the use of technical vocabulary. The teachers' depth of knowledge ensures that pupils have a solid grasp of skills and strategies. There is a consistently high expectation of the pupils, particularly in the examination classes, and the teachers continually encourage them to strive for better performance appropriately related to their ability. A good example of this was seen in a Year 10 football lesson. The teacher knew each pupil's skill level well and gave appropriate encouragement and teaching points that resulted in immediate improvement in their ball and tactical skills. Teacher and pupil demonstration is effectively used to help the pupils improve as seen, for example in a weight lifting session. The pupils were encouraged to assess and comment on one another's technique resulting in improved performance and understanding. Ongoing assessment in lessons is constructive, ensuring individual and group progress and there is always sufficient time to transfer new and consolidated skills into the final activity. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into lessons and achieve well. A weakness in the teaching is that opportunities are missed to develop the pupils' evaluative and coaching skills. An exception to this was seen in a GCSE rugby lesson, in which two boys were successfully directed to coach individuals and to organise training sessions for the forwards and backs. The examination courses are exceptionally well organised. The teachers have a great depth of knowledge and a variety of successful teaching techniques. These lessons are lively and relate well to personal experiences and current sporting affairs. For example, A-level pupils were required to keep Olympic diaries and link events to various modules of work such as anatomy and psychology of sport. Marking of GCSE and A-level theoretical work is constructive but not always consistent in approach between teachers. Teacher assessments are effectively used for setting targets for pupils studying GCSE and A-level. Assessment procedures are particularly thorough and data is used to track how well the pupils achieve relative to their ability from Key Stage 3 through to A-level. The mutual respect and shared enthusiasm between the teachers and the pupils makes a considerable impact on the quality of work. This is especially evident in the popular extra-curricular programme where pupils enjoy team and individual success at local, county, and national levels in sports such as tennis, athletics, netball, trampolining and rugby.

152. Leadership of the faculty is very good and contributes strongly to the personal development and achievement of the pupils. Since the previous inspection a number of valuable initiatives have been introduced, such as monitoring of teaching, which has had a positive impact on the pupils' standards and the teachers' own professional development. Examination results have improved and the number of pupils opting to take the courses has increased. The pupils taking part in the newly introduced Community Sports Leader Award have had considerable success. Inter-tutor group competitions and links with local sports clubs and associations have added depth to the extra-curricular programme and resulted in a successful bid for the Sports Mark Award in 1999. Dance has been introduced at Key Stage 3 and as a GCSE within the Performing Arts programme. The amount of time allocated to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 has increased. All of the above represents very good improvement since the last inspection. At Key Stage 3, girls do not have the same access

as boys to football and rugby and boys are not able to participate in a gymnastic activity in Year 9. The lower changing rooms on the Southbourne site have fallen into a poor state of repair, and the shower curtains at the Iford site need to be replaced.

## **BUSINESS STUDIES AND ECONOMICS**

153. Business studies is taught as an option at Key Stage 4 and at A-Level. The percentage of pupils attaining A\* to C grades at GCSE has risen significantly over the past three years and is well above the national average. The current standard of the older pupils after one year of the programme is broadly average. This is largely explained by the overall lower ability profile of this group of pupils. Most of the pupils can use and apply knowledge, concepts and theories in context and can select and interpret information. The most able can evaluate data well. Most pupils use ICT effectively as a means of presenting their work, particularly projects. However, a significant minority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, find it hard to select and interpret relevant information and particularly struggle with the process of evaluating it. The achievement of the pupils in relation to their prior attainment is satisfactory.

154. At A-level the percentage of pupils attaining A to E grades has been higher than the national average over the past four years; and significantly higher in most of those years. The pattern for pupils gaining the top two grades has generally been above the national average in that period. After one year of the course, the most able pupils are on target to achieve C or above but there are a significant number of pupils who on current performance will be borderline pass candidates. The most able pupils at A-level cover all the course concepts satisfactorily. They write essays with precision and good use of technical vocabulary. They make good use of their knowledge and understanding of theory such as supply and demand and marketing mix to analyse and tease out the issues in data response questions. The less able pupils work satisfactorily on more descriptive aspects of topics such as management structures and the theory of the firm. However, they are much more superficial in their analysis of data and often organise their essays without sufficient attention to planning or comprehensive coverage of issues. They find it hard to evaluate information or to use terminology with the required precision. The achievement of the pupils in terms of the progress they have made with their learning over time is sound.

155. The quality of the teaching and its impact on the pupils' learning at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. It is good in the Sixth Form. The teachers bring good subject knowledge to their lessons and try to relate the topics to the pupils' own experiences outside school. They mark the pupils' work accurately and generally give good guidance on how it might be improved in future. They encourage the pupils to improve their performance. However, in a Year 10 lesson the teacher tolerated much irrelevant pupil chatter. This behaviour was in part the result of less able pupils finding it difficult to keep up with the topic and a lack of strategies to keep them interested in the topic.

156. In the A-level lesson seen the teacher had prepared the approach well with pupils involved in paired work on forms of business enterprise and presenting their findings to the rest of the class. The slow pace at which the presentations were made, however, lessened some of the potential impact. The pupils nevertheless worked with interest and good commitment.

157. Standards are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The new head of department recognises the need for change in certain areas. The department development plan sets appropriate priorities including strategies to help pupils across the ability range. The department is well resourced with textbooks and a range of additional written and audio-visual materials. Good preparations have been made to meet the demands



of the new A-level business studies programme. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

158. Economics is taught to A-level standard in the Sixth Form. The percentage of pupils gaining A to E grades in 2000 is likely to have been significantly above the national average on recent trends and those gaining A to B grades, slightly above the national average. The pass rate for A to E grades has risen steadily over the past three years and has been consistently well above average. A to B grade passes have also steadily risen, with the exception of 1999, but these have generally been closer to national expectations. These results represent a good level of achievement when set against standards of prior attainment.

159. After a year on the course the current attainment of the majority of the older pupils is below average, although a minority are in line for a C or B grade at their present rate of progress. Overall this still represents satisfactory achievement in learning given the initial ability profile of the group. Even after a very short time in the Sixth Form a majority of the present Year 12 Economics pupils show good facility with handling the terminology and putting it into context.

160. Most of the older pupils can tackle relatively descriptive topics such as the causes of poverty to a satisfactory standard. However, in many cases they find it difficult to marshal their evidence and present it cogently or convincingly in an essay. They also tend to make a superficial response to data questions. The contrast between the more able minority of pupils and the rest was illustrated in a lesson examining the impact of macro-economic factors. The more able pupils could recognise the impact of different government policies on Aggregate Supply and Demand, appreciate that there were contrasting ways of approaching the problem and reach a view as to the most appropriate policy to use. The less able pupils struggled to explain the links between the policies and their likely outcomes and to articulate their conclusions. Nevertheless, most of the pupils work conscientiously and keep on task.

161. The teaching is good. The teacher has very good subject knowledge. She has high expectations of the pupils and insists that they concentrate on thorough learning of the specific economic concepts. She assesses the pupils' work in a way that emphasises the positive aspects and gives specific advice on how they might improve the standard in future. She uses varied teaching techniques and this helps the lessons to develop at a brisk but realistic pace. She uses humour to give sensitive encouragement to all the pupils, particularly those experiencing difficulties with the subject matter.

162. The subject is well led. The development plan for the department has appropriate targets to meet the needs of the new Advanced Economics syllabus. The department has a good range of texts and useful supplementary material, both printed and audio-visual. A good strategy that has been introduced is to encourage the pupils to bring in any articles of interest they find and to discuss them in class. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

## **GENERAL NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION (GNVQ) AND NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATION (NVQ) COURSES**

163. The school currently offers business, health and social care and performing arts at Advanced level in the Sixth Form and business at Intermediate level. It also offers an NVQ qualification that links three experiences: one day in school; one day at Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education and three days on work placements. The performing arts option was introduced in September 2000 and at the time of inspection had been in operation for two weeks (see paragraphs 172 to 175 below).

164. Over the past two years, all GNVQ pupils have gained at least pass grades at both Advanced and Intermediate levels. Many of them have gained merit and distinction grades. The percentage points score per pupil has been significantly higher than the national averages both in business and in health and social care. For a majority of those pupils this was very good progress relative to their prior attainment. Their achievement is very good. The picture is very similar for pupils on the NVQ link programme.

165. The work of all current Advanced level GNVQ pupils in Year 13 is at distinction or merit level. All have already satisfactorily completed their course unit tests and key skills qualifications in communication, numeracy and ICT at level 3. They are performing at a level considerably higher than national expectations and their progress over time and in lessons represents a high level of achievement relative to their prior attainment. For some pupils who have progressed through Intermediate level on to the Advanced programme, progress has been exceptionally good relative to their original GCSE performance.

166. All Year 13 pupils, in both vocational options, show considerable initiative in the way they seek and handle information from a variety of sources and the way they present it to other audiences. Research reports show a very good use of ICT to produce high standards of presentation and to process a range of statistical information. The pupils show considerable initiative in planning work and taking on specific roles within a group. In one business lesson, the pupils discussed their own research into management training programmes in local companies and were able to relate their own findings readily to management theory. In one health and social care lesson the pupils discussed the research they had undertaken into access of information on a healthy diet in surgeries, supermarkets and other local outlets. They worked in pairs to a tight deadline to plan how they might best present their findings to other groups in the school, looking at alternative strategies, rehearsing what they thought might be most effective and realising a very good standard of graphical presentation. A small number of the pupils working at merit level experience greater difficulty in evaluating the information they have researched and also some theoretical elements of the business and health and social care programmes.

167. Current Year 12 pupils, both on Vocational A-levels (formerly Advanced GNVQ) and Intermediate level business, are already showing signs of good progress within a very short time of entering their programmes. Through the induction period pupils on both business and health and social care programmes have realised significant achievement in the development of presentation and questionnaire skills. In the performing arts option pupils already show a good knowledge of terminology and conventions and have good technical skills in both drama and dance disciplines. The small number of pupils on the NVQ link programme are also working well and showing good achievement in ICT. Nearly all the pupils who have entered the Sixth Form from other schools have very quickly learned to work together productively with people they have known for only a short while.

168. A key factor in the very good achievement of almost all the pupils is the quality of the teaching. In all GNVQ and NVQ lessons seen the teaching was at least good. In a majority of lessons, it was very good or excellent. The teachers all have very good subject knowledge and relate it well to course specifications in their planning of assignments. They have high expectations of the pupils and they communicate these through clear ground rules on the completion of assignments and the meeting of deadlines. At the same time they adhere to specific deadlines for handing back work. All members of the department share these expectations. The pupils thus quickly learn what is expected of them and generally work hard to meet their obligations. The teachers use a range of styles and keep up a quick pace of work with the pupils. They support this with methodical, detailed and comprehensive planning of lessons. The pupils are thus encouraged to keep focused on their tasks and at the same time their interest is retained through teachers employing a variety of approaches.

The teachers are in particular concerned to lay the foundations for independent learning before devolving too much responsibility to the pupils for their own learning. The outcome of this approach is the mature and confident manner in which the pupils eventually demonstrate personal responsibility and initiative. There is a commitment to working in partnership with the pupils to help them succeed. The pupils appreciate the efforts made on their behalf. This was particularly well illustrated in a Year 13 business lesson on the conventions of profit and loss accounts. Initial difficulties experienced in handling information were overcome by a combination of clear exposition and patience on the teacher's part and great pupil resilience so that by the end of the lesson there had been significant progress by all pupils in learning the conventions.

169. The high quality of teaching is supported by well-produced materials and good opportunities for pupils to learn in a range of business and community placements. The pupils negotiate their own placements in line with their particular interests. These 'adopted' placements, as they are termed, provide useful work experience and a valuable resource for other project work. The pupils are encouraged to combine GNVQ with additional qualifications.

170. Very good leadership by the head of department is a key strength of the GNVQ and NVQ programmes and a key factor in the very good standards attained. There is a strong sense of purpose and direction with comprehensive and practical procedures for all aspects of work in the department. There is excellent practice in assessment that accurately meets the requirements of the course specifications and gives clear guidance on how the pupils might improve their work and set future targets. The department uses careful scrutiny of its past performance to inform its current practice and to make any improvements identified.

171. Since the last inspection the very high standards of pupil attainment, progress in learning and the quality of teaching in GNVQ have at least been maintained and in respect of attainment, improved upon. Vocational course provision is a strength of the school and provides a valuable educational experience for pupils with a wide range of needs and interests.

172. The Advanced performing arts course (both single and double awards) was introduced in September as part of the school's programme following the successful Arts College status award. Pupils were observed in dance and drama sessions; music will be introduced in the spring term.

173. Considering the pupils have only just started the course their current standards of attainment are very good in drama and good in dance. The majority achieved good GCSE drama grades but only a small number have had GCSE dance experience. Their achievement in these areas of learning so far is good. In drama they demonstrate maturity in performance skills and a good sense of audience. They use terminology and drama conventions confidently and take responsibility for their own work. In dance the pupils learn, rehearse and refine sequences and apply a range of compositional skills to develop the work. They research and plan appropriately, articulating their findings and identifying the next steps.

174. The pupils are highly motivated and work well together. The pupils show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. For instance, a group of pupils travelled to Bournemouth to research publicans' views on under-age drinking in preparation for an issue-based performance to a target audience.

175. The teaching is good and sometimes very good. Very good subject knowledge enables the pupils to exercise their intellectual, physical and creative skills. Good lesson structure and pace ensure that they consolidate and extend their knowledge. Effective

demonstrations in dance of changes in level and dynamics help the pupils apply these principles to their own work. In drama good guidance and questioning helped pupils to plan their own issue-based theatre piece to be performed in feeder schools. Resources for dance are insufficient but plans to improve this are appropriate.