

INSPECTION REPORT

LOCKYERS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Corfe Mullen, Wimborne

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113862

Headteacher: Mr A Argles

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Evans

1049

Date of inspection: 30 April – 2 May 2002

Inspection number: 230049

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Secondary
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Blandford Road Corfe Mullen Wimborne Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E S Battey
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1049	Brian Evans	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9388	Anthony Munday	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12762	Roger Catchpole	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.	
13122	Stephanie Matthews	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.	
19528	Roland Portsmouth	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.	
15051	Lynne Kaufmann	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Design and technology.	
20537	Kevin Ball	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography.	
1085	John Laver	<i>Team inspector</i>	History; Physical education.	
11672	Peter Harle	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music; Art.	
19026	Brian Downes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.	
23324	Sylvia Greenland	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs.	
15485	Roger Butler	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Lockyers is a middle school in the village of Corfe Mullen in Dorset. The school draws pupils mainly from its local area. There are 525 pupils on roll, which is average for middle schools. The roll is stable. One hundred and seven pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, which is above average. Seven have statements of special educational needs, which is below average. There are very few pupils who have English as an additional language or are from ethnic minority groups. Fourteen pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The intake to the school represents the full balance of abilities of pupils locally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and behaviour is good. Standards overall are rising. The headteacher, supported well by the deputy head, provides effective leadership and works closely with parents, staff and the governing body. The school provides a good standard of education and gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics because basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well.
- Teaching is good and provides a strong base for pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which gives pupils opportunities to build on their learning in lessons.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- An overall strategy for implementing the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs.
- Meeting National Curriculum requirements in swimming in physical education.
- Attainment and achievement in French.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress on the key issues identified in 1996. There has been a focus on homework since the last inspection but some inconsistencies between year groups and subjects remain. Generally, more challenging tasks are set in lessons and have helped to raise pupils' standards. There has been good progress in ensuring that pupils develop and use their information and communication technology skills. The school's assessment policy has been reviewed and there are effective systems in place to

assess pupils' progress through the school. The implementation of a sound performance management policy has led to the effective monitoring and support of classroom practice. This policy has also had a positive effect on specialist teaching. An overcrowded art room continues to have an adverse effect on standards in art.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	C	C
mathematics	C	C	E	D
science	A	B	D	C

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

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school varies slightly from year to year but it is at the average. By the age of 11, standards are above average. The school received a National Achievement Award from the DFES in March 2001 because of the sustained improvement in standards. The national test results suffered a dip in mathematics in 2001. Inspection evidence shows that current standards are back in line with the rising trend between 1998 and 2000. Higher attainers are not formally identified but make good progress in English, music and in physical education. However, in a number of subjects, including science in Years 7 and 8, higher attainers are not always set work which matches their knowledge, skills and understanding. In English, national test results at the end of Year 6 were above average in 2001 in that more pupils reached Level 5 or above and were above the standards reached by pupils in most comparable schools.

Standards in English have risen since the last inspection. In mathematics, national test results were well below the average in 2001, but inspection evidence shows that the current Year 6 are achieving standards in line with the national average. In science, pupils achieve well and standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and average by the end of Year 8. There is no significant difference in their performance of boys and girls. By the end of Year 8, pupils' basic skills have improved because the school is successfully implementing national strategies on literacy and numeracy.

Overall pupils achieve well throughout their time in the school and leave with attainment levels that are in line with national expectations. Attainment by the end of Year 8 in French is below national expectations. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are above average and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning in all subjects except art. Pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress in both in specialist and mainstream classes.

The school's Key Stage 2 targets for 2001 were achieved in English and science but were not reached in mathematics. The targets the school has set for 2002 are challenging and teachers have analysed well the areas for development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and most have positive attitudes to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good around the school and mostly good in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils of all levels of attainment mix well and respect each other's views. Relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory and in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5–6	Years 7-8
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. It is good overall and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and to the standards they achieve. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. The proportion of good and very good teaching was spread fairly evenly between the year groups. In art, teaching was better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. The teaching of literacy and numeracy across all subjects is good. There is a consistent approach by all teachers to developing pupils' basic skills. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, pupils did not achieve as well as they should. This was mainly because a small number of pupils hindered the learning of others, or because teachers lacked sufficient subject expertise to match the work to the attainment levels of the pupils.

Teaching is generally good in most subjects. Where it is good, the teaching is characterised by a well-planned and challenging variety of tasks. Pupils concentrate well, show personal initiative in their learning, and respond well to praise and encouragement. They have a high expectation of teachers and are keen to learn. In music, teaching is very good and there are excellent examples of where pupils linked fun, involvement and hard work in their learning. Information and communication technology skills are taught well in discrete Information and communication technology lessons but teachers do not provide specific opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in all subjects. The setting and marking of homework is satisfactory but it is not always set consistently and sometimes does not reinforce pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and classroom assistants. Teachers make every effort to promote inclusion in the classroom. Teachers use assessment data well in planning work for all groups of pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are strengths but also gaps in the curriculum provision for higher attainers. Provision for swimming does not meet National Curriculum requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The overall strategy for development of pupils with special educational needs is weak. There are no formal strategies for identifying gifted and talented pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. It is satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development. The personal, social and health education programme contributes well to pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a safe environment and the quality of pastoral support is good. The school's assessment systems enable teachers to support and monitor pupils' academic performance. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, and for promoting attendance, behaviour and personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership within the school community. He is strongly supported by the senior management team, staff and governors. Many subject co-ordinators are relatively new in their posts but most provide at least satisfactory leadership in their curriculum areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors provide satisfactory support to the school. They are adopting strategies to monitor and evaluate school performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school's decision-making, planning and review procedures are effective and underpin a good evaluation process.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Efficient use is made of the school's existing resources. Non-teaching staff provide valuable support. Learning resources and staffing are sufficient, but aspects of the accommodation are barely adequate. Financial procedures are reviewed to ensure that the principles of best value are applied across the whole school budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework.• Information on their child's progress.• The school working more closely with parents.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the school. Homework is satisfactory but the homework on occasions does not build on learning in lessons. There is variation between subjects and year groups. The school's communication with parents is good and the quality of reporting on pupils' progress is satisfactory overall and often good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

***Attainment** refers to the standards pupils achieve compared to national averages. Standards are also compared with results obtained in similar schools. **Achievement** refers to the progress pupils make in terms of where they started when they entered the school. Thus good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that pupils do well and make better than expected progress.*

Attainment on entry to Year 5 varies from year to year but overall is at the average.

Inspection evidence shows that standards by the end of Year 6 are:

- above average in English, science and music;
- average in mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education.

Years 5 and 6 pupils achieve:

- well in English, science, music, physical education and religious education;
- satisfactorily in mathematics, art, design and technology, geography, history and ICT.

Overall, national test results for Year 6 in 2001 in English and science were in line with those of similar schools. In mathematics, they were below those of similar schools.

Inspection evidence shows that standards by the end of Year 8 are:

- well above average in music;
- above average in English, mathematics and ICT;
- average in science, art, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education;
- below average in French, but standards are improving in Year 7.

Years 7 and 8 pupils achieve:

- very well in ICT and music;
- well in English, mathematics, physical education and religious education;
- satisfactorily in science, art, design and technology, geography, history and French.

Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they move through the school.

1. The senior management team is raising standards by putting into practice sound strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning in all years. They have worked hard to implement an effective policy to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
2. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are above the national average by the end of Year 6 and Year 8. During the inspection, standards in reading and writing were found to be satisfactory or better for the majority of pupils in all year groups. There is clear evidence that the focus on these skills during the literacy hour and in other subject lessons is raising standards. Reading standards are good in terms both of basic skills and in the reading comprehension of more advanced readers. Individual pupils in all year groups

show a high level of ability in skimming and scanning for information and they use dictionaries appropriately. Pupils like books and respond well to both fiction and non-fiction. They talk with enthusiasm about the books they have read in class and about issues in the news or related to the local area. Pupils can write in a variety of ways, depending on the subject they are writing about and the audience it is for. The majority of pupils can express themselves clearly. Presentation skills are usually good because individual pupils have established skills in handwriting and can also use word processing skills when appropriate. Pupils take a real pride in the appearance of their work and their success is celebrated in many very effective classroom displays. Although first drafts of work often have many errors, pupils are able to improve their work by drafting and redrafting. However, a number of pupils make too many errors in spelling and the use of punctuation.

3. In mathematics, overall standards have risen since the last inspection, although in 2001 there was a dip in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in the Year 6 national tests. The pattern of boys' and girls' results fluctuates from year to year, but over time the differences are not significant. By the end of Year 8, attainment is above average, and pupils achieve well because teaching is good and is underpinned by their' positive attitudes to mathematics. Pupils of all attainment levels apply their numeracy skills well.

4. Staffing difficulties have affected standards in science, but the temporary science co-ordinator has been largely successful in maintaining standards. Pupils are supported in science by good teaching based on well-structured lessons and by positive working relationships. In art, history and geography, higher attainers are not always set work in line with their knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards in French are not high enough by the time pupils leave school. As with science, there have been staffing difficulties in French which have disrupted pupils' learning, but attainment levels are rising in Year 7. In ICT, standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 8. Development of ICT skills over time is good, because effective links with first and upper schools maintain continuity of pupils' learning. In music and physical education, a good range of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to make good progress in developing their skills.

5. Across all year groups, pupils with special needs make good progress in subject lessons because of the good level of support and good standard of teaching they receive. Teachers are skilled in pupil management, and the tasks they set are usually devised to provide an appropriate level of challenge. This leads to good concentration on the part of the pupils. For example, in a science lesson a boy with special needs was paired with a competent 'scientist' for practical work and made very good progress as a result. In music, an appropriate balance is struck between group and individual development, and this enables pupils to progress at their own pace. Although individual progress is well tracked as part of the whole-school system, data for the special needs groups is not extracted and collated to give an overall picture of progress within the department. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress but the present lack of policy about their needs means that this progress is inconsistent across subjects.

6. The school's national Year 6 test targets for 2001 were met in English and science but in mathematics results were well below the target set. The targets it has set for 2002 are realistic and teachers have analysed areas for development. There is evidence that pupils' learning is benefiting from the fact that all subject teachers introduce literacy and numeracy strategies into their teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Pupils have good attitudes to learning.

- Pupils come to school enthusiastically and enjoy their lessons.
- Most pupils are thoughtful and mutually respectful and relationships throughout the school community are exceptionally good.
- Pupils' opportunities for personal development are limited in some areas.

7. Nearly all parents confirm that their children like school. The inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view. Pupils' attitudes maintain the high standards noted during the previous inspection, and contribute significantly to their good progress and attainment. Pupils come to school enthusiastically. They enjoy lessons and frequently work independently and in small groups without needing close supervision. In all year groups they listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, and respond enthusiastically to questions. During the inspection, excellent attitudes were evident in a very good Year 5 mathematics lesson, where pupils either responded confidently to the teacher's questions or asked for further guidance to obtain a correct answer. Pupils at all levels of attainment have good attitudes. In discussion with visitors, they are proud of their own achievement and those of the school. Attitudes in extra-curricular activities are very good, and clubs are well supported at lunchtime and after school.

8. Behaviour in classes and in the open areas of the school is good. Behaviour is good at lunchtimes in the dining hall, in classrooms where pupils eat their packed lunches, in the playground, and in the complex of spaces around the school buildings. Most pupils are thoughtful and mutually respectful and they respond very well to the warmth and good humour of all the school staff. Good behaviour contributes to pupils' good progress because, without frequent pauses or distractions, teachers move lessons ahead at good pace. No pupil was excluded in the school year 2001/2002.

9. The school's rules for behaviour, displayed in classrooms, are condensed into brief reminders of courtesy, consideration and co-operation. Most pupils cheerfully conform to the rules, and respond very well to teachers' behaviour management techniques. No incident of unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in lessons during the inspection, and behaviour was particularly impressive in all year groups during a lunchtime affected by rain. Parents and pupils confirm that occasional incidents of aggression between pupils are quickly resolved. Incidents of bullying are rare and are managed promptly and sensitively when they do occur. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are related to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In each of these areas, their responses are at least satisfactory. They have good understanding of Christianity, and some understanding of other faiths, including Islam and Judaism. The Muslim festival of Eid is celebrated annually during whole-school assembly. Pupils are reverential during assemblies, although they have few opportunities to sing, pray or reflect upon the issues of the day. They are generous of spirit, fund-raising enthusiastically for local and national charities. In all year groups, interest in a wide range of dance and performance enables boys and girls to work amicably together. In practical music lessons they are lively and motivated. For example, during the inspection, excellent relationships in music lessons in Years 7 and 8 were stimulated by close co-operation and a shared sense of the fun of African and South American rhythms.

10. The school council meets regularly, chaired and minuted by a teacher. In all year groups, class representatives and other pupils believe the council's achievements and influence to be modest, at best. Pupils in all year groups willingly carry out everyday duties in classrooms and, when given opportunities, throughout the school. Pupils in Year 8 regularly support Year 5 pupils in their reading but have few other regular duties. The absence of a formal monitor system, including a head boy and head girl, deprives them of organisational experiences, and limits their development as role models.

11. Relationships throughout the school community are exceptionally good. During the inspection, pupils in each year group spontaneously said that much of their learning is 'fun'. Consequently, they respond warmly to their teachers and are not afraid to make mistakes. Pupils respond politely and confidently to each other and they are mutually supportive. All have equal status and receive sensitive and effective support at work and play.

12. Attendance is satisfactory in all year groups and, overall, is slightly above the national average for similar schools. The regular attendance has a positive effect upon pupils' attainment and progress. Most pupils arrive punctually at school and settle quickly to work. Registration periods are very efficient, and lessons begin promptly. Class registers are completed neatly, and conform with legal requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is good and makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

Teaching is:

- very good in music and information and communication technology (ICT);
- good in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education;
- satisfactory in science, history, and French, and in art for Years 7 and 8;
- unsatisfactory for art in Years 5 and 6.

14. In over half the lessons observed, teaching was good or better. It was good or better in seven out of every ten lessons. Teaching was very good or excellent in just under a third of lessons. Three per cent, or two lessons, were unsatisfactory. Overall, this represents a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.

15. The teaching of basic skills in English classes is good and the focus on literacy across the curriculum is effective. Reading, discussion and research skills are developed well, and opportunities for extended writing are provided in most subjects as well as in English. Teachers mark work carefully and support pupils well in the development of skills in writing, for example by modeling words so that pupils are clear about the spelling. There is a good focus on the development of subject-specific vocabulary, which is often displayed in classrooms, for example words related to the study of geography or to aspects of science. There is a clear focus on accuracy and fluency as the school is determined to improve the quality of writing. Reading progress is monitored well by teachers, and library skills are taught very effectively as teachers make good use of the well-managed library facilities in the school. Support for the acquisition of numeracy skills across all subjects is less well developed than is the case with literacy but there is good practice in a number of subjects. ICT skills are developed well by specialist teachers.

16. Pupils respond well to the praise and encouragement of teachers and sustain a high level of concentration. Boys and girls alike have a high expectation of teachers and are keen to learn. Pupils work well together. In the very small number of lessons where attitudes were unsatisfactory, teaching was passive and undemanding and failed to challenge the negative attitudes of a small number of disruptive pupils. In a few lessons, for example in art, teaching and learning was unsatisfactory because the teacher's subject expertise was weak.

17. Much of the best teaching, for example in English, encourages pupils to be active learners rather than passive listeners. Good planning is characterised in lessons by brisk series of activities, exemplified well in many mathematics lessons. Writing frames are used in a number of subjects, as for example in design and technology, to help pupils develop their literacy skills. Classroom management skills are good and generally sustain pupils' interest throughout lessons. Teachers' good use of on-going assessment is well established and contributes significantly to the overall good progress that pupils make in most lessons. However, the needs of higher attainers are not always met. In a number of lessons, for example in history, there is an over emphasis on seeking factual knowledge and too little opportunity for pupils to apply analytical and problem-solving skills. A good rapport between teacher and pupils enhances learning. In an excellent music lesson, for example, pupils made very good progress because of the intensity of their involvement in the subject.

18. Homework is set but there are inconsistencies between subjects and year groups and, on occasions, the homework does not build on learning in lessons.

19. Pupils with special needs learn well because they are well taught in literacy and numeracy classes, and well provided for in subject lessons. They learn best when activities are specially matched to their needs. An example occurred in a movement game in a Year 7 literacy lesson. This involved listening and concentration as well as an element of competition, and it enabled pupils to learn painlessly the names and characteristics of the main characters in a story. In a Year 5 numeracy lesson, a bowl of uncooked pasta and a cut-down transparent plastic drink container had pupils vying with one another to estimate, add and subtract simple fractions.

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

Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory.

- The curriculum is socially inclusive, offering good access and opportunity for all pupils to benefit from the range of activities available.
- Provision for pupils' development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills is good.
- Good extra-curricular provision enhances pupils' learning.
- The statutory requirement is not met for ensuring that every pupil has the opportunity to learn to swim.
- There is no overall strategy for the management of the learning experiences of pupils with special educational needs.
- There is good provision for pupils' social and moral development but provision for spiritual and cultural provision weaker.
- There are no formal strategies for identifying gifted and talented pupils.

20. The school's planned curriculum offers breadth and balance and meets statutory requirements, apart from a failure to provide pupils with an opportunity to swim before the end of Year 6. Time allocation to subjects is generally appropriate, although the provision for ICT in Years 5 and 6, for one period a week over two terms of the year only, makes for difficulties of continuity. The curriculum is socially inclusive, offering good access and opportunity for all pupils to benefit from the range of activities available.

21. Provision for literacy and numeracy is good. Support for the acquisition of numeracy skills across all subjects is less well developed than is the case with literacy, although some good examples were seen, as for example in design and technology. At the time of the inspection good examples were seen of ICT being used in other subject areas, for example in Year 7 work in religious education, but its application in other subject areas, such as physical education, is weaker.

22. Provision for pupils with special needs is satisfactory across all year groups. It includes small groups for the teaching of literacy and numeracy in which learning support assistants (LSAs) provide additional help. There are also special additional literacy classes as well as LSA support in subject lessons linked into pupils' individual education plans. This support is very good in science and ICT, good in geography, music, design technology and physical education, and satisfactory in English, maths, art, religious education and history. All pupils on the register have individual education plans which have clear targets and are easily accessed by all members of staff. Statements, and reviews for statemented pupils, are properly conducted and documented, with full parental involvement. However, there is no overall strategy for the management of the learning experiences of pupils with special needs; the provision is not well co-ordinated, and responsibilities within the different strands are not clearly defined.

23. A co-ordinator has been appointed to oversee provision for gifted and talented pupils, and liaison has been established with the Dorset High Attainers in Middle Schools (HAIMS) group. The school is establishing a register of gifted and talented pupils together with a policy for the extension of their learning experiences.

24. The quality of extra-curricular enrichment provided by the school is good. For example, there is a homework club that meets on two nights of the week, offering access to computers and help with homework, in addition to the facility to sit and work in congenial surroundings. A German club allows pupils to extend academic study beyond that available during the school day. Opportunities to take part in sport activities have been strengthened considerably this year as the result of the appointment of a new physical education specialist teacher. Drama and music clubs are well supported. A recent three-day trip to London, incorporating visits to Downing Street, the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral and a theatre, was enjoyed by 93 pupils in Year 8.

25. The school provides a good personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme that incorporates elements of education in citizenship. In addition to the timetabled PSHE there is a daily period of tutor-time, which, whilst relatively uncoordinated, permits tutors to introduce activities that support the PSHE program. For all year groups the normal school timetable is occasionally suspended to permit 'activity days' which promote health and environmental awareness. Outside agencies frequently participate in these events and bring expert knowledge and experience to such topics as drugs awareness and first aid. Pupils testify to the success of these activity days, which

supplement provision made in the school's successful personal, social and health education programme. The PSHE scheme of work is careful to link with work in other areas of the curriculum. An example is in science in Year 7, when work on reproduction is co-ordinated with work in PSHE on physical and emotional changes at puberty.

26. Links between the school and the community are satisfactory. Dorset operates a 'pyramid' system, whereby an upper school is linked to the middle schools from which it receives its pupils and the middle schools are in turn linked to the first schools from which they receive their pupils. The pyramid system works well for Lockyer's school. The school has close links with its local Anglican parish church, St Nicholas. It uses the church for drama presentations at Christmas time, and clergy from the church occasionally take part in school assemblies and in religious education. A range of outside agencies is invited to contribute to health and environment activity days. A youth club attached to the school is widely used by pupils and by their older siblings and friends.

27. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The contribution the school makes to pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. A thoughtful, reflective atmosphere is created in many tutor time-periods. Pupils are often given opportunities to reflect on their lives and the lives of others and to record their thoughts in their personal school diaries. There is a spiritual element in subjects such as music, where pupils celebrate the work of great composers, and in design and technology where pupils reflect on their personal expectations of what they need to do to improve.

28. However, the school has no overall policy to cover spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this means that coverage is inconsistent. Planning for pupils' spiritual development is not strong across all subjects, and not all areas of the curriculum make a significant contribution, which reduces the impact of the good work done by some. There is limited contribution from work in art, for example, which is a subject where a substantial contribution could be made.

29. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. A strong moral dimension is found in most lessons, where teachers emphasise a code of good behaviour and consideration for others. Behaviour is good around the school at breaks and lunchtimes. There are procedures in place for rewarding good work and behaviour, particularly the awards of bronze, silver and gold certificates. Pupils know right from wrong and the school is an orderly community.

30. There is good provision for pupils' social development. In the majority of lessons pupils have for developing such skills as working together, sharing and taking turns. There are also good opportunities for taking responsibility, such as tidying up in the classroom, helping in assembly and looking after younger pupils. After-school activities and a range of musical concerts add to the social development of pupils. At the school council, pupils are able to raise issues of concern and interest to them. They discuss a range of environmental and moral issues such as the use of recycled material for sustainable development. There is a good range of trips, including one to France each year, and these help pupils to develop their social relationships with one another and with adults. Pupils are courteous to visitors and happy to talk with them.

31. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There is a cultural contribution made by the study of other world religions in religious education lessons. Emphasis on the multicultural element of music is evident in the use of musical instruments from around the world. There is also a cultural element in subjects such as English, French, geography and history, and a number of trips and visitors to the school make a contribution to cultural development. In general, pupils have good opportunities to study their own culture

and heritage. This is to be seen, for example, in Year 8 form-times, where pupils give individual talks. A good example was where a pupil brought in ballet shoes and gave a talk and demonstration that contained a strong cultural dimension. On the other hand, opportunities to study the richness and diversity of other cultures are limited. This is evident in subjects such as science, mathematics and history, where limited acknowledgement is made of the worldwide influence of other cultures on our development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's safe and caring environment has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve.

- Teachers' relationships with pupils are good-humoured and mutually respectful.
- Good systems help pupils to settle quickly into Year 5 and other year groups, and prepare Year 8 pupils for transfer to upper schools.
- Assessment procedures are good and support pupils' learning well.
- No member of staff has a current first aid certificate.
- There are no regular checks on trends in attendance.

32. Satisfactory procedures are in place for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The headteacher is the responsible officer for child protection. He is well informed, and has taken part recently in formal training. All staff, including learning support assistants and mid-day assistants, understand child protection issues. Teachers have been trained in everyday procedures and have been given written guidelines to alert them to signs of physical or mental abuse. Learning support assistants and midday assistants, however, have not been trained and they are unaware of the written guidelines.

33. The school has adapted and put into practice the local education authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out-of-school visits. Good health and safety practice is supplemented by regular risk assessments. The site manager is a co-opted member of the governors' premises committee. Satisfactory supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playgrounds at break times and lunchtimes, but no member of staff has a current first-aid certificate. Periodic fire alarm practices ensure that the single-storey building can quickly be evacuated. The site and buildings present no apparent risk to health and safety, but the sports hall flooring is not slip-resistant, and is potentially hazardous.

34. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good but informal. Although teachers have good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils, the system does not provide permanent and cumulative records for staff leaving the school to pass on to their successors. However, teachers and other adults know the pupils well and are skilled in assessing their needs. Pupils can speak confidentially to the school nurse at weekly 'drop-in' sessions. Pupils respond very well to a variety of topics introduced by their form tutors. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, are included fully in all activities. They receive good individual care and support from tutors and heads of year. Specific training for individual heads of year has included pastoral care, child protection, and liaison with the first-school. The headteacher is friendly, accessible and reassuring. He knows all pupils by name and has a good knowledge of their attainment and personal development. Teaching assistants develop good relationships with pupils and are skilled in curriculum and personal support.

35. A good induction system helps pupils settle quickly into Year 5. Pupils joining other year groups settle quickly and happily into the school's routines. Good procedures in Year 8 prepare pupils for transfer to upper schools.

36. Simple reminders of the school rules are displayed in classrooms. Most teachers are very skilled in behaviour management and they establish good humoured and mutually respectful relationships with pupils. The anti-bullying policy is not displayed but the provisions of the policy are practised consistently and thoroughly. A very good anti-bullying statement was included in a newsletter at the start of the school year. Pupils and parents have few concerns about bullying. They know that discussions and a reconciliation process deal effectively with the few reported incidents. Staff and governors have not yet agreed a policy on the use of force by staff, or on procedures for noting incidents of restraint of pupils.

37. The school's reward system acknowledges good behaviour and good work and effort. Pupils in all year groups value teachers' merit awards and the certificates and letters to their parents, triggered by totals of 25, 50 and 100 merits.

38. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Class registers are completed neatly, and conform with legal requirements. However, office procedures do not include regular checks on attendance trends in year groups or in the whole school, or telephone calls to families when children are absent without explanation. The school records a very small number of unauthorised absences, but each year a significant number of families ask permission to take their children on holiday for periods exceeding ten school days.

Assessment

39. Assessment procedures are good and support pupils' learning well. Since the last inspection the assessment policy of the school has been thoroughly reviewed and many improvements have been made. Assessments are now generally referenced to National Curriculum Levels to indicate standards. The close correlation between the teacher assessments and test results in 2001 indicates that this review was beneficial. There is very good practice in information and communication technology (ICT) and in design and technology, which includes self-assessment by pupils. The techniques used could profitably be shared with other subject areas. Assessment is used to provide a basis for the grouping of pupils by ability in Years 7 and 8 in mathematics and English. In physical education there are good detailed assessments for each activity. History has good day-to-day assessment and uses common tasks related to National Curriculum Levels. There is a lack of uniformity in English, as marking is inconsistent across the school. The one weakness is assessment in religious education, but the policy and practice are currently under review by the new co-ordinator to align the subject with the assessments relative to the Agreed Syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed well and the information is used in the preparation of their individual educational plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning, and they have favourable views of the school.

- Communication with parents is good.
- Parents have good opportunities to discuss their children's work and progress.

At the pre-inspection meeting, parents' views were positive, and were confirmed by most responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The school has good links with parents, and the inspection confirms good relationships and good two-way communication. Parents and friends provide consistent, valuable help to groups of pupils and to individuals, and donate materials for use in practical lessons. The parents' association organises regular social and fund raising events, and raises significant amounts of money for the school each year. Recent purchases have included a digital camera, a television, microscopes, sports equipment and numerous small items for classrooms. The headteacher and the deputy head attend all meetings of the parents' association. Good co-operation is established between the parents' group and the governing body, and some families are active on both committees. The school has supported the school nurse in establishing a parenting course at the village hall, attended by 40 families.

The quality of information for parents is good. Regular, numbered newsletters are informative about events and important dates. Biennial questionnaires record parents' views of many aspects of school life. Negative responses to a questionnaire prompted the school to send parents brief termly overviews of the work to be covered by each year group. Parents have a very wide choice of consultation evenings each year to meet teachers and discuss their children's progress. Written reports to parents are of satisfactory quality showing in some detail what pupils know and can do and often setting targets for improvement. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report for 2001 conform with legal requirements.

Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter Year 5 or join other year groups. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed of progress, and they understand the school's procedures for support and discipline. Good records are maintained by the special needs co-ordinator, and he is available by appointment to discuss pupils' progress. A significant minority of parents were not satisfied with homework arrangements. Inspection evidence shows that there is variation between teachers and between subjects.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher, with the strong support of his deputy headteacher and senior staff, leads the school very well.

- The school's decision-making, planning and review procedures are effective.
- Management of the special needs department is satisfactory but leadership is unsatisfactory.
- Resources and staffing are satisfactory but accommodation is barely adequate in a number of respects.
- The school is effective and gives good value for money.

40. Good morale has been maintained during a period when there have been numerous changes in staff and long-term illness. Standards have risen gradually since the last inspection. The headteacher gains respect from staff, parents and pupils by his calm, authoritative presence around the school.

41. The governing body plays an increasingly active role in support of the headteacher and staff. Positive relationships exist between the governing body and the senior management team. The governors are well aware of their roles and responsibilities in shaping the direction of the school in partnership with the headteacher. They receive information from the headteacher which enables them to carry out their duties effectively. Day-to-day financial controls and the strategic use of resources are good. Procedures for financial management and control are efficient and the school ensures that it receives best value for money. The administrative support from the office is skilful and efficient.

42. Senior and middle managers work well together. The school's decision-making, planning and review procedures are effective. The seamless integration of the school's performance management policy into its established systems has improved appraisal and training. Monitoring and support of teaching and learning is a high priority for senior staff and is underpinning improved achievement patterns in the school. The school's priorities are clearly articulated in the school development plan. Year co-ordinators are effective and carry out a consistent policy on rewards and sanctions. Most subject co-ordinators have been in post for less than two years but overall they provide good leadership in their curriculum areas. Leadership and management are good in English, mathematics, design and technology, geography, history and religious education. They are very good in information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education. The temporary science co-ordinator and the recently appointed head of French show good leadership and are setting up sound management plans.

43. Management of the special needs department is satisfactory but leadership is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator adequately fulfils the requirements of his role description. For example, all documentation relating to pupils is in place, a development plan is in place, ICT is well used to develop and maintain individual education plans and the co-ordinator liaises effectively with partner institutions and outside agencies. A recent change of premises has generated extra work which has slowed essential work on the school special needs policy and the implementation of the new Code of Practice, which should be in place by September 2002. Lack of an overall strategy for the co-ordination of the many facets of the department leaves people uncertain of their roles and expectations, and working in isolation instead of as part of a team. While this in no way affects the progress of the pupils concerned because their well-being always comes first, it does affect the potential of the department to move forward as a unified entity. The learning support staff are not included in the Performance Management arrangements and there is no formal opportunity for appraisal. A majority of LSAs are using National Vocational Qualifications as personal development outside the school structure. The school regularly has visiting students to complete a teaching practice at the school as part of their course.

44. Resources are satisfactory overall. The library provides good resources to support the curriculum and for pupils of all abilities. The links with the county library service are well used to maintain variety and quality. The cataloguing is computerised, and there is effective access to the Internet and to ROM research resources.

45. Overall, staffing is satisfactory. Staffing has gone through difficult times for recruitment since the previous inspection. The overall match of staff to the needs of pupils and the subject curriculum is satisfactory. The science department has experienced staffing difficulties. In design and technology non-specialists are very well supported.

Arrangements for professional development are good. Teachers have good opportunities for professional development, and decisions on training are guided by matching the thrust of the school development plan. The national training initiative for ICT had a disappointing start in the school, but following evaluation did make some improvement. Therefore computers are still an issue for some departments. A small group of teachers are using learning credits to follow the European Computer Driving Licence Certificate, to hone their ICT skills.

46. Accommodation is barely adequate overall, with some strengths and some significant weaknesses which affect the quality of pupils' learning. Music, design and technology and ICT benefit from good specialist accommodation. However, many rooms are small for what are sometimes large teaching groups and this limits some practical activities, for example in art and mathematics. There is limited laboratory space in science, and consequently some science lessons have to take place in classrooms which restricts experimental activities. Physical education has good accommodation both indoors and outdoors. The hall is a useful resource, although since it is used as a dining room and a through route during the day, activities in English and physical education are sometimes disrupted.

47. The site manager and his team work well to ensure that the school and its environment are well maintained; this is a particular priority in the school development plan. There are some movement problems in bad weather, and these affect pupils' learning. There are no covered walkways between the many scattered classroom blocks. For example, during the period of the inspection there was persistent heavy rain, and the absence of shelter between buildings meant that after breaks between sessions the pupils arrived at their classrooms feeling wet and uncomfortable.

48. The socio-economic background of the pupils is broadly average. Standards are rising. The attitudes of pupils to learning and their relationships with one another are positive. Teaching is good. Effective leadership and management have enabled the school to make good progress since the previous inspection. The school provides an effective environment for pupils' learning. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order to raise levels of attainment and improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, senior management team and teaching staff need to:

- Meet the needs of higher attainers in all curriculum areas by:
(*Paragraphs 4, 5, 17, 23, 76, 96, 101, 134*)
 - * setting out a school policy on provision for gifted and talented pupils;
 - * providing resources which extend pupils' understanding and encourage them to develop higher levels on analysis and problem solving.
- Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs by:
(*Paragraphs: 22, 43, 55, 113*)
 - * setting out an overall strategy for the coherent management of the learning experiences of pupils with special needs;
 - * planning for meeting the requirements of the new Code of Practice;
 - * clearly defining responsibilities for all staff.
- Improve standards in French in Year 8 by:
(*Paragraphs: 113-119*)
 - * building on improvements in teaching and learning in Year 7.

50. The school needs also to address the following issues:

- Improve the quality of accommodation when opportunities arise.
(*Paragraphs: 46, 47, 76, 79, 80, 127, 132*)
- National Curriculum requirements in swimming.
(*Paragraphs: 132-133*)
- An overall school policy for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
(*Paragraphs: 27-31*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

84

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

42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	23	34	22	2	0	0
Percentage	4	27	40	26	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y5 – Y8

Number of pupils on the school's roll	525
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	14

Special educational needs

Y5 – Y8

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	125

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	70	62	132

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	51	46	62
	Girls	54	38	54
	Total	105	84	116
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (83)	64 (77)	88 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	48	47	56
	Girls	52	41	54
	Total	100	88	110
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	76 (79)	67 (76)	83 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	522
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes:****Y5–Y8**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8

Education support staff:**Y5–Y8**

Total number of education support staff	13.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	249

Average teaching group size:**Y5–Y8**

Key Stage 2	28.0
Key Stage 3	24.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	971012.00
Total expenditure	896005.00
Expenditure per pupil	1747.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	35253.00
Balance carried forward to next year	110260.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.6

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

525
300

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	26	57	13	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	60	9	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	67	9	4	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	56	23	6	1
The teaching is good.	23	68	5	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	59	13	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	43	7	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	52	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	64	14	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	27	60	4	4	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	62	5	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	56	11	2	5

Other issues raised by parents

None

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths:

- The subject is managed well.
- Teaching is good and pupils respond very well to the subject.
- Standards are above average.
- Homework is used well to promote high standards.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Areas for improvement:

- Computers are not used regularly in the classroom.
- There is a lack of space for drama.
- English does not make enough contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures.

51. Standards of attainment are above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8, and pupils achieve well. This is because they are taught well. The literacy hour has been introduced effectively and teachers develop and share strategies for teaching English. Pupils have very positive attitudes, are active learners, and respond particularly well to the creative and imaginative aspects of their work. This has a clear impact on their level of achievement, and improvement since the last inspection has been good.

52. In the year 2001 tests, results were above the national average in that more pupils reached Level 5 or above. The present Year 6 shows similar levels of attainment and the trend over a three-year period is for an overall improvement in standards. Boys do less well than girls but they are attaining well in comparison with the national picture. This is clear in Year 8, and school data shows that boys are reaching higher levels than in Dorset as a whole. Standards in Year 8 are above the national average. The introduction of the national literacy policy is improving standards for pupils in all year groups.

53. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards are above average at the end of Year 6. This reflects a similar level of standards to those observed in the last inspection. Attainment levels in speaking and listening are good and listening skills are often very good. In all year groups speaking and listening skills are developed through discussion activities, and individual pupils are able to speak confidently to adults and in class. Pupils generate ideas in brain storming sessions and they contribute well in discussions because they have frequent opportunities to use these skills in individual presentations and group work. The work planned across the year groups fosters well the development of skills in speaking and listening. Pupils of average attainment in Year 6 are able to explain clearly the different genres in creative writing. In one lesson a pupil with special educational needs was able to understand the ideas in the poem 'Sea Fever' and to explain the use of 'whetted' in the context of the poem. All pupils can talk about different types of imagery used in poetry, and the higher attaining pupils understand and can use metaphor well. In Year 7 pupils contributed well to discussions about the events portrayed in a tale from Chaucer. Oral work in Year 8 related to a study of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' showed that pupils understand very well the complications of the relationships between the lovers and the intervention of Puck.

54. Across the school, skills in reading are better than those to be seen nationally. Reading standards in Year 6 are good overall, and some pupils have very good skills in skimming and scanning text to find information. Skills in use of the library are very well established. Pupils show a secure knowledge of the use of an index, the difference between fiction and non-fiction and the ways in which books can be found in a library. Some lower attaining pupils have a limited vocabulary, which affects their understanding of what they read, but they all have secure skills in breaking down words into different syllables to work out their meaning. The literacy programme is encouraging higher standards in reading and all pupils cope well in class, although some need a considerable amount of support. Pupils have been introduced to a wide range of literature and they understand how different imagery is used to make writing more vivid. The majority are confident about using non-fiction texts, including information in newspapers and on the Internet. In many lessons pupils use dictionaries to improve their vocabulary and they are able to use computers to develop their skills in some aspects of reading and research. However, computers are not being used sufficiently often in class, though they are used at times for research and word processing. Reading standards in Year 8 are good for the majority of pupils and they cope with difficult and complex texts well.

55. Attainment in writing is above the national average for the majority of pupils. Presentation of work is often good, as most pupils have secure skills in handwriting. They are experienced in the drafting and redrafting of work, and this ensures that work on display is often of a very high standard. The highest attaining pupils are able to write about and illustrate their ideas well and many can produce pieces of extended writing. It is clear that pupils are encouraged to concentrate on grammar, spelling and punctuation; for example, pupils of below average attainment are able to explain the use of the apostrophe of omission. However, pupils in all year groups make too many errors in basic spelling and punctuation, especially in the use of capital letters. The range of written work is good, with evidence of imaginative work and of writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. The literacy hour provides many opportunities for creative work, and pupils benefit from writing their own poetry. Individual pupils with lower potential attainment, and some of those with special educational needs, find it difficult to express their ideas clearly on paper and struggle to produce writing of an appropriate standard. However, they can all write simple sentences and poems to express their ideas and they often make real and valuable contributions to work in class. Pupils are proud of their work and those with lower potential attainment are particularly keen to point out their poems in the display. This is because the approach to learning and the level of support gives them confidence in their ability to succeed. Pupils understand the difference between standard and non-standard English and can appreciate the difference between formal and informal styles of writing. In Year 8 the best work is of a very high standard, being both accurate and creative.

56. Teachers make good use of the potential of drama and role-play. Year 8 pupils of all levels of attainment can follow the structure and rhythm of the poetry in the work of Shakespeare very well, because they have the opportunity to act various scenes and to explore the way in which the play was written. This practical approach to Shakespeare ensures that the plays are accessible to all pupils. However, classrooms have limited space for drama, and when the hall is used the lessons can be disrupted because it is used as a route to other classrooms. Pupils benefit from a similar approach to learning in Year 7, where they are introduced to Middle English and the work of Chaucer in a way that promotes understanding and real enjoyment for all pupils.

57. Overall, achievement in English is good throughout the school because of this inclusive approach, and the majority of pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, writing and reading. This is well monitored by their teachers, and questioning in class is often particularly effective in checking pupils' understanding and challenging them to think

more carefully. Assessment is used to plan for different ability groups during the literacy hour and for the different bands of ability in Years 7 and 8. There is a good match between tasks set and resources used, so that all pupils can make the progress that they should. This contributes to a high quality of learning for pupils in the majority of English lessons. Although they all have a similar range of activities, the planning of lessons ensures that learning is tailored to the needs of individuals. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them because they receive good support and guidance from teachers and learning support assistants. Higher attaining pupils are given work that challenges them. However, not all pupils are placed in the appropriate sets for English because the selection criteria are based on English and mathematics.

58. The quality of teaching is good. It creates good learning opportunities and has a positive impact on the achievement of all pupils. The strengths of teaching are in the often very good subject knowledge and methodology of teachers. Planning of lessons and the management of pupils are also good. In the most successful lessons observed there was very a good match between the teaching strategies in use and the needs of the pupils, and this helped pupils to learn effectively. Class and specialist teachers have a good understanding of all aspects of the subject. They provide inspiring examples and set really interesting tasks because of the care in planning across the year groups. Teaching is good in that it encourages pupils to be active participants in learning rather than passive listeners. Very good use is made of overhead projectors as a focus for new learning. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils were provided with an excellent learning experience because of the fast pace and excitement of the work, which was based on versions of the story of Red Riding Hood. In Years 7 and 8 classes pupils are constantly challenged to contribute by sharing ideas and thinking for themselves. Homework is set regularly and this promotes good progress in the development of all aspects of reading and writing.

59. Pupils enjoy their work in English, and behaviour and response in lessons are very good. They are happy to talk about their work, and they recognize and enjoy a variety of types of writing because of the well-chosen range of texts used in class. Pupils approach tasks in English with confidence and enthusiasm. In all classes observed it was obvious that pupils really enjoyed the well-planned activities and that they really wanted to contribute their ideas and share them with others. They benefit from a rich curriculum in English, which makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural experience. Pupils are introduced to a good range of English literature but there are not enough opportunities at present for them to find out about and appreciate the literature of other cultures. The school is adequately resourced for English but there is a shortage of books for Years 7 and 8, and of books from other cultures, and only limited access to computers. Available resources are well used, although not all teachers are fully confident in the use of ICT.

60. The management of the subject is good. There is a clear focus on ensuring continuity and progression, on planning, and on the development and use of assessment and target setting. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, especially in the improvement in standards and in teaching in Years 7 and 8. Pupils are now well prepared for work at the upper school and they can take with them a real enthusiasm for English and for drama.

Literacy

61. Pupils enter Year 5 with broadly average standards although there is some variation from year to year. Standards are above the national average in Year 6 and in Year 8. Pupils achieve well because the school has introduced the national literacy strategy effectively in Years 5 and 6. It is planning the introduction of the strategy in Years 7 and 8 and is aware of the need to develop literacy skills across the curriculum in all year groups. Skills in literacy are developed well in some subject areas, for example in geography and history. Skills in communication through discussion, presentations and in the sharing of ideas are well developed and there are good opportunities for extended writing in many subjects.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths:

- Good subject leadership and management.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Overall standards are above average.
- Good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

Areas for improvement:

- The range of teaching strategies to actively involve pupils more in lessons.
- The use of assessment for long-term curriculum planning.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom.

62. When pupils enter the school their attainment is average overall. Standards of attainment are above average at the end of Years 6 and 8 and pupils achieve well. Pupils' attainment in the 2001 national tests for 11 year olds was well below those of all schools and of similar schools.

63. These results were disappointing, as previously there had been a rise in results since the last inspection. Since the results for 2001 were published the school has worked hard to improve the standards of these pupils, and current work in Year 7 indicates that they are in line with, and in many cases above, national expectations. Higher attaining pupils and many pupils of average attainment have a good level of numeracy. They solve problems which involve knowing and using the areas of rectangular and triangular shapes, and analyse and compare data. Lower attaining pupils have average number skills and use simple co-ordinates accurately. They solve problems concerned with angles and bearings and make simple tally charts when analysing data. Their understanding develops well, and in Year 8 pupils can solve questions involving circles. Pupils' algebra skills are refined to enable them to plot and draw straight-line graphs and to solve equations. Lower attaining pupils work confidently with a range of shapes and symmetrical patterns.

64. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on standards. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 draw simple line graphs and solve problems involving the perimeter and area of rectangles. Average attaining pupils interpret simple graphs and can estimate answers. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs draw and name plane shapes and make calculations involving time and distance.

65. These above average standards are a result of good teaching. Teachers plan their lessons well; a good introductory mental exercise is followed by a series of brisk activities that build on pupils' understanding and finish with an efficient review of what has been learned. In Years 7 and 8 in particular, teachers' good specialist subject knowledge enables them to include material that is challenging and relevant for pupils. Activities are organised, although some investigative work suffers from lack of space in classroom. An example occurred when pupils were unable to move around the room to investigate larger circular objects or to use a range of techniques for measuring circumference. Pupils' work is regularly marked and there are many encouraging comments made. However, these comments do not always point the way forward and indicate to pupils how they could improve their work. Teachers cater for the range of abilities within the classroom well.

66. Pupils respond enthusiastically in mathematics lessons. They arrive at lessons in a positive frame of mind and are ready to work. They settle quickly and are attentive to their teachers. When asked, they contribute to the lesson by eagerly answering questions in an enthusiastic and polite manner. In a lesson involving symmetry, pupils worked on the board in front of the class with a confidence which shows the mutual respect that exists. Classroom management is good and generates a positive learning atmosphere. Pupils' exercise books are neat and well kept, and they highlight important information so that it can easily be recognised when they review their work for tests and examinations. All pupils work well together, and when asked to work in groups or pairs they do so with no fuss and co-operate well with each other. They are mutually supportive when discussing questions and put forward their own reasons for their solution to a particular problem.

67. The curriculum includes good opportunities for investigations and for pupils to apply their ICT skills. However, lack of facilities in the classrooms hinders the use of computers, as whole school facilities are heavily booked. There are regular opportunities for assessment, and teachers keep good records of marks. Pupils are grouped by ability in conjunction with English. This is an effective way of providing work for pupils of different ability, and lower attaining pupils are in smaller groups. This small group size, together with some effective support enables good progress to be made. There are some classes, however, where there is no support for pupils and this hinders progress.

68. The department is well led and managed by an experienced teacher. The teachers are supportive of each other and exchange ideas on a regular basis. The head of the department monitors lessons and regularly looks at pupils' books to ensure that standards are maintained. There is also support for the teachers of Years 5 and 6 who do not have specialist knowledge in mathematics. As a result of this there have been improvements in teaching and learning. There is a comprehensive scheme of work that enables teachers to plan their lessons. This is referenced to the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. The resources available to teach the subject are adequate.

69. Improvement since the last inspection has been sound, teaching has improved, and apart from last year there has been a continual rise in results. The quantity and quality of the textbooks used have also improved.

Numeracy

70. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and standards of numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Mental skills are regularly reinforced in all years as part of normal lessons. There are some good examples of the use of graphs, charts and the interpretation of these in geography. Accurate measurement of length and

angle were a feature of design and technology lessons, and pupils could apply these skills well. Numerical skills are underdeveloped in science, as the opportunities for supporting and using a range of skills have yet to be fully identified. Observations in other subjects indicate that the level of application is satisfactory.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths:

- Good relationships and attitudes.
- Sound policies and plans for development in place.

Areas for improvement:

- The matching of work to the abilities of all pupils.
- The development of numeracy and literacy skills.

71. Standards of attainment are average at the end of Years 6 and 8. Pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactorily in Years 7 and 8. Standards in some classes, particularly in Year 8, have suffered because of staff absence but the department has done a great deal to maintain the quality of provision. In 2001, the overall results at the end of Year 6 were below the national average although results for higher attainers were close to the national average. Written work is satisfactory and some, as in a Year 7 and 8 project on woodlice and rocks, is of a high quality. In Year 8, a number of pupils lack confidence in their investigative skills. Above average standards in Year 5 were evident when pupils made knowledgeable and confident contributions to class discussion on habitats.

72. In most lessons pupils respond with enthusiasm and make satisfactory or better progress. Some pupils in Years 7 and 8 who show particular ability in science are not given challenging tasks to maintain their interest and encourage greater progress. In most classes observed pupils contributed their knowledge and ideas to class discussions with confidence. They particularly enjoy practical tasks. Pupils work purposefully and safely together in pairs. In all years behaviour is generally good or better. In the occasional lesson, a small group of pupils do disrupt the learning of others.

73. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and respond well to the support they get from LSAs. In a Year 8 practical lesson, a pupil with learning difficulties worked closely with a high attaining pupil and both made good progress. Each contributed their strengths and supported one another. Worksheets provided for pupils are not always geared to the needs of the low attainer.

74. The standard of teaching is generally good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and their lessons are well planned. They have a positive relationship with their pupils and in most lessons observed class management was firm and purposeful creating a good atmosphere for learning. More attention could be paid to visual learning. Some marking supports and encourages pupil progress with helpful comments but this needs to be more consistent across the whole department. Homework is set but does not consistently build on learning in lessons. The LSAs provide good support. In a number of lessons, teachers do not place enough emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

75. Significant changes have been made to the science curriculum over the past year and sound plans are in place for further development. New schemes of work have been introduced and these are helping to bring more consistency to the teaching. Computer software is being used to aid assessment and investigations. Detailed progress recording sheets are kept for Years 7 and 8 pupils. The accommodation and resources for science are adequate. The main laboratory is stimulating and well equipped but the second laboratory is cramped for most classes and limits practical work. Years 5 and 6 have all their lessons in a classroom and this has an adverse effect on their practical work. The department is well supported by a technician who doubles up as an effective support assistant. Good use is made of a well-stocked library and increasing use is being made of the school's computing facilities to support learning. There is a Year 6 science club which helps to extend pupils' interest, knowledge and understanding.

76. The leadership and management of the department have been affected over the past year because of long-term absence. In the face of these difficulties the temporary science co-ordinator has, with her team, been largely successful in maintaining standards and in keeping the department moving forward.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths:

- The quality of work from a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in Years 7 and 8.
- Links with partner schools to help raise standards.

Areas for improvement:

- Application of pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- Include a wider range of multi-cultural projects into the curriculum.
- Raise the standards of the higher attainers.

77. Standards of attainment are average at the end of Years 6 and 8, and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. There were no assessments against attainment target levels at the end of Year 6 for 2001; the current head of department has been in post since September. However, the department is well prepared to provide them for the current Year 6. Much work has been done with neighbouring middle schools and with the upper school which they all feed, to ensure comparability of levels. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially in Years 7 and 8. An example was to be seen in one boy's excellent work in his sketchbook, inspired by the Hockney 'Big Splash'. However, there is little evidence of progress over time in sketchbooks, for example, in the development of tonal shading. There is much potential to be developed and some pupils are already able to control the medium they are working in, such as pastel. Some good work was seen on display, and in Year 7 the Hockney paintings have inspired some good creative work in collage. Some of directly observed drawing has led to higher standards, but in Years 5 and 6 the work is weak in this area. Interesting and well produced large masks by Year 6 are on display.

78. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In a few lessons, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory because subject expertise is weak. In many lessons teachers prepare and plan thoroughly the techniques to be taught, but they lack the confidence to give pupils the opportunities to be creative. Relationships are good, but expectations are not high enough. Organisation and management are calm and unflustered, and pupils respond by sustaining their concentration.

79. Pupils' response is satisfactory in Year 5 and good in Years 6, 7 and 8. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils concentrated on learning as closely as they could from a video of the Hockney's work. However, pupils have a very limited opportunity to apply their ICT skills in the art curriculum. Equally, there is very little multi-cultural input in their art. The overcrowded nature of the specialist art space, especially with larger groups, makes medium- and large- scale three-dimensional work difficult. Timetabling does not always ensure that classes can use the specialist accommodation. The assessment system is good and is at its best when it is informal and built into lessons. The joint work on attainment target levels with neighbouring schools is a significant strength.

80. The head of department is an effective leader who has been responsible for major improvements in provision and practice in the brief time he has been in post. There is effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Much has been done, but much remains to be done. The time allocation for art is adequate but the accommodation is barely adequate. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Three-dimensional work has significantly improved. There have been significant improvements in assessment procedures, gallery visits, and extra-curricular art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths:

- Recent developments to encompass Curriculum 2000, using the QCA units.
- Quality of teaching and learning in relation to problem solving and independence.
- Specialist provision from Year 5 to Year 8.
- Developing information and communication technology (ICT) links with the upper school.
- Literacy and numeracy strategies to improve standards.

Areas for improvement:

- Use of the National Curriculum Levels as a self-motivator for pupils.
- The cultural dimension of design and technology.
- The continued development of the design and technology expertise of non-specialists.

81. Standards of attainment are average at the end of Years 6 and 8, and pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. Pupils use a range of materials safely. Modification of their 'making' is good, but pupils do not always record their thinking processes. At the end of Year 6, attainment is in line with national expectations, because pupils can use the specialist workshops of resistant materials, food and textiles technology and raise their designing and making skills.

82. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 8 is generally in line with national expectations, and a significant number of pupils attain better than expected results, some equalling the standard of work expected in Year 9. Pupils cut, shape, join or combine a variety of materials to produce a good quality product. The unavoidable extended absence of the

subject co-ordinator has had an adverse effect on attainment, because of frequent changes in staffing. The refurbishment of the resistant materials area also seriously restricted the opportunity for pupils to use computers for control technology. This has reduced competence in using computers for problem solving. The attainment of girls and boys is generally similar. In all cases, making is stronger than designing. This is because generic skills need refinement to raise standards further, for example in isometric and orthographic drawing, rendering, and flow planning.

83. Lower attaining pupils make good progress against their individual education plans, and inclusion is a focus of department planning. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well, learning support assistants are used effectively in the classroom, and there is a good match to pupils' needs when teachers plan lessons.

84. Talented pupils have the opportunity to extend their skills through time outside lessons, as well as the chance to take up the challenge of extending their work in class. Assessment is effective and tracks pupils' progress to ensure they reach their potential. In Years 5 and 6 achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' creativity is challenged through rigorous targeting that drives their individual achievement to its capacity. For example in Year 5, pupils are able to produce a good quality wooden picture with the use of resistant materials, handling tools, and intricate cutting and shaping. Pupils complete butt joints and mitred joints to make a picture frame. Individual designs show pupils' imagination and ability to produce a good simplified image, such as a sailing boat. In textiles, pupils again learn the skills of shaping and joining fabrics. They use felt to make a basic shape, which they embellish with buttons to meet their original design drawing. Pupils use numeracy skills to measure accurately and produce patterns, as well as building up a strong base of technical vocabulary to support their designing.

85. By the end of Year 8 pupils use a range of materials and follow the design process to produce more complex products of good quality. Pupils build on their earlier skills to modify their designs. Their annotation of their work to explain their thinking process shows progress. Techniques of handling materials and equipment have matured, and pupils produce some outstanding results by designing and constructing a bag, using recycled materials. They consider other designers' work and are analytical in their approach to manufactured products. Information and communication technology (ICT), used for control technology, has diminished over recent months because of the refurbishment of the department and the delay in materials arriving from the upper school.

86. Attitudes to learning are very good in design and technology. Teachers have consistently high expectations and are establishing good quality standards in making and design work. A small minority of boys occasionally attempt to disrupt the learning of their peers, but teachers deal with this behaviour problem successfully. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by learning new skills and working in small groups to research projects.

87. Teaching is good and includes an element of very good teaching. Planning is good and capitalises on the effective links with special needs. Teaching establishes the importance of technical vocabulary, though these words are not displayed in all classrooms. The consistent use of design sheets in Years 5 and 6 is further improved by moving to A3 design sheets in Years 7 and 8. Pupils develop their special awareness skills to produce well-proportioned design ideas which they then convert to working drawings. The quality of working drawings is variable. The department has good prompt sheets to improve drawing, but these were not used effectively last year during the curriculum leader's absence and therefore pupils' skills have diminished. Teachers produce good writing frames to help pupils with presentation. Clear expectations at the start of every lesson and plenary

sessions consolidate learning and set the targets for the next session. Generally lessons have short-term targets to allow all pupils to achieve in a step-by-step pattern. Very good use of assessment to modify teaching underpins pupils' attainment; a good example of this was seen during the picture frame lesson. Pupils are proud of their results, and this reinforces their confidence. Homework is set in line with the school policy.

88. Management in the department is good. The lack of a technician causes problems for teachers. It has the effect that production of cutting lists in resistant materials and textiles, hygiene in food technology, and the maintenance of equipment and tools has to be completed by the teachers or neglected. There are non-specialist teachers in the department but enthusiasm and the support from specialists is maintaining standards. Good planning for Years 5 and 6 by a primary specialist has ensured that teaching and learning in design and technology integrate well with basic skills and personal development. Accommodation is good. The department has been refurbished and specialist areas have a positive impact on learning. Parental contributions of good quality card and board support the high quality of modelling by pupils. All areas for improvement in the previous report have been addressed effectively. The design and technology area has made very good progress from the previous report.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths:

- Pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of basic geographical skills and use them to make good progress in lessons.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives.
- Pupils show a keen interest in geography and concentrate well in lessons.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement:

- Assessment data needs to be used more effectively to inform teaching and learning.
- A range of extension activities is needed to challenge the more able pupils.

89. Standards of attainment in geography throughout the school are in line with the national average. Because of the nature of the Humanities timetable it was not possible to observe any geography lessons in Years 6 and 7. However, examples of pupils' work were analysed across the complete range of age and ability. The quality of the work seen was good. It was neatly presented, written activities were generally completed, and maps and diagrams were clearly annotated.

90. In Year 5, pupils were able to select relevant statistical information to show the differences between Kenya and the UK, and appropriate geographical vocabulary was used to explain their findings. Four-figure co-ordinates were used to successfully locate places on a map. Year 6 pupils are aware of the basic components and links of the water cycle. The higher attaining pupils can use six figure grid references accurately and recognise simple contour patterns taken from Ordnance Survey maps. Good examples of fieldwork techniques, such as labelled field sketches, were observed from the work undertaken on the residential field study visit to the Isle of Purbeck.

91. In Year 7, pupils are aware of the global distribution of earthquakes and volcanoes and can offer simple explanations for their causes and location. Sound numeracy skills are used to identify the differences between the north and south of Italy which are then presented in accurately drawn pie charts and climate graphs. Pupils in Year 8 recognise and describe the population distribution in Brazil and offer simple explanations to explain this pattern. They distinguish between weather and climate but only the more able can explain why they vary from place to place.

92. Teaching is good overall, and pupils learn well as a result. Some classes are taught by non-specialists, but they are not disadvantaged by this. All teachers show good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives. Teachers show good classroom management skills to sustain the interest and concentration of the pupils. Boys and girls attain equally well and are keen to participate in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of close liaison with learning support staff.

93. Staff insist on high standards of behaviour, and the pupils respond in a positive manner. They are attentive in lessons and focus quickly on the tasks set. They work collaboratively when required, and relationships between the and with the class teacher are good.

94. The subject is enthusiastically led by a head of department with a firm commitment to raising levels of achievement. The small group of teachers work well together as a team and recognise the importance of common objectives and the sharing of good practice. However, schemes of work need to be updated to include key skills and a variety of assessment opportunities for all year groups.

95. Assessment and monitoring procedures are better developed in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. Assessment data is not used well to inform curriculum planning by developing more sharply focused learning targets for all pupils. However, the department has made good progress since the last inspection. Numeracy links are now evident in a number of teaching modules, and information and communication technology (ICT) opportunities exist for all year groups. Marking and assessment procedures have improved but are not standardised across all years.

HISTORY

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

Strengths:

- Good leadership and management.
- Good assessment.
- Good liaison with the upper school.
- A good programme of visits to supplement the curriculum.

Areas for development:

- Providing a better match of work to meet the needs of higher attainers.
- Providing better links between curriculum provision for pupils between Years 5 and 6 and Years 7 and 8.

96. Standards of pupils by the age of eleven and the age of 13 are in line with expectations of similarly aged pupils nationally, in knowledge, understanding and the development of

historical skills. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. However, some higher attainers make more limited progress when they are not given sufficiently challenging work.

97. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop a sound understanding of various aspects of life in Ancient Greece, such as religion, the theatre and family life. In so doing they learn how to interpret evidence, for example by examining pottery, and their basic chronological understanding is reinforced through the use of timelines. In Year 6 pupils learn some basic facts about Tudor England, for example about Henry VIII, although they show a limited appreciation of the significance of key events, partly because there is a limited range of extended writing and an over-reliance on looking for basic factual information. The result is that higher achievers make limited progress in developing higher-level historical skills. Sometimes there is an over-reliance on worksheets which address too narrow a range of skills.

98. By the end of Year 8, most pupils make more substantial progress in developing a range of historical skills and conceptual understanding. For example, when examining medieval English history, they learn how to distinguish different causes of an event such as the Norman Conquest. Pupils succeed in analysing some demanding topics, for example religion and its significance in pre-industrial England. Similarly, when studying the Civil War, most pupils make sound progress in learning to distinguish between different points of view and interpretations. They achieve this for example when considering the different views about royal authority held by groups such as royalists, Diggers, Levellers and republicans. Pupils learn to evaluate different sources when examining a particular individual like Cromwell on the lines of 'Hero or Villain?'

99. Literacy skills are addressed successfully in history through an increasing focus upon structured extended writing as pupils move up through the school, and also through an emphasis upon understanding key historical vocabulary. Good speaking skills are also encouraged. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well, particularly as a means of research.

100. The overall quality of teaching in history is satisfactory for pupils in all year groups. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The strengths of the teaching are the focus on pupils learning historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence; the good use of assessment; and the effective use of resources and classroom support. For example, inventories of household possessions were used effectively in a Year 6 lesson to enable pupils to increase their understanding of the differences in lifestyle between rich and poor. Visual sources were used similarly to help pupils in Year 8 appreciate the changes in rural life which took place in the 18th and 19th centuries. In a Year 7 lesson on the Black Death, the teacher carefully assessed pupils' ability to interpret source material and, having noted deficiencies, adapted the focus of the lesson well in order to consolidate their evaluative skills.

101. Where teaching is less effective, there are gaps in the subject knowledge of non-specialist teachers, and the tasks set are not sufficiently matched to the needs of all pupils. In particular, teachers do not always challenge higher attainers, setting too many lower-level tasks which involve finding out factual information but do not help the pupils to begin to address higher level skills. For example, when pupils studied Henry VIII's wives, they were not encouraged to use this information to address any significant historical issue. Similarly, although teachers often use questioning well as a means of assessing and reinforcing pupils' knowledge, they frequently allow pupils to make assertions without training them to substantiate their judgements with evidence.

102. Leadership and management in history are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop aspects of the subject such as assessment. Common assessment tasks have been introduced, and these are assisting teachers in finding out exactly how well pupils are doing against national criteria. Schemes of work are also being developed, in order to assist non-specialist teachers in particular. There is good liaison with the local upper school, so that pupils can successfully build on the work they do in Year 8. A programme of visits to sites such as Corfe Castle enhances the quality of pupils' learning experiences in history.

103. In 1996, pupils made satisfactory progress in history and teaching was satisfactory, as now. There have been some developments since then, particularly in improving assessment. Therefore, overall, there has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths:

- Standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 8.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught in all years.
- There is energetic and enthusiastic co-ordination of the subject.
- There are good assessment procedures for ICT.

Areas for improvement:

- Monitoring of ICT across subjects.
- Time allocation for ICT in Years 5 and 6.
- Technical support.

104. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is in line with national expectations. Year 5 pupils are welcomed by a good booklet produced by pupils in Year 7, which includes interesting text and imported images. The strong link with first schools through the pyramid meetings ensures continuity in pupils' learning.

105. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations, and they achieve satisfactorily. However, pupils have limited access to discrete ICT to establish a skill base that will fully enhance their cross-curriculum application of ICT as a tool for learning. Inspection evidence confirms this judgement as there were limited examples of ICT to be seen in the scrutiny of pupils' work over time in Years 5 and 6. The school has been disappointed that the national training programme for ICT in the classroom fell short of expectations, with some teachers still lacking confidence with computers. Pupils' good literacy and numeracy skills promote a good understanding of technical computer terms.

106. Attainment by the end of Year 8 is above national expectations and pupils achieve very well. Discrete ICT teaching in Years 7 and 8 enhances pupils' learning. Pupils control sound and movement by research and refine their work through using technology. Planning and teaching build effectively on the work done in Years 5 and 6 and at home. The analytical assessment used during Years 7 and 8 clearly identifies the skills that pupils gain. In Years 7 and 8, application of ICT is beginning to expand. For example, the use of the Logo programme enables pupils to design and give instructions for a route to be

followed, showing how computers can be used to control movement and eventually produce a drawing such as a windmill. Programmes used in modern languages help pupils to practise the target language through fun activities. Good use is made of ICT in English and science to raise standards in spelling, creative writing and research.

107. Lower attaining pupils in all years meet their targets because planning and modification of the units of work is good. Teachers' knowledge of pupils' special needs is detailed and logged discretely in teacher's records. Many pupils make good progress because LSAs are integrated into planning and teaching. Six pupils use specific software to help them to improve their writing and spelling skills in the special needs department. Talented pupils in Years 7 and 8 enhance their learning through attendance at school clubs and extension tasks in lessons.

108. Pupils in Year 7 build up their application of ICT in specialist computer lessons. They also work on ICT topics in other curriculum areas, such as using 'Penfriend' in English to aid spelling and writing. Recent work in Year 8 on building a web site including hyperlinks was very successful. The unit of work encouraged pupils to plan and design an exciting personal web page on topics such as swimming, computer games and the care of pets. Pupils created text and image links to interest the browser. This unit also identified the need for pupils to create new files and learn the principle of file management to help to organise their packed user areas. Teachers' planning strengthens pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, and this results in raised confidence and self-esteem. Although the content of National Curriculum Levels is used well in planning and assessment, pupils do not use them as part of their personal strategy for improvement. There is also a lack of a personal record of skills a pupil gains, as a reference point for target setting.

109. Attitudes and behaviour are very good across all years. Consistently high expectations of attitudes and behaviour are maintained whenever computers are used. Additional access to computers through lunchtime or after school clubs is always well supported. Pupils face their strengths and weaknesses through assessment and very good diagnostic marking. For example, when the Greek poster project was marked, it was very clear to pupils why they lost marks and what they could do to improve. The challenging approach to research and the use of the Internet has developed pupils' planning and thinking. They enjoy working in pairs and small groups, sharing and consolidating learning. However, keyboarding skills are below the standard of the other areas.

110. Teaching and learning are very good where specialist teachers operate. Across the curriculum the application of ICT skills is planned but not yet monitored to ensure that the planning is embedded in regular practice. Only one subject, art, has made little progress in using ICT to improve teaching and learning. Planning in discrete ICT is very good and capitalises on teachers' effective knowledge about pupils' special needs. In ICT, pupils have started to record the processes they learn in note form in their file. This is used as reference to support their learning. Teachers clarify their expectations at the start of every lesson and plenary sessions effectively consolidate learning, often setting the targets for the next session. Homework is set as needed. Very good lessons are split into manageable chunks, with short-term targets to allow all pupils to achieve their full potential. Here, teacher and pupils are true partners in learning. In excellent lessons teachers use a range of inspiring and challenging techniques to review and consolidate learning. For example in Year 8, where progress was being made on web site design, the teacher used a high quality web site from a different class to illustrate consistency, and a web page from a DfES site to further clarify design. These were shared with the class through the effective

use of the on-screen tutor. Teachers use well-prepared writing frames to aid pupils' planning and set the standard required for presentation. In Years 7 and 8 when classroom assistants are available there is a noticeable improvement in concentration by the lower attainers. Teachers encourage pupils to be independent, and this promotes exemplary behaviour.

111. Management in the department is very good because of the high calibre skills of the co-ordinator in terms of evaluation and leadership. Enthusiasm within ICT is infectious, and the encouraging approach for non-specialists to use ICT is creating a growth area in the school. The ICT co-ordinator, however, has little time to promote and monitor ICT across the curriculum, because of time constraints and the lack of a regular technician to maintain equipment and support ICT planning. Development planning is good and has a dynamic future linked to the upper school's technology college status, now in place.

112. Information and communication technology has made good improvement since the previous report, because all issues have been addressed. The remaining issue is the embedded use of ICT in all curriculum areas.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French)

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

Strengths:

- The leadership and management of the newly appointed subject co-ordinator.
- Improving standards in Year 7.
- Teachers use the new scheme of work to plan well for lessons and in the longer term.
- Teaching in the basic skills of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Areas for development:

- Pupils' attainment has not risen since the previous inspection. Attainment is not as high as it could be, especially among boys.
- Speaking skills are not as good as other aspects of the subject, especially for higher attaining pupils.

113. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the standards pupils attain are below those expected nationally at the end of Year 8. There has been a level of instability of staffing which has disrupted learning and affected attainment. This has affected pupils in Year 8 more than those in Year 7. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils in Year 7 are achieving standards in line with those expected of pupils of the same age. In Year 8 particularly, boys do not achieve as well as girls. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with their peers. Of the four aspects of the subject, speaking is weaker than listening, reading or writing. This is mainly because pupils have been set work in reading and writing when teachers have been covering lessons, and this has been at the expense of speaking practice. Attainment is now rising in Year 7, but has not risen overall since the previous inspection.

114. By the end of Year 8 pupils answer questions about such topics as school and school subjects, sports and pastimes, buying food and drinks, and finding directions in town. In general pupils listen carefully to the teacher, to cassette tapes and to other pupils when they are speaking. There is a minority who find concentration difficult for any length of time. Pupils' speaking skills in the language being taught are limited. A majority of pupils is able to

ask and reply to questions at this stage but there is limited evidence of pupils being able to carry out conversations with three or four exchanges or to vary their language to suit different situations. This was a feature of the previous report which has not been successfully addressed. Pupils develop their reading skills mainly through reading textbooks and worksheets to find the answers to questions. Most pupils are able to read simple authentic texts by the end of Year 8. In their written work a majority of pupils can copy answers from textbooks and worksheets accurately and can write phrases from memory. The minority of higher attaining pupils write well and can write short paragraphs about their homes and families, for example. They can use a range of tenses and reflexive verbs, but often make basic errors with agreement of adjectives and verb endings.

115. French makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and there is an emphasis on grammar and punctuation in most lessons. Pupils use basic arithmetic to do calculations and to work out the cost of goods. In some lessons they use tables and graphs to find information and present the result of surveys. This makes a contribution to numeracy development. There is good use of ICT to refine and edit work and to produce pictorial and written pieces of work. This is seen, for example, in work done by pupils on various regions of France and in pictorial menus in French which pupils produce.

116. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with good or very good teaching in just under one third of lessons. There is a minority of unsatisfactory teaching. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there are a number of factors which combine to detract from the impact of the teaching. The management of pupils is not strong. Although there is no serious misbehaviour, a number of pupils are inattentive and misbehave in a minor way, so they are not paying attention and also distract other pupils. In these lessons the pace is slow and the level of challenge in the work is unlikely to raise standards. There is no range of work tailored to the range of ability found in classes. This was evident, for example, in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were given nine minutes of lesson time for the whole class to copy four short sentences. There was no extension work for fast workers and little challenge to higher attaining pupils to develop their writing. In general, teaching styles do not encourage a high level of pupil activity. This applies also where teaching is otherwise satisfactory. A typical session of spoken French involves question and answer sessions between the teacher and individual pupils. While this is happening other pupils are not actively involved and sit and listen or become bored and do not pay attention. There is only a minority of lessons where pupils are actively involved in group work or role-plays.

117. In general, there is limited use of music, poetry, group work or imaginative use of the overhead projector to encourage pupils to use, practise and experiment with the language. Where pupils are given such opportunities they respond well. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 7 lesson on food and drink where pupils were given good opportunities, through role-plays, to practise with their classmates; they achieved well and clearly enjoyed the lesson. Where teaching is very good, the teacher has excellent class control, which is achieved with quiet authority. As a result the working atmosphere in lessons is relaxed and businesslike and pupils feel confident about taking part. The teacher has high expectations of pupils' work and sets challenging tasks at an appropriate level. This encourages pupils to be actively involved and contributes to raising standards.

118. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are opportunities in lessons for pupils to reflect on the lifestyles of people in another country. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, there is a strong moral dimension, and pupils are taught right from wrong. There is satisfactory provision for social development through taking turns and working together. A more varied teaching

programme would improve this provision further. The study of people from another country provides a cultural element in many lessons. The social and cultural provision is further enhanced by trips to France each year. There are satisfactory procedures in place for tracking pupils' attainment and progress.

119. The use of the data provided to check for deficiencies in the curriculum, or to check progress of different groups of pupils, is underdeveloped. However, in the short time she has been in post, the head of department, assisted by the other teachers, has completely revised and re-written the scheme of work to provide a more consistent programme for pupils. She has shown good leadership and management in establishing clear priorities for development. Standards have not risen significantly since the previous inspection, largely due to staffing difficulties. Nevertheless, there are clear indications of progress in Year 7, and when these factors are taken into account the subject has made satisfactory progress since that time.

MUSIC

120. The provision for music is **very good**.

Strengths:

- Very good teaching and learning.
- Good relationships and a sense of joint purpose between teacher and pupils, which leads to clear links between hard work, commitment, attainment and fun.

Areas for development:

- More appropriate recording technology to improve the quality of pupils' self-assessment.

121. There were no assessments against attainment targets levels at the end of Year 6 for 2001, but the department is well prepared to provide them for the current Year 6. It has been taking full advantage of the excellent joint work by neighbouring middle schools and the upper school which ensures comparability of attainment target levels between them. Progress and the development of musical skills and experiences through to Year 8 are already very clear. In one Year 8 class this was evident both in composition work and in performance based on African drumming techniques. Group work and whole class ensembles are very well used to raise standards and give pupils significant musical experiences. Pupils with special educational needs take full advantage of these opportunities to attain at least as well as their peers, and higher attainers work at their own level to attain very well.

122. Extra-curricular activities, which involve more than half of the school's pupils, provide exciting extensions to the curriculum, as well as very good social development across the four age groups. Nearly a quarter of pupils receive instrumental tuition on a wide range of instruments; provision is heavily subsidised and access is open to all. The pupils involved often use their skills as part of performing and composition work in lessons.

123. Year 5 pupils were attaining well in work on musical notation. Year 6 pupils were working in groups devising effective poly-rhythmic patterns and developing a sense of pulse. Year 7 pupils were learning basic samba-playing skills, including the playing of instruments and through ensemble work, were able to use syncopated rumba rhythms very well. In one Year 8 class, working in African drumming style, the two large groups in the class produced

very exciting and vibrant music which was not only an inspiration for the listener, but more importantly for the performers.

124. Teaching and learning are both very good at all levels, and the musical expertise of the teacher is clear. Lessons are characterised by excellent relationships, with a sense of common purpose, where the vitality of the teacher ensures total involvement of the pupils. Management and organisation are also very good, and necessary resources are instantly accessible; the very complex lesson with Year 5 pupils went without a hitch. Space, time and resources are very efficiently used. Planning and preparation are also excellent, with clear targets set and shared, linked to developmental feedback. There is a balance between corporate and individual development. Above all the passion for music is communicated, enabling pupils to catch the 'music disease' in a virulent form. Pupils learn in a variety of ways: through prior experience, trial and error, selection and rejection, listening and aural awareness, from each other, and above all by doing and refining their own work as it goes along.

125. Pupils' response is very good in Years 5 and 6, and excellent in Years 7 and 8. Pupils arrive full of bubble and enthusiasm; concentration is deep and listening intent. Pupils show a common purpose and are strongly mutually supportive. Behaviour in groups is responsible, and self-motivation strong. Pupils link fun, commitment and hard work to achieve good levels of attainment.

126. The curriculum fully satisfies National Curriculum requirements, and includes appropriate aspects of world music and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a composition tool. It is accessible to all and helps individual development, as well as giving opportunities for ensemble work. Musicians from outside the school are well used, including samba, African, and environmental groups to inspire pupils' music making. Since the arrival of the current music teacher there have been significant improvements in provision for music and in standards and response from pupils, and the headteacher and colleagues have supported her well. She is an inspirational leader who carries pupils along with her on an irresistible flood of music making. Assessment is good, but the best evaluations are within lessons as the music making proceeds. Pupils' spiritual development is good, and the best lessons are equally inspiring to watcher and participant.

127. All the issues in music at the last inspection have been fully resolved. There is now a scheme of work that is appropriate for the school, significant improvement in ICT provision, and opportunities for pupils of all abilities. The specialist accommodation is still cramped, but use of the hall, a corridor nearby, and taking the class outside in better weather reduces the adverse effect of the small space.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths:

- Very good leadership and management in raising the profile of physical education in the school.
- Extra-curricular provision for sport.
- Good assessment.
- Good teaching, resulting in good learning by pupils.
- The good attitudes of pupils towards the subject.

Areas for development:

- Making provision for swimming.
- Reducing the amount of teaching by non-specialists, and rationalising the timetable to allow some classes a more balanced experience in physical education.

128. Standards achieved by pupils in physical education by the ages of both eleven and thirteen are in line with the expectations of pupils of similar age nationally, both in performance skills and in knowledge and understanding. Pupils in all age groups, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Activities during the inspection were observed in athletics in all year groups, games in Year 8, and gymnastics in Year 6.

129. In athletics activity, pupils make good progress in learning the basic throwing skills, for example in developing the technique of discus throwing. They improve their ability to grip the discus correctly and to release it in a controlled fashion. Pupils also improve their performance in running, and younger pupils learning the long jump make very good progress in moving from a standing to a running jump. Pupils in gymnastics achieve a good standard in learning how to put together a sequence of controlled balances, and show a good ability to move confidently on and off apparatus with poise and increasing control. They are also able to evaluate how well they are doing. Pupils in the early stages of learning tennis make less progress in their ability to sustain a simple rally, principally because the majority of pupils do not have a correct grip or stance, and do not develop good footwork.

130. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is good, and is characterised by several strengths. The specialist teachers convey good subject knowledge to pupils through a combination of questioning, explanation and demonstration, for example when introducing a complex skill like the triple jump. Questioning is used particularly effectively, as observed several times during warm up sessions when teachers reinforced pupils' understanding of the impact of exercise on particular muscle groups and on the body generally. A particular strength is the high expectations teachers have of all pupils, a feature of all lessons observed, and to which pupils respond well. The great majority of pupils, whatever their level of ability, tries hard in lessons, and consequently make good progress in developing a range of skills. Teachers also encourage pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, for example measuring and recording each other's achievements in athletics, and leading teams in gymnastics. Pupils have positive attitudes in physical education: they respond well to these opportunities and therefore develop good social skills as well as improving their performance. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and there are no significant weaknesses. There was, however, one example of a gymnastics lesson in which the safety precautions were inadequate, when a non-specialist teacher used a range of potentially dangerous equipment.

131. The quality of leadership and management is very good, and significant developments have taken place in the relatively short time in which the co-ordinator has been in post. Extra-curricular provision has been developed to the stage where it has become one of the strengths of the school. Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of sports such as football, netball, basketball and volleyball, and the school has begun to have success in competitions, for example in cross-country. A useful scheme of work has been introduced and the coordinator has worked hard to improve the confidence and skills of several non-specialist teachers. Literacy skills have been developed through a focus on pupils' responding to questions and understanding appropriate terminology. Numeracy skills are developed through the recording of achievement in sports such as athletics. A thorough system of assessment has been introduced to track and record pupils' progress.

132. Accommodation is good in so far as there are good outdoor facilities, a sports hall and access to the hall, although use of the latter is restricted, especially for extra-curricular activities at lunchtime. There are timetabling issues. Some classes have their week's physical education lessons all on the same day, which restricts the quality of progression in learning. Secondly, because all pupils in a year group are taught games simultaneously, pressure is put on the indoor accommodation when wet weather arrangements come into force. Although the co-ordinator is very proactive in improving the overall quality of teaching and learning, the task is made difficult by the substantial number of non-specialists all teaching a small amount of physical education each week. Although the range of learning opportunities for pupils is good overall, no swimming is offered for pupils by the age of eleven. This is a statutory breach of the National Curriculum, since most of these pupils do not have the experience of school swimming lessons either before joining the school or whilst at Lockyers.

133. There were several good features of physical education identified in the inspection in 1996, including standards, the progress made by pupils, and the quality of teaching. The absence of swimming was an issue then. However, there have been several significant changes in the last year in terms of the development of schemes of work, assessment, the use of resources and the development of a thriving extra-curricular programme. Overall, therefore, there has been good progress in physical education since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**.

Strengths:

- The leadership of the head of subject.
- The quality of teaching.
- The positive attitudes of pupils to the subject.

Areas of improvement:

- Assessment.
- Structural problems, which inhibit effective management of the subject.
- Lack of contact with a variety of faith communities.

134. In work seen during the inspection, standards reflected the expectations of the Dorset Agreed Syllabus in all year groups. This represents good achievement in Years 5 and 6, where many pupils seem to have come from their first schools with significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. In Years 7 and 8, achievement is satisfactory though pupils are now making good progress. The positive attitude of pupils towards the

subject is a significant factor in their progress. Most pupils are acquiring sound knowledge about a range of religious traditions and are learning to draw lessons relevant to their personal development. Examples of work in a Year 8 exercise book showed a thoughtful exploration of the sorts of emotions the Buddha might have experienced prior to his decision to leave his home and family to search for enlightenment. Work in a Year 7 book maturely evaluated the benefits and disadvantages of researching a subject as part of a group-work exercise. Lower attaining pupils achieve well as a result of being well supported in lessons, sometimes by the presence of learning support assistants, but otherwise by the use of learning materials suitable to their ability and by extra support offered by teachers. The school is at an early stage in its work of identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils. Whilst there is much in religious education to challenge and extend the able there is as yet no programme to provide for stimulating pupils whose potential is underdeveloped.

135. Standards of work in exercise books do not always match the quality of the oral work evident in classes. Homework is used inconsistently, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and classwork and homework assignments alike are sometimes left uncompleted. Too much written work, in some class groups, is made up of work that is copied, sometimes requiring blank spaces to be filled in. There is generally too little opportunity for extended writing. In classes, pupils work with interest and respond readily, and usually accurately, to questions put to them. They are also willing to contribute to discussions, drawing on personal experiences in a way that suggests a considerable degree of trust between pupils and teachers and within class groups.

136. The school follows the Dorset Agreed Syllabus of 1999 and meets the requirements of that syllabus. The subject leader intends to develop assessment procedures from the three-step model incorporated in the Agreed Syllabus to the eight levels of attainment model used in other national curriculum subjects. This would have many advantages in that it would be understood by pupils, teachers and parents and would help develop target-setting in the subject. The school has recently moved away from a county scheme for accrediting religious education attainment in middle schools. At the moment, teachers are not assessing to a common framework.

137. Religious education makes a good contribution to the development of the pupils' basic skills, including literacy. Research activities are often used which require them to access and read materials. One example of homework set during the inspection required pupils to use one local and one national newspaper in their work. In one Year 5 class, pupils presenting work to the rest of the class were coached in their public speaking skills. The subject also contributes to numeracy and ICT development. Examples were seen during the inspection of pupils analysing statistical data and presenting their results in a histogram form; one pupil chose to use a computer spreadsheet program to present his data and then accessed on-line help to make use of the program.

138. The quality of teaching and learning are mostly good. During the inspection it was possible to observe only two out of seven teachers who teach the subject. However, the two teachers who were observed account for over 50 per cent of teaching of the subject. The school's internal monitoring procedures suggest there is consistently good teaching among others who teach the subject. Warm relationships between staff and pupils contribute to an atmosphere in classes that promotes good learning. In addition, a high level of expertise and enthusiasm by the subject leader makes a significant contribution to its success. Lessons are well planned. They invariably begin with a review of work previously done, an overview of the work that will be done in the lesson, and a preview of how the lesson connects to what is to come. A good range of teaching techniques is used in lessons, including whole class teaching and different sorts of individual and group work.

139. Textbooks, artifacts and videos are all put to good use in spite of being in rather short supply, and computers are increasingly used as a learning tool. Lessons end with a plenary session that allows pupils to report back to the class what they have learned and gives teachers the opportunity to consolidate the main aspects of the lesson. The one significant gap in the learning experiences offered to pupils is personal access to faith communities through visits to places of worship and visitors from faith communities coming to the school.

140. Leadership and management of the subject are good, though the subject leader labours under some structural problems not of her making. Having seven teachers involved makes it hard for the subject leader to monitor and co-ordinate the subject, particularly when subject meetings are not part of the normal structure of meetings in the school. An annual opportunity to conduct a subject review involving monitoring all other teachers of the subject is a very useful tool, but it needs to be supplemented by opportunities for on-going monitoring throughout the year. Evidence from pupils' exercise books suggests that there is some variation in the content of the work followed by different classes and inconsistencies in marking practice. However, the enthusiasm, commitment and competence of the subject leader, who has been in the school for less than a year, will help her to necessary changes within the subject area.

141. There are a number of factors that make it difficult to assess progress in the subject since the last inspection. There has been a change to the locally agreed syllabus. The school has phased out its participation in the "Dorset Religious Education Assessment in Middle Schools Project" (DREAMS). Certain factors suggest that there has not been smooth progress over the last six years. There have been changes in the staff teaching the subject, and particularly in the subject leader. Standards in religious education are no better than satisfactory at the present time. However, the subject is currently well taught and managed, and pupils are making good progress.