

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HAYLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Hayle

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112065

Head teacher: Mrs C Jackman

Reporting inspector: Mr R Palmer  
31198

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 242894

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 3 Highlanes  
Hayle  
Cornwall

Postcode: TR27 4DN

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Brockman

Date of previous inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This co-educational, community comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years is located on the northern coast of West Cornwall. The school has 671 pupils (353 boys and 318 girls), is smaller than most other secondary schools in England and is over-subscribed. It became a specialist language college in September 2001. Pupils are from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, including many from economically disadvantaged areas. They come mainly from the six local primary schools. A few come from outside the traditional catchment area. The attainment of pupils on entry at age 11 is below average overall and includes pupils of all levels of attainment. The proportion of pupils (about one in five) known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. A very small proportion of pupils, less than one in every hundred, is of non-white ethnic background. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (one in four) is above average. Most of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs (about one in 20) is well above average.

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

Hayle Community School is a good school. It provides a good quality of education for pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment. The good leadership and management of the headteacher and the good support provided by the governors and senior teachers are important factors in the school's continuing success. Results in the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations by the end of Year 11 are usually above national averages. These results represent good, and sometimes very good achievement based on pupils' prior attainments. Achievement is good because expectations of teachers and pupils are both suitably high. Within a caring and friendly environment, pupils work hard and respond very positively to the good teaching they receive. The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. It provides good value for money because the school's unit costs are average and pupils improve their standards of work considerably during their time at the school.

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

- Results in external examinations are usually above national averages and represent good progress and achievement.
- Good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to their work enable pupils to achieve well.
- Good leadership and management have developed good systems that contribute greatly to pupils' academic and all-round development.
- Very good relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils create a purposeful environment for learning.

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

- In Years 10 and 11, the attainment of boys remains well below that of girls.
- Arrangements for developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy have improved but not all subject departments are equally effective in helping pupils to develop these skills.
- The school does not know if pupils who are gifted and talented are achieving well enough because there is inadequate identification of the needs of these pupils.

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

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

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 is good, although the GCSE results in 2001 were less good than in previous years. The school has built well upon its previous strengths. It exceeded its challenging targets for GCSE results in 2000 but fell short of its targets for 2001. The performance of boys still lags behind that of girls. The quality of teaching and learning remains good. Leadership and management continue to make effective contributions to the school's many successful developments and ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education. Good financial planning ensures cost-effectiveness. Progress has been good in tackling the four key issues identified in the previous inspection. Teachers now make good use of the greatly improved resources for Information & Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning in most subjects. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now good, so that these pupils receive work that is suited well to their needs and make good progress. Provision for pupils who are gifted or talented has improved, but the identification of the needs of these pupils is inadequate so that the school does not know if these pupils are doing well enough. Standards in reading, writing and numeracy among lower attaining boys have improved and are satisfactory. Curricular links with the local primary schools have developed very well and make an important contribution to the continuity of pupils' learning.

## STANDARDS

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

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

In 2001, results in English, mathematics and science in the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 9 were at the national average in all three subjects. These results indicate good achievement for boys and girls of all levels of attainment when compared with pupils' below average attainment overall, in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6. Compared with similar schools, results were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and average in English. Over the past five years, results have improved at a slower rate than the national improvement. This was mainly because of fluctuations in the levels of overall attainment of successive year groups. Pupils who sat these tests in 2001 had entered the school with lower levels of attainment than previous year groups. The standards of work seen in classes and in samples of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 are currently above average in English, mathematics and science.

GCSE results have been above the national average in three of the last four years. They fell to average in 2001 mainly because an unusually large number of pupils had poor records of attendance and did not sit the GCSE examinations. In the five-year period up to 2000, the school's GCSE results improved faster than the national trend. However, because the GCSE results fell to average in 2001, the latest trend is below the national one. Over the last three years, boys' GCSE results have matched the national average; girls' results have been above. Compared with the GCSE results attained by similar schools, results were well above average in 2000 and average in 2001. GCSE results in 2001 were well above the national average in design and technology and above average in mathematics, art and design, French

and ICT. Results were close to the national average in other subjects, including English and science, but were well below average in drama. Compared with pupils' levels of attainment when they joined the school, the GCSE results in 2001 represented at least satisfactory achievement for the large majority of pupils of all capabilities, including pupils with special educational needs. Girls achieved higher standards than boys in most subjects. In Years 10 and 11, standards of work observed in classes and in scrutiny of books and coursework are higher than the standards attained in GCSE examinations in 2001. They are above average in English, mathematics and science.

Throughout the school, standards in literacy and numeracy improve and are above average by the end of Year 11. Pupils use their good ICT skills well to enhance their work in most subjects. The school did not meet the very challenging targets set for performance in GCSE examinations in 2001. The school was recognised in 2000 by the Department for Education and Skills as one of the most improved schools in England.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work hard and are keen to do their best. They readily participate in lessons and in other activities provided by the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Both in class and around the school, pupils are considerate to one another and to their teachers. Exclusions of pupils are rare.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils become responsible young adults by the time that they leave. They are tolerant and respect the views of others.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below average.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Years 7 – 9</b>	<b>Years 10 – 11</b>
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good throughout the school. Very good teaching occurred in one third of the lessons observed. However, no outstanding teaching was seen and there were a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching is effective in meeting the needs of most pupils, although the gifted and talented pupils do not always receive work of suitable difficulty. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. In the two unsatisfactory lessons, the pace and challenge of the work were inadequate and the management of the class was ineffective. The teaching of literacy is good in English and satisfactory in most other subjects. The teaching of numeracy is good in mathematics and satisfactory in most other subjects. Pupils make good progress in most lessons because pupils and teachers both have high expectations. Pupils work hard and maintain their concentration and interest throughout the lesson. Teachers make good use of ICT to assist pupils' work and progress in many subjects. Teachers use assessment well to detect underachievement and to determine what to teach. Very good relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils create a pleasant atmosphere for working. Learning



is good in most lessons because pupils want to achieve as well as they can. Pupils of all levels of attainment bring very positive attitudes to their work. They acquire a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and how they can improve, because teachers mark the work well and constantly review pupils' progress. Pupils enjoy working independently, although they do not always have enough opportunities to do so.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs of all pupils. A suitable and developing programme of extra-curricular activities supports pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The allocation of support assistants to specific subjects is effective in helping these pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The few pupils of ethnic minority heritage integrate well into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. That for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils are very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are known well as individuals. Most receive very good support to assist their academic and personal development. Procedures for assessment are good. Provision for gifted and talented pupils varies from good to satisfactory because their needs have not been thoroughly identified. The school promotes positively the social inclusion of pupils of all backgrounds. Suitable procedures for child protection and to promote health and safety are in place.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school's standards and its reputation have improved under strong and effective leadership in recent years. The new headteacher is maintaining the drive for higher standards and receives very good support from senior staff. The senior management team provides a clear direction and purpose to the school's work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are supportive, carry out their duties well and have high expectations for the school's future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes effective use of data to monitor and evaluate all aspects of its performance. It sets suitably challenging targets for improvement.

The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial management is good. The school makes effective use of its adequate staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Spending decisions are carefully considered to seek best value and determined in accordance with the school's stated educational priorities.
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## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations are high and pupils work hard.</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents are comfortable about approaching the school with a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework set is inconsistent and is sometimes too much.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons is inadequate.</li> </ul>

The inspection team strongly supports parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors agree with those parents who say that there are inconsistencies in the setting of homework. Some pupils in Years 7 and 9 also agree that on occasions they have more homework than the timetable suggests. However, the quality of homework is generally good; it is marked well by teachers and makes an important contribution to pupils' good achievement. Inspectors do not agree that the range of activities outside lessons is inadequate. They find that the provision is satisfactory and improving. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of learning and recreational activities outside lessons. It also provides a free bus service on three evenings to assist pupils who live a long way from the school. Recent staff appointments have helped to increase and broaden the range of activities and opportunities available to pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Results in external examinations are usually above national averages and represent good progress and achievement.**

1. In each of the past four years, pupils' attainment when they join the school, as measured by their performance in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, has been below the national average and below the average for Cornwall.
2. During their time at the school, pupils achieve well and sometimes very well. An important factor in pupils' good achievement is the sensible approach that the large majority of pupils have towards their work.
3. In each of the past five years, pupils have attained results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 that have been generally above the national average and never below it. When compared with their previous attainment, these results usually represent very good achievement by the end of Year 9 and good achievement by the end of Year 11. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of prior attainment make generally good progress throughout the school. Standards of work seen in classes and in scrutiny of pupils' work were higher than the average standards attained in external examinations in 2001. They reflect the variations in the levels of overall attainment of the different year groups. Pupils are currently making very good progress and producing work that is well above average in design and technology and French. Standards are currently above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
4. In 2001, the school's results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 were lower than usual but represented good achievement. Pupils in this year group had lower levels of attainment when they entered the school at the end of Year 6 than previous year groups. The results were similar to the national average. Overall, they were above average when compared with the results attained by pupils in schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals. These results indicate some particularly noteworthy progress. Of the 51 pupils who had entered the school with below average attainment in English, 23 reached the nationally expected standard of Level 5, including one pupil who attained Level 7. Of the 49 pupils who were below average in mathematics on entry to the school, 20 reached Level 5 by the end of Year 9, including three pupils who attained Level 6. Of the 43 pupils who had been below average in science, 19 reached Level 5, including one pupil who attained Level 6. It is reasonable for secondary schools to look for improvements of between one and one and a half levels in pupils' attainment from the end of Year 6 to the end of Year 9. In 2001, out of the 124 pupils in the year group, 51 had increased their attainment by at least two levels in mathematics; 43 did so in English and 43 did so in science.
5. GCSE results in 2001 were lower than in recent years. They matched the national average and the results attained by pupils in similar schools. Girls attained better results than boys. Overall, the results represented satisfactory performance. Most pupils attained results that were better than predicted from their prior attainment at the end of Year 9. However, 14 pupils out of 115 in the year group sat very few examinations between them. This understandably had an adverse effect upon the school's overall performance. This particular year group had several features not

found in other year groups that led the school to anticipate a lower than usual performance in GCSE examinations. Four of the 14 pupils were educated at another educational establishment and remained on the school's roll. These pupils followed courses suited to their particular needs and did not enter for any GCSE examinations. Seven pupils in Year 11 left the school or the area a few months before the examinations started. Three other pupils in Year 11 had poor attendance, including two who did not attend school from January onwards, despite the appropriate involvement of the education welfare service. Work seen in classes in Years 10 and 11, including coursework for GCSE examinations, indicates above average attainment overall. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work and results of mock examinations also indicate above average levels of overall attainment in the current Year 11. These point to good achievement based on pupils' previous attainment.

6. Pupils achieve well in English because the teaching is good and pupils are keen to succeed. Although boys' attainment in English is much lower than that of girls, because boys have weaker literacy skills than girls when they join the school, their achievement is still good. This is a result of the department using a range of strategies, also used in other subjects, which include the seating of boys next to girls, to help boys to concentrate closely on their work. The good relationships between teachers and pupils assist learning. Pupils improve their literacy standards as a result of good support from teachers in English lessons. The revised schemes of work for Years 7 and 8 reflect the new framework for English and enable pupils to work at a suitably fast pace. The very good improvement in the school's links with its partner primary schools has assisted the continuity of learning, particularly in English. For example, pupils in Year 6 in the primary school record their reading and their reading habits in a 'readofax' booklet. They bring these booklets with them to Year 7 and continue this process of recording their reading so that their progress can be easily checked. Teachers mark and assess the work of pupils very well. They use the data effectively to track pupils' progress. The increasing use of ICT to revise their writing is helping pupils to raise their attainment in English. Pupils develop their reading skills through the use of a system of book boxes and through good links with local bookshops.
7. In mathematics, boys and girls both make good progress because teachers make very good use of systems to assess pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Teachers then use the information to teach topics at the appropriate level of difficulty. For example, teachers recently carried out a very detailed and thorough analysis of pupils' answers to GCSE mock examination papers. This analysis identified areas of weakness in a few aspects of mathematics for which teachers have subsequently devised, and put into operation, suitable remedial programmes. Standards have improved in classes in Years 7 and 8 as a result of the use of the three-part lesson strategy. The introduction of classes grouped according to attainment has enabled pupils in Year 7 to make fast progress. Effective and frequent practice in mental arithmetic in Years 7 to 9 has helped to improve results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9. GCSE results have improved over the years because the department has encouraged pupils to put more effort into producing high standards in coursework investigations. Higher attaining pupils extend their knowledge and skills in mathematics through participation in such activities as master-classes in mathematics and in events such as the 'maths challenge'. Low attaining pupils improve their skills in mathematics through the special support they receive in the school's 'springboard centre' and by attending homework clubs. The department helps pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding of mathematics through after-school revision classes, including a GCSE revision day during the half-term holiday in the summer term. Pupils benefit from good teaching in the subject.

Despite the long-term absences of the head of department and another main teacher of mathematics, which have been compounded by the inability to recruit qualified replacements, careful re-arrangement of the teaching timetable ensures that all pupils receive teaching appropriate to their needs. The good teamwork in the department has allowed pupils to continue to make good progress in mathematics despite the unavoidable staffing difficulties.

8. As in other subjects, the allocation of support assistants to work solely in the mathematics department ensures that pupils with special educational needs, those with statements and those without statements, receive appropriate support. Accordingly, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school has made good progress in dealing with the issue identified in the previous inspection about provision for pupils with special educational needs.
9. In science, boys and girls both make good progress as a result of good teaching. Pupils work hard and behave well in response to teachers' suitably high expectations. Achievement is good because pupils know how well they are doing through the very good record cards that link their work to National Curriculum grades and GCSE grades and targets. Pupils receive good advice on how to improve their work and know what is expected of them.
10. Two subjects in which GCSE results are well above average, and represent very good achievement, are design and technology, particularly for girls, and French.
11. The high achievement in design and technology is due in no small measure to the high expectations and strong commitment of the teachers. In food technology, for example, teachers give freely of their time to provide sessions after school in which pupils can develop their coursework. Pupils respond very positively to the policy of the design and technology department that pupils should design and make projects in which they have a particular interest. The increased use of ICT helps pupils to enhance their creative skills. The use of displays of pupils' work as exemplars enhances learning. It increases the motivation of all pupils to do their best. Boys achieve well. They maintain concentration and interest in the work as teachers skilfully set short-term goals. Girls achieve very well and attain very high standards as a direct result of the very good quality of teaching they receive.
12. The school's recent designation as a specialist language college is entirely appropriate. Standards in modern languages, particularly in French, are a strength of the school. Even in 2001, when results were not as high as in previous years, an above average proportion of candidates gained a GCSE pass at grades A\*-C in French. This was a good achievement because the school enters a very much higher proportion of pupils for the GCSE examination in French than is the case nationally. In 2000, boys and girls both attained GCSE results that were substantially above the national average. Very good teaching by a most effective and experienced team of teachers is the major contributory factor leading to pupils' very good achievement in French. Pupils learn rapidly because the work is always of suitable difficulty and conducted at an appropriately fast pace. The skilful use of a wide range of teaching methods maintains the brisk momentum of lessons and encourages pupils to focus closely on the tasks set. Pupils play a very active part in their own learning. They respond positively in choral activities such as repetitions of words and phrases. In work in groups and in pairs they collaborate well and have an eagerness to practise and investigate that leads to very good learning. Teachers have high expectations to which pupils respond very positively. Although most of the time teachers and pupils use French during the lessons, teachers sensibly use English when required to

ensure that pupils gain a proper understanding of new work. Pupils know how well they are doing through frequent monitoring and assessment of their work by teachers. Pupils learn very well in French because they like the way it is taught and respond very well. They enjoy being able to take part in practical activities related to real-life situations.

**Good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to their work enable pupils to achieve well.**

13. The quality of teaching has improved slightly since the previous inspection. The proportion of very good teaching has increased. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good throughout the school. Very good teaching occurred in one third of the lessons observed. No excellent teaching was seen. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in two lessons. Throughout the school, teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Parents are justified in their view that the teachers are caring and have high expectations.
14. Teaching is effective in meeting the needs of pupils. However, the provision for pupils who are gifted or talented varies from good in subjects such as mathematics, design and technology and French to satisfactory in others. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It is now good. The allocation of support assistants to subject departments has led to more efficiency in the deployment of resources to assist pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans well to provide work of appropriate difficulty that enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
15. In all subjects, pupils make a very positive contribution to their own achievement through their mature approach to learning.
16. Pupils achieve well because they make good and sometimes very good progress in most lessons. They reinforce their knowledge and increase their understanding of work in all subjects through conscientious completion of homework that is of good quality. In Year 8, for example, an investigative homework in history enabled pupils to increase their awareness of events and the historical importance of certain famous people of the Stuart period. In response to the teacher's questions about this homework, pupils showed a good recall of what they had learned, some having made very good use of the Internet to enhance their work. Teachers in all subjects encourage pupils to work hard. Pupils respond very positively to teachers' high expectations. Most pupils present their work neatly and with pride. Teachers mark pupils' work very well so that pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve. In the large majority of lessons, pupils' very good behaviour and their very positive attitudes create a good climate for learning. This enables pupils to work well as individuals, in pairs and in groups, to develop their skills of independent learning.
17. Teaching is good because teachers use their good knowledge of their specialist subject to give pupils the confidence that they can do well in the subject. In design and technology and in French, teachers' very good success in enthusing the pupils helps to account for pupils' very good achievement in these two subjects. A particular strength of the teaching across subjects is that in nearly all classes, teachers manage the pupils very well and make effective use of the learning resources. Accordingly, pupils receive work that is generally of suitable difficulty and interest. Another contributory factor to pupils' good achievement is the good knowledge that teachers have of their pupils. Not only do teachers in this small school know the

social and personal backgrounds of pupils, they also use the school's good arrangements for assessment to determine accurately how well most pupils are doing and to set suitable targets for improvement. In subjects such as mathematics, teachers frequently use the results of assessment to adapt their programme of teaching to deal with underachievement or misunderstanding. Such practice helps pupils to develop their basic skills in the subject.

18. Three of the features that made some lessons very good, namely the careful structure of the lesson, the active involvement of pupils in their own learning and the provision of a wide variety of teaching and learning methods, were not always prominent in the good and satisfactory lessons. In all of the very good lessons, the programme of work was structured well so that pupils very quickly became fully aware of the work to be done, its context and relevance and where it was leading. In these lessons, the teacher ensured that pupils had fully understood previous work and provided a wide range of stimulating, interesting, appropriately difficult and carefully timed activities to force pupils to think for themselves. These lessons contained frequent checks on how well pupils were progressing and usually ended with a snappy revision of what had been learned in the lesson. These features were present in nearly all of the lessons seen in French and design and technology and in some of the lessons in many other subjects.
19. An example of such activities leading to very good learning occurred in a music lesson for pupils in Year 7. The aims of the lesson were clearly displayed on the board before the pupils arrived. The teacher went through these aims with the pupils and used very good question and answer techniques to check on pupils' previous learning and how it related to the new work. A practical 'warm-up' activity thoroughly engaged the pupils' attention. Through participating very enthusiastically and responsibly in an activity using hands, shoulders, knees and feet, pupils increased their understanding of such musical terms as rhythm, tempo and rests. The teacher skilfully obtained answers from pupils that were appropriate to their capability. For example, she insisted that pupils who studied musical instruments outside of school used the correct terminology and gave detailed explanations of their work. The teacher's high expectations were rewarded when pupils of all levels of attainment in the class could identify the three families of instruments that were played in the excerpts from Britten's *Dawn Interlude*. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the rapid pace and wide range of interesting, carefully timed and challenging activities that tested their listening and performing skills. A good mix of whole-class and small-group activities involving illustrative worksheets ensured that pupils maintained their interest and concentration. Pupils collaborated well in groups. They enjoyed producing their own compositions, using keyboards, to depict the bumps and crashes of an ice-skater entering and leaving the fog. Pupils' faces showed that they had not wanted this lesson to end.
20. A common and positive feature of most lessons that assists learning is teachers' good use of assessment of pupils' work and progress to detect underachievement. Teachers set suitable targets for pupils to improve their work. Very good relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils create a purposeful atmosphere for working. Pupils of all levels of attainment have very positive attitudes so that work proceeds at a brisk pace in the large majority of lessons.
21. In the lessons in which teaching was less than good, the main shortcomings were insufficient variety of activities and provision of work of similar difficulty for pupils of different levels of attainment. Occasionally, inadequate management of time meant that the planned revision for the end of the lesson could not occur. In the two

unsatisfactory lessons, pupils' learning was hindered by ineffective management of pupils, insufficient expectations of pupils' capabilities and, unusually for this school, inadequate marking of pupils' work, for example, not correcting the wrong spellings of key words.

**Good leadership and management have developed good systems that contribute greatly to pupils' academic and all-round development.**

22. The school has benefited from strong leadership and effective management in recent years. These have led to continued improvements in all the key aspects of the school's work. Results in external examinations indicate that pupils usually attain higher, and sometimes much higher standards than could reasonably be expected based on their levels of attainment on entry to the school. In 2000, the school was recognised by the Department for Education and Skills as one of the most improved schools in England in terms of attainment in GCSE examinations. In 1999, the school was awarded the government's Charter Mark for the third successive three-year period. This was a very good achievement. The award, in the words of a government minister, was made because the school and other organisations that received the award 'have maintained and improved on setting standards of service, innovation, consultation and response, and on the most effective use of resources'.
23. The transition from the leadership of the former headteacher, who was held in high regard by parents, governors and the previous inspection report, to the new one has been smooth. The new headteacher, with very effective support from the deputy headteachers, is reinforcing the school's culture of achievement and personal development, through the refinement of improved systems of monitoring and evaluation of the school's policies. For example, the reports that check on pupils' progress in subjects have been successful in detecting the underachievement of some pupils. Appropriate remedial action follows up these reports.
24. The headteacher and senior staff are aware that some of the school's policies for development, such as those for the improvement of teaching and learning, literacy and numeracy, are not implemented and monitored with equal rigour within all departments. Evaluation of policies is not always thorough enough because the criteria for success are sometimes insufficiently defined. This helps to explain, for example, why the teaching of literacy in English and the teaching of numeracy in mathematics are good, but the teaching of these skills in other subjects is generally less effective in helping pupils to practise and develop these skills. The headteacher, appropriately, intends to build into the school's plans for action a process of more regular and frequent reviews of progress, in order that priorities can be evaluated and adapted at the earliest convenient time.
25. The recent renewal of the school's status as an Investor in People indicates that systems of management operate well and help to provide a good quality of care for pupils of all backgrounds. The accompanying report of the current management of the school correctly describes a commitment to consultation, support and development. The system of performance management has helped teachers to improve their teaching and managerial skills. In particular, it has provided teachers with a very good awareness of how information obtained from the assessment of pupils' work can be used well to set meaningful targets for pupils and departments to improve. In several departments, including mathematics, design and technology and French, teachers often adapt the teaching programme to address pupils' needs more effectively in response to information from marking, coursework, homework and tests.



26. In September 2001, the school became a specialist language college. This is a very appropriate development in view of the school's very good results in GCSE examinations in French and its commitment to the teaching of other languages, including German, Spanish, and Italian. Interestingly and suitably, pupils in Year 7 are due to have lessons in Cornish in the summer term. The additional resources available to the school in its capacity as a language college are already having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning and personal development. The greater provision of language assistants in French and Spanish allows pupils to improve their vocabulary and skills in speaking and listening. The use of the school's teachers to teach French to pupils in the partner primary schools has improved the school's links with these schools and promotes continuity of learning in French. Good links with other language colleges enable the modern language teachers to keep up to date with, and to use, the most advanced methods of teaching the subject. Accordingly, pupils' learning is very good in modern foreign languages.
27. The headteacher and governing body set out a clear educational direction for the school that is communicated well to all staff. They have high expectations of staff and pupils. The headteacher is approachable by staff and pupils alike and is often to be seen around the school. Teachers at all levels have a very good knowledge of the pupils because the systems of assessment of pupils' academic and personal development are administered effectively and acted upon. The school has a determination to succeed. This is clear from the rigorous reviews and analyses, by teachers and governors, of the dip in GCSE performance in 2001. The school successfully promotes the social inclusion of pupils. It has a commitment to assist pupils of all backgrounds to reach their full potential in academic achievements and personal development. Procedures for evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement are good. The outcomes of these procedures are good. The school has a self-evaluative culture that enables it to make important improvements.
28. Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively. They are actively involved in the work of the school and are well informed about the performances of all subjects. They monitor developments closely and effectively. They review all aspects of the school's performance and take effective action to improve. Governors have a keen interest in the all-round development, as well as the academic success, of all pupils.

**Very good relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils create a purposeful environment for learning.**

29. The school has a very friendly ethos within which staff and pupils work hard in pursuit of high standards of work and behaviour. The good provision of care and support encourages very positive relationships between pupils and teachers that help to create a very purposeful environment for learning. When given the opportunity to work in small groups or pairs, pupils behave very well, co-operate well with one another and make good progress. As a result, teachers can pay close attention to the group with which they are dealing, confident in the knowledge that other groups are working conscientiously. Pupils work well with one another because they are interested in other people's ideas and like to reflect on what they are learning.
30. Pupils in Year 11 who were interviewed described the school, correctly, as a very welcoming place. One pupil in Year 11 said that what pupils like about this school is that pupils put pressure on each other to succeed and that it 'was cool to be clever'. The other Year 11 pupils in the group agreed. Some pupils in Year 9 said that they could 'have a laugh' with the teachers but knew where to draw the line. The pupils in Year 7 who were interviewed said that they were very happy and enjoyed coming to

school. Several pupils said, with justification, that one of the school's real strengths was the very good quality of relationships.

31. Learning is good in most lessons because pupils want to achieve as well as they can. They know that they are expected to work hard. Pupils of all levels of attainment respond very positively to try to achieve their best. The school is largely free of oppressive behaviour, as indicated by the low level of exclusions. Pupils say that they are confident that staff would tackle any bullying or harassment very effectively.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **In Years 10 and 11, the attainment of boys remains well below that of girls.**

32. The governors and staff are winning, albeit slowly, the attempt to counteract the 'surf-culture' among some older boys who have previously preferred the lure of the local sand and sea to the pursuit of academic excellence. The school has been aware for several years of the large gap in favour of girls in the respective attainment of boys and girls in external examinations. It has tried many different approaches to try to raise the attainment of boys, including several in-service training sessions and consideration of how other schools have tackled the problem. The attempt to raise boys' attainment has met with some success. It suitably remains a key priority in the school's plans for improvement.
33. Over the past five years, boys' attainment, as measured by the average points scored in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9, show that although girls performed much better than boys in English, the boys attained similarly to the girls in mathematics and slightly better than girls in science. In English and mathematics, boys and girls both attained results above the respective national averages for boys and girls. In science, boys attained results above the national average for boys; girls attained results that matched the national average for girls. The differences in the relative performances of boys and girls during this period were the same as the national differences in the attainments of boys and girls. This shows that the school faces the same problem that confronts many secondary schools in England. The school's own data shows that boys and girls both attain higher results in these tests than expectations based on their attainment on entry to the school.
34. It is in the performance in GCSE examinations that the big differences in the relative attainment of boys and girls are evident. The average points' score in GCSE examinations of girls over the past three years was four points above the national average for girls. This shows a good improvement from 1997 when girls attained just under one point above the national average. The performance of boys in GCSE examinations over this same period has moved slightly downwards, mainly due to the much lower than usual GCSE results attained in 2001. Over the past three years, girls' results have been much higher than those of boys. Girls' results have been above the national average for girls. Boys' results have matched the national average for boys.
35. The school's comprehensive data accurately shows that most boys and most girls attain results in external examinations that at least match expectations based on prior attainment and often exceed them. All departments have action plans that aim to raise boys' attainment. In mathematics, for example, teachers try to arrange for similar numbers of boys and girls in classes that are all grouped according to pupils' levels of attainment and capabilities. The mathematics teachers have equally high expectations of boys and girls. They strongly encourage boys in Year 11 to attend the

extra sessions held after school. The use of a variety of teaching strategies, including short-term activities, helps to retain boys' interest and concentration. As in many subjects, the practice of sitting boys next to girls, particularly in Years 7 to 9, has a positive effect on the learning of boys. However, in some classes, when pupils work in groups of their own choosing during practical activities, as seen in science, they often revert to single-sex groups.

36. Girls attain higher standards than boys in subjects such as English, partly because their work shows better organisation. Scrutiny of pupils' GCSE files in English revealed that girls presented their work more methodically and clearly and that they carried out more rigorous and thorough self-evaluations of their work. In English classes in Years 7 to 9, teachers are helping boys to improve their standards through encouraging them to make good use of worksheets that contain prompts to assist in the writing of accounts and answers to questions. Teachers do not yet make sufficient use of ICT to encourage boys to draft and redraft their work.
37. In design and technology and French, in which the attainment of boys is usually above average and sometimes well above average, boys respond very well to the practical nature of many of the activities. In French, they maintain their concentration and effort and make good progress because they receive an interesting variety of stimulating and carefully timed tasks. In design and technology, although boys' attainment is lower than the excellent attainment of girls, the boys make good and often very good progress. This is due largely to the opportunity to work for much of the time on individual projects that they regard as useful and relevant. In science, in which much of the work is of a practical and investigative nature, the performances of boys and girls are fairly similar, although in the current Year 11, more boys than girls are predicted to gain A\* or A grades in the GCSE examination in science.

**Arrangements for developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy have improved but not all subject departments are equally effective in helping pupils to develop these skills.**

38. Pupils enter the school with standards in literacy and numeracy that vary from year to year between average and below average. They improve their standards in these key skills as they move through the school. Standards in literacy and numeracy are above average by the end of Year 11. In English lessons, pupils practise and develop their literacy well. Similarly, in mathematics lessons, pupils practise and use their numeracy effectively to develop their work across all parts of the syllabus.
39. A key issue from the previous inspection was to improve the provision of literacy across the curriculum, with specific reference to underachieving boys. Satisfactory improvement has been made. Progress on dealing with this issue was slow until recently. Although a policy for literacy was introduced in March 2000, its effect has been limited because neither the action plan nor the criteria for judging success have a sufficient focus on raising standards across subjects. All departments have audited their provision for literacy but the development of literacy is not a whole-school priority for this current year. However, it is included in the English department's development plan with the intention of developing literacy across the school. All subjects include the teaching of literacy in their programmes of work, but there is no consistent approach. Good practice in developing literacy occurs in several subjects. A good example was the display in a science room of fiction writing by pupils in Year 7 on the topic 'When the world runs out of fuel'. Although teachers' marking usually helps pupils understand how to improve, some books do not point out the incorrect spellings of common words. In most classrooms, good displays of key words help pupils to improve their spelling and understanding of these words. In several subjects, pupils receive good

advice through worksheets containing suitable prompts about how to organise and present their written work. This good practice is not consistent across subjects.

40. The school has a suitable policy for numeracy. However, it does not contain sufficient, accompanying guidance and detail to ensure that pupils make fully effective use of their good mathematical skills to extend their work fully in other subjects. Teachers in subjects other than mathematics are inconsistent in the way they teach pupils the use and application of number. The teaching approach to plotting and constructing graphs varies among subjects. In science, pupils do not sufficiently practise and use their skills in algebraic manipulation in work that involves formulae. Many departments, such as geography and ICT, enable pupils to use their mathematical skills effectively. The use and display of pie charts in coursework in geography are good. In ICT, pupils could competently calculate percentage discounts and value-added tax on invoices. However, there is insufficient co-ordination of the teaching of numeracy across the school to ensure consistency of methods of teaching mathematical skills. Procedures for evaluating the work that the school is doing to promote numeracy across the curriculum are inadequate. The school recognises the need to improve the teaching of numeracy in many subjects. As part of an initiative to develop numeracy, it appropriately plans to hold, in the near future, a training day on numeracy for teachers.

**The school does not know if pupils who are gifted and talented are achieving well enough because there is inadequate identification of the needs of these pupils.**

41. Governors and senior staff say that the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented is one of the school's current priorities. However, there is no whole-school policy, nor any departmental policies, to assist in the identification of these pupils and to decide how best to cater for their needs. By contrast, since the previous inspection, the school has considerably improved provision for pupils with special educational needs. Through the school's effective assessment procedures, teachers know that low attaining pupils are achieving well. The school has very good data about pupils that is used well to ensure that the large majority of pupils receive work of appropriate difficulty and appropriate targets for improvement.
  
42. However, because the school has not specifically identified the gifted and talented pupils, teachers cannot determine to what extent these pupils are stretched to their limits in different subjects and activities. Teachers do not really know whether these pupils are achieving well or not because they have not set out criteria for making such judgements. The indications from pupils' attainment on entry are that pupils of high attainment gain GCSE results that at least match expectations. Some departments provide interesting and challenging activities to extend the learning of high attainers, such as the mathematics challenge and master class sessions.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43. The school has a very good awareness of its strengths and the areas for development. In order to improve standards further, the school should continue its work on the following issues.
- (1) Improve further the attainment of boys, particularly in Years 10 and 11, so that their attainment more closely matches that of girls, by
    - encouraging boys to organise and present their work well;
    - developing boys' skills in evaluating their own work;
    - making further use of ICT to enable boys to draft and redraft work, particularly in English.(Paragraphs: 32, 34 and 36)
  
  - (2) Ensure that all subjects contribute fully to the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy by
    - making clear the methods to be used and the criteria by which the teaching of literacy and numeracy will be judged;
    - monitoring teaching to check that all subjects use the methods consistently;
    - evaluating across all subjects the effect of the chosen teaching methods on pupils' development of literacy and numeracy skills.(Paragraphs: 24, 39 and 40)
  
  - (3) Identify those pupils who are gifted and talented and develop procedures to ensure that the needs of these pupils are properly met.  
(Paragraphs: 41 and 42)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

39

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

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	16	8	2	0	0
Percentage	0	33	41	21	5	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 two percentage points.*

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

Y7 – Y11

Number of pupils on the school's roll

671

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

119

#### Special educational needs

Y7 – Y11

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

31

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

170

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

5

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

9

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

21

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	8.1

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	64	60	124

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	38	46	45
	Girls	42	42	39
	Total	80	88	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	65 (76)	71 (77)	68 (66)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (32)	43 (56)	28 (34)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	30	49	39
	Girls	43	44	42
	Total	73	93	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (79)	75 (80)	65 (66)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (42)	44 (56)	27 (31)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	63	52	115

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	23	55	55
	Girls	30	48	50
	Total	53	103	105
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	46 (66)	90 (97)	91 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	37.3 (42.5)
	National	39.0 (38.4)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	n/a

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	668
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	38.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	527

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78%
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	24.8
Key Stage 4	20.8

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

### **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	18	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1 610 384
Total expenditure	1 526 730
Expenditure per pupil	2390
Balance brought forward from previous year	81 607
Balance carried forward to next year	165 261

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

671
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Number of questionnaires returned

149
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### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	63	8	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	37	56	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	56	7	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	60	11	5	1
The teaching is good.	31	60	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	48	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	50	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	46	13	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	33	54	4	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	56	6	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	42	23	7	9