

INSPECTION REPORT

St. OSMUND'S C OF E MIDDLE SCHOOL

Dorchester

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113892

Headteacher: Mr. R. Davies

Reporting inspector: Mrs. C. Worthington
20609

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 March 2003

Inspection number: 249179

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Barnes Way Rothesay Rd Dorchester
Postcode:	DT1 2DZ
Telephone number:	01305 262897
Fax number:	01305 251395
Email address	office@stosmunds.dorset.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Chairman of governors:	David Bowen
Date of previous inspection:	21 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20609	Carol Worthington	Registered inspector	English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) 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?
11104	Michael Fleming	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
4677	Valerie Banks	Team Inspector	Geography Information and communication technology Educational inclusion	
30911	John Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
32199	Ellen Hill	Team inspector	Mathematics	
23891	Peter Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology	
15079	Anthony Boys	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12276	Terence Payne	Team inspector	Music	
17474	Derek King	Team inspector	Art	
15971	Michael Pye	Team inspector	History Physical education Citizenship	
1795	Joyce Sanderson	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Osmund's is a large, popular and oversubscribed voluntary aided Church of England middle school with 637 pupils aged between nine and thirteen, with slightly more boys than girls. It is situated in an area of low social deprivation, though the catchment area is, nevertheless, mixed. The local education authority does not supply school meals. Most pupils are white British, and all speak English as their first language. About twelve per cent of pupils have been identified with special educational needs, and just over one per cent have statements. Both figures are average. Attainment on entry to the school is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many excellent and some outstanding features. The ethos of the school is characterised by excellent relationships and all round high aspirations. Standards in the core subjects are well above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8. Teaching is very good and the leadership by the headteacher and senior management team is outstandingly successful. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average for 11 and 13-year-olds
- The quality of teaching is very good
- Leadership and management are excellent
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are all excellent, and promote excellent attitudes to learning
- The very good curriculum is enriched with outstanding provision for extra-curricular activity in art, music and sport
- Partnership with other local schools is excellent

What could be improved

- There are no key aspects of school's provision that require special attention to effect improvement

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997, since when it has made very good improvement. All the key issues have been met, though assessment procedures could still be improved by greater use of target setting in some subjects. In addition, standards in English and mathematics have risen from above average to well above average, and standards throughout the school have been rising each year. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has improved from very good to excellent, and as a result, pupils' attitudes are now excellent. The proportion of good and very good teaching has increased significantly. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved. There is excellent leadership and management; it was good last time. Provision for extra-curricular activities in music, sport, and the performing arts is outstanding, and relationships with schools in the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership are excellent.

STANDARDS

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

End of Key Stage 2 tests Performance in:	Compared with					Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools 2002		
	2000	2001	2002	Free School Meals	Prior attainment	
English	B	C	A	C	A	
Mathematics	B	B	B	C	B	
Science	B	B	A	B	A	

Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with about average attainment. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 was well above average for English and science, and above average for mathematics. The school has been consistently above average in all three subjects for the last three years, except for a slip in English in 2001.

When compared with similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals, results were average for English and mathematics and above for science. This is not an entirely valid comparison, however, since the school is situated in an area where schools do not provide meals. A fairer comparison is that which relates to these pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, which takes into account the progress they have made. This is well above average for English and science, and above for mathematics, showing that pupils achieve very well from their attainment on entry. The school meets and exceeds its targets every year.

All the inspection evidence points to these standards being maintained; during the inspection standards were well above average for English, mathematics and science in Year 8. In other subjects, above average standards were seen in geography, history, ICT, music and physical education. Standards were seen to be average in art design and technology in Year 6 and above average in Year 8. Pupils make good progress in their introduction to French in Year 6 and go on to achieve above average standards for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils come to school in a good mood and ready to work. They are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy many aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were judged to be very good or excellent in about two thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection. They move in an orderly way through the school between lessons and during breaks.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. All members of the school community benefit from their excellent relationships with the others. Pupils demonstrate respect for their peers and for adults, interact in an open and friendly manner, and

	are genuinely polite and considerate.
Attendance	Attendance is very good; there was no unauthorised absence last year. Pupils arrive on time and lessons start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 - 6	Years 7 - 8
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good; some excellent lessons were seen. Teaching is characterised by very good planning of activities to inspire and enthuse, and by very good classroom management. The teaching of English is very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers make full use of their expertise to plan work to extend the learning of pupils of all abilities and ensure that they all succeed. Marking is excellent. Literacy develops well across the curriculum, but greater consistency in other departments' approach, such as correction of spelling mistakes, would enhance this even further.

The teaching of mathematics is very good, with particularly effective use of resources, such as appropriate software and interactive whiteboards. Numeracy is developed well within the mathematics department and used well in design and technology, for example when weighing ingredients and measuring materials. This is not consistent in all departments, however, and needs further attention to enhance pupils' knowledge of everyday numeracy. Teachers pay excellent attention to establishing the attainment of all children on entry to the school in Year 5, making it possible for each group to reach their capability. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as others – very good in English and mathematics and good in all other subjects, including citizenship. Target groups are very successful in raising the standard attainment, such as that of boys in English.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has a broad curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils well, and includes personal, social and health education in Years 5 to 8, and citizenship in Years 7 and 8. The provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly in arts and sport, and the links with other schools and the community are particularly strong and have a very positive influence on the quality of learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. There is very good provision in English and mathematics because of very effective teaching of small groups to ensure that all reach a standard of literacy and numeracy that gives them sound access to the curriculum in their upper school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent all round. Although the school has no formal policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the overall provision made for these aspects of pupils' personal development is excellent. The headteacher, teachers and all non-teaching staff, such as those in the school office, provide ideal role models to promote these aspects in lessons, through the way the school is managed and administered, and by the generally caring and positive attitudes they display.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good pastoral care. The school provides an environment where pupils rightly feel safe and valued, and which enables them to flourish

	physically, intellectually and socially. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good overall, but the use of short-term targets could be improved in some departments.
--	---

The school works very well in partnership with parents; it makes positive efforts to elicit parents' views and acts on the findings.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has excellent vision for the development of the school and for the education of pupils throughout their school life. He and the two deputies work together as an outstandingly effective senior management team. Subject leaders give very good leadership overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors give very good service to the school. They are informed and supportive, and play a significant role in school development, making very good use of particular expertise in the governing body.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. All staff and governors are involved in the process, which evolves from the very effective subject reviews to cover aspects of school provision, especially teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes best use of all its resources in the quest for continuous improvement; the management actively seeks to supplement its funding from every possible source. The principles of best value are excellently applied.

Staffing is good; all staff – teaching and non-teaching – form a good team, and office staff provide very good first contact with parents and visitors. Accommodation is good and very well cared for. Some facilities, such as the sports hall, are excellent but laboratories and some classrooms are small and cramped. The school is not well funded but it makes resources a priority. They are very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching • The quality of information they receive and the opportunities they are given to consult teachers • The quality and range of extra-curricular activities • The school expects its pupils to achieve their best and become responsible and mature • Leadership and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children are expected to do

Inspection findings support all parents' positive views of the school. Evidence shows that good use is made of homework and that a suitable amount is set.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with about average attainment. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 was well above average for English and science, and above average for mathematics. The school has been consistently above average in all three subjects for the last three years, except for a slip in English in 2001. When compared with pupils' prior attainment at the end of Year 2, it is well above average for English and science, and above for mathematics, showing that pupils achieve very well from their attainment on entry.
2. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 6 were well above average for English and mathematics, and above average for science. This represents maintenance from 2002 in English, improvement in mathematics, and what appears to be a decline in science. This is not the case, however, since the school's test preparation classes are of a high quality and should ensure that the 2003 National Curriculum test results are of a similar high standard. The judgement on standards observed reflects the complete science curriculum, including skills of scientific enquiry and practical investigation.
3. Pupils achieve particularly well in the core subjects, especially English, because of the excellent attention paid to establishing the attainment of all children on entry to the school in Year 5. Assessment data are then used to predict the likelihood of pupils achieving the expected level 4 or better at the age of 11. The school is able to do this with a very high degree of accuracy, making it possible to group children from Year 5 as best represents their capability. The majority is then taught in mixed ability groups in the secure knowledge that they are likely to achieve at least average standards. A target group is set up in which pupils more likely to be just below average are placed, and there is a group for pupils with special educational needs, who make the same good progress as others. In English and mathematics they make very good progress because of these effective arrangements and the well adapted materials used. The two target groups are smaller than the mixed ability classes and receive a great deal of support. In Year 6, one target group consists entirely of boys. This is a very successful venture by the school to raise the standard of boys' attainment, especially in English.
4. Owing to these measures, very few special educational needs pupils do not achieve a level 4 in Year 6. Such is the quality of support that most achieve level 4 in English – a standard which enables satisfactory access to the secondary curriculum by the time they move to their upper school at the end of Year 8. This represents very good progress by lower ability pupils and by some boys who regained their enthusiasm for English by being taught by a male teacher who becomes a good role model for them to improve their reading and writing. Boys' achievement in English at the end of Year 6 has improved since the setting up of these groups and this carries on as they go into Year 7. They integrate well into mixed groups again. Literacy skills acquired were also apparent in their French lesson in Year 7 where they grasped grammatical structure and learned new vocabulary with similar enthusiasm.
5. Pupils of above average ability are also enabled to succeed well because teachers of these groups plan for the more restricted range present and this allows those capable to succeed in achieving a well above average number of level 5 grades, which prepares them very well for the transition into Key Stage 3 in Year 7.
6. In other subjects, above average standards were seen. In French, no judgement on standards was possible, but pupils make good progress. In design and technology and art, standards were judged to be average. This reflects the lack of effective comparators for French, since it is not usually part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum and pupils' variable past experience in art and design and technology when they enter the school in Year 5. They make good progress owing to the good teaching expertise and specialist facilities and reach an average level of attainment by end

of Year 6. The above average standards achieved in all other subjects are as a result of the school's high expectations, provision of very good resources and the training programme to ensure teachers' strong expertise.

7. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the standard expected for their age. They go to their upper school very well equipped; there, St. Osmund's pupils make an excellent contribution to the very high standards in these subjects achieved in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests. In 2002, they were in the top five per cent of the country. From next year, this outstanding contribution to standards is to be fully recognised; Year 8 pupils will take all their Key Stage 3 tests a year early, at St. Osmund's. Already the school end-of-Year 8 teacher assessments in non-core subjects compare very favourably with the national average at the end of Year 9 with respect to pupils gaining the expected level 5 or higher. After their two terms at upper school, the results are well above those expected. As part of the Dorchester Area Schools' Partnership, the school makes a major contribution to the education of its pupils, enabling as it does, smooth transition between first, middle and upper schools, so that children progress well and do not fall back when they transfer to a new school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to their work and behave very well. They enjoy many aspects of school life and most of them are happy at school, so truancy is very rare. The level of attendance is very high in comparison with other schools. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive on time for the start of the day and most lessons begin on time. Everyone seems to be in a good mood and ready to work. Even when classrooms are crowded there is a calm and friendly atmosphere of good-natured endeavour as pupils share with teachers the aims of good quality learning and personal development. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes were judged to be very good or excellent in about two thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection. There were a few occasions when some pupils became fidgety while they waited for the rest of the class to catch up but typically the large majority of pupils is consistently engaged in productive activity. No lesson was seen where behaviour and attitudes were found to be unsatisfactory overall. Pupils move in an orderly way through the building during lesson changeovers and break times.
9. All members of the school community benefit from their excellent relationships with the others. Pupils demonstrate respect for their peers and for adults, interact in an open and friendly manner, and are genuinely polite and considerate. This is manifest in the very effective co-operation and collaboration that occurs in many lessons, and in the teamwork required in many extra-curricular activities. There is no element of oppressive behaviour such as racism or sexism and, because pupils have confidence in the school's response to such incidents, the rare incidents of bullying do not degrade the atmosphere of trust and mutual support.
10. Pupils are enthusiastic learners but also enjoy sports, arts and other types of activity, so the wide range of extra-curricular activities is very popular and heavily subscribed. The school council is a valued institution which promotes effectively pupils' understanding and adoption of democratic principles. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and they appreciate the clarity of expectations in the school. They have a good understanding of fairness and of the impact of actions on other people. They understand other people's points of view well and are capable of debating complex issues. Responsibilities are accepted willingly and, by the time they leave school, all pupils have participated in helpful activities such as in the library, at parents' evenings or as various sorts of monitors. They value the recognitions such as merit awards and certificates that acknowledge these and other non-academic achievements.
11. Pupils with special educational needs have positive and co-operative attitudes in lessons and generally work hard.

HOW WELL PUPILS ARE TAUGHT

12. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good; no lesson was unsatisfactory. Nine out of ten lessons were good or better, with nearly half very good or better. Eleven per cent of lessons were excellent.
13. The work samples examined showed that pupils make consistently good progress in all subjects over longer periods than the inspection week, indicating that in the longer term, teaching is consistently good in all subjects – a remarkable standard to maintain. Particularly important factors contributing to this are the sharing of subject expertise by specialist teachers with the non-specialists, the rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching with attention to methodology, and the use of assessment data to plan work to challenge and inspire children of all abilities in English and mathematics.
14. The quality of teaching in lessons of the target groups of pupils with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6, and in the Year 7 literacy class and Year 8 support group, is very good. Teachers know their pupils well and assist those with special educational needs directly, enabling them to achieve well. Teachers adapt style and materials to the needs of the group. They make sure that activities are varied so pupils maintain interest and concentration. Their expectations are high but realistic. These classes are small and pupils receive much more individual attention to their particular needs. Year 8 pupils worked intensively on their class reader, 'Holes', for example, discussing the chapter in depth and predicting what would happen next. They all deepened their understanding of events and characters in this lesson. When available, teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils.
15. The teaching of English is very good and some is excellent. Teachers have very good expertise in the subject, and because of the excellent use of assessment data to form appropriate teaching groups, they make full use of it to plan work to extend the learning of pupils of all abilities. This ensures that they all succeed, whether they be high ability pupils studying Shakespeare or Chaucer, or boys learning to enjoy reading and writing for the first time. Teachers ensure that grammar is given its full attention; they also plan to enthuse and inspire by matching material to suit individuals. Pupils know how well they are doing because of excellent marking. This combination results in well above average standards. Literacy develops well across the curriculum, but greater consistency, for example correction of spelling mistakes and the use of writing frames in all subjects, would enhance this even further.
16. The teaching of mathematics is very good, characterised by particularly effective use of resources. These include software appropriate for the task and interactive whiteboards, which make it possible to tackle potentially repetitive calculations, such as the volume of prisms, in a very motivating way. All teachers use their good subject knowledge when questioning pupils, resulting in productive dialogue.
17. Numeracy is developed well within the mathematics department and used well, for example, in food technology when weighing and measuring ingredients, and in science when converting fractions to decimals and percentage. This is not consistent in all departments, however, and is in need of further development to enhance pupils' knowledge of everyday numeracy.
18. Teaching in science is consistently good. In ICT it is good with some excellent features. Information and communication technology develops well in most subjects, but could be improved in humanities, French, and art. In all other subjects teaching is good overall, with many instances of very good and some excellent teaching and learning. Teachers' good expertise is apparent everywhere and even in the departments lacking subject specialists – such as art and geography – the effects of training put in as a result of needs identified by management is apparent in the degree of expertise observed. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and, as a result, pupils respect them and learning becomes a positive partnership. This is further helped by the excellent relationships in most classes.
19. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils' capability and this sees pupils rising to the challenge to do their best work, whether performing, composing or listening to music, or designing and making a hat in design and technology. Teachers plan very well. In the majority of lessons,

objectives for all pupils are clear. Most teachers will check at the end of the lesson to see if pupils understand and have met the objectives. However, the use of the plenary session for reiteration to reinforce learning is not consistent. Sometimes this is because of a lack of time, seen in some history lessons.

20. Teachers' management of pupils is very good and excellent in some practical lessons, such as those in music, science, and design and technology, ensuring that they are conducted in an orderly manner, even when accommodation is cramped, as in the science laboratories.
21. Teachers use methodology based on proven learning practice to motivate children to learn. In French, for example, younger children are often motivated to learn best when they play games in French. In science, practical investigation work into light and colour enhances pupils' study of the eye. In design and technology, pupils much enjoy practising skills necessary for making a layered dessert, such as making chocolate custard or caramel.
22. No time is wasted either at the beginning and end of, or during lessons. As a rule, learning begins at a brisk pace and continues throughout. In most lessons, there is a changing sequence of activities, as seen in French from initial recap of vocabulary about games, to speaking to partners about sports habits, to writing and speaking to the whole class – all at such a pace that pupils make excellent progress.
23. Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is very rigorous and effective. Excellent marking of work is a strong feature of English provision and very good in most other subjects, where regular assessment through testing is very good, but could be improved by pupils being given more opportunities to evaluate and assess their own work. This is a good feature of art classes, however, where it works well. Self-assessment here is a good development. Teachers make good use of homework in all subjects; sufficient is set and it is used well to extend the taught curriculum.

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

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are very good. All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum and the school has taken effective action to provide well for all needs. The whole range of National Curriculum subjects is taught and statutory requirements are fully met.
25. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided, covering most subjects. The pupils have a particularly wide choice of activities in music, physical education and art education, and many pupils participate. The school has also gained the Sportsmark and Artsmark Gold Awards in recognition of the quality and richness of the curriculum in these areas. Many other subjects also run extra-curricular clubs and there are homework clubs and booster classes as well as trips and visits out of school, including trips abroad. The library is open every day for pupils to pursue individual study. The range of opportunities available greatly enriches the pupils' education beyond the normal curriculum and encourages high standards of attainment.
26. The National Strategy for improving standards in Key Stage 3 is being put into practice in English, mathematics and science, and is beginning to make an impact on teaching and learning. Appropriate attention is paid to the teaching of literacy in all subjects and good standards are being attained. The teaching of numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory, but needs to be developed. The arrangements for teaching ICT fulfil statutory requirements for the subject. The school has a good personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme that includes citizenship, health education, sex education and education on the misuse of drugs.
27. The school has strong links with its partner schools through the Dorchester Area Schools' Partnership. This arrangement is very effective in identifying priorities for action in order to further raise standards of achievement and the schools benefit from the close co-operation and the

- opportunities to make the most of shared funding that the partnership provides. This helps to ensure continuity in the pupils' education and has a very positive effect on standards. Subject consultation evenings are well attended by parents. The school also has very good links with the local and wider community, the church and with several charities. Many subjects are involved in these links, which include music performances, environmental work, drama productions, enrichment classes in the upper school, studies in local history and geography and links with schools and charities abroad. The strength and variety of these links enriches the quality of learning that pupils experience in the school.
28. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in English and mathematics because the co-ordinator analyses the assessment data for Years 5 and 6 and organises the grouping very effectively. Year 7 pupils who do not achieve National Curriculum level 4 are offered booster literacy lessons twice a week. Much individual help is available in them, and the majority does achieve this basic literacy qualification before they go to their upper school. Every afternoon a homework club is open, providing a quiet room with teaching assistants ready to help. For pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, a behaviour team works with them every week. There is very little unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons.
 29. Although the school has no formal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development policy, the overall provision made for these aspects of pupils' personal development is excellent. The headteacher, teachers and non-teaching staff provide ideal role models to promote these aspects in lessons, through the way the school is managed, and by the generally caring and positive attitudes they display. The office staff organise all the extra-curricular trips most efficiently.
 30. The school is very successful in ensuring the spiritual aspect of pupils' development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and others' experiences in assemblies and lessons. They are encouraged to make personal responses, for instance to literature. There is an air of respect in the school so it is natural for a variety of opinions to be tolerated and encouraged. Pupils are encouraged to use empathy, for example through role play in English and humanities lessons, to understand other people's feelings and motivations. They can be inspired by the study of, for example, myths, and their spirits can be elevated in any subject, such as when seeing the effect of prisms in science. Imagination, effort and quality of presentation are all valued throughout the school so pupils routinely display justifiable pride in their work and other achievements.
 31. Pupils' moral development is promoted very effectively. They are given clear indications about which behaviour is desirable and which is unacceptable – pupils appreciate this clarity and the fairness of teachers. Teachers remind pupils of rules which their classes have developed and provide good role models of moral behaviour, particularly respect. Pupils' understanding of rules and of law is promoted well in citizenship and PSHE lessons. Opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to consider moral arguments or dilemmas, as seen in a history lesson, for example, when pupils were asked to compose a speech as Lord Shaftesbury pleading for humane treatment of child workers, and in drama, when pupils took the roles of parents of evacuees.
 32. The school community provides an excellent environment for fostering pupils' social development. Teachers very often ask pupils to work together, which they do willingly and very effectively. There are many educational visits and virtually all pupils participate in the residential visits that the school organises, including those to Scotland and France. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to exercise responsibility and to look after the interests of others. They gain understanding of democracy and the common good through the operation of the school council and many are enthusiastic participants in charitable events. The system of pairing Year 5 pupils with Year 8 friends is particularly beneficial for all concerned; pupils experience both the support and responsibility aspects during their time at school, and this is well remembered long after they leave school.
 33. The provision made for pupils' cultural development is excellent. Pupils' knowledge of other faiths including Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism is developed in religious education. Links with a school in Entebbe, a Bulgarian orphanage and the 'Children of Chernobyl' enhance pupils' awareness of how others live or have lived, as do many topics in humanities lessons and other subjects. A broad experience of literature is provided in English. The very wide range of clubs

provides a rich experience of sports, arts and other activities. Many pupils participate actively in music, often performing for audiences outside the school. Displays in classrooms and around the school are used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to supplement the information provided in lessons; they include a strong multi-cultural dimension. Pupils benefit from many educational visits and from visitors such as a Caribbean poet who was at the school last year.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL CARES FOR ITS PUPILS

34. The school takes very good care of its pupils. It provides an environment where they rightly feel safe and valued, and which enables them to flourish physically, intellectually and socially. Arrangements for child protection are very thorough and effective. The site is well managed and effective action is taken to ensuring the security and health and safety of pupils. Equipment, such as fire extinguishers, is regularly maintained and safety documentation is up to date. Appropriate attention is paid to health and safety issues in lessons, such as science and physical education. Pupils are helped to care for themselves by having their awareness raised in matters such as healthy eating and the dangers of smoking, and by thoughtful consideration of issues such as how to resist social pressures by being assertive.
35. The systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are excellent. Teachers and Year Heads keep a close eye on all pupils through a very effective termly 'snapshot' assessment of effort, which is supplemented by discussions at staff meetings or more informally. These allow staff to provide appropriate support and encouragement for each pupil. Systems for eliminating poor behaviour and promoting good behaviour, including through the use of merits, certificates and informal rewards, are very effective and those for monitoring and encouraging attendance are good.
36. The high quality of relationships throughout the school enables pupils to support one another. An outstanding example is the system of friends that is organised between pupils in Year 5 and Year 8. As well as helping the younger children with practical matters such as understanding the complex school site layout, this promotes their feelings of confidence and security and successfully initiates them into the ethos of the school. Pupils appreciate the benefits of this system which frees them from worries about survival and enables them to concentrate on their work.
37. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good. When they enter the school, pupils take standardised verbal reasoning tests. The results of these and other tests showing National Curriculum levels achieved in Year 2, as well as other tests taken in their first school are used to predict the likelihood of pupils gaining the expected level 4 in Year 6. This information is used to form teaching groups for average to above average pupils, those with special educational needs and a target group of pupils whose predictions are just below level 4. This is excellent use of assessment and is fundamental to the school's success in reaching high standards in National Curriculum tests in all three subjects.
38. Assessment of pupils' progress as they move through the school is made regularly and thoroughly. Each subject has its own system, many having evolved through meetings with other schools in the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership. These assessments are used to substantiate teacher assessments at the end of Years 6 and 8, and are passed on to the upper school. The continuity through key stages, even though they cross over different schools, is a great strength, and the degree of trust shown by the schools in the Partnership is underpinned by much moderation work done between them.
39. There is a common marking policy which is adhered to. Marking is very good – excellent in English – and an important factor in the rising standards. Assessment is used to set targets for improvement in English and mathematics, and for pupils with special educational needs, but this does not yet extend to all subjects, and could be more consistently applied in mathematics, design and technology, history, French, physical education and citizenship.
40. The school makes the provision required in the statements of special educational needs. Records are well kept and annual reviews are held on time. Pupils have individual educational plans (IEPs), which are reviewed regularly. In some cases, there are one or two targets which are general and less easy to monitor. Teachers are aware of the IEPs, but do not always explicitly include them in their planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

41. The school maintains very beneficial relations with parents. It makes positive efforts to elicit parents' views and acts on the findings. Parents are very satisfied by most aspects of the school's work. They appreciate the caring and supportive ethos of the school which is seen as effective in helping children to achieve well and to become more mature. They praise the teaching and the provision of activities outside lessons. Parents recognise the effectiveness of the management of the school. They report that pupils are well behaved and a large majority say their children are happy at school. Some parents are not entirely satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress and a slightly larger minority do not agree that their children are given the right amount of homework.
42. Inspection findings support all parents' positive views of the school. Annual reports on pupils' progress meet statutory requirements. Parents receive information about what their children have studied in each subject except PSHE and citizenship, with grades for attainment and effort and useful targets to help focus future efforts. In some subjects these grades are not related to National Curriculum levels which can make it difficult for some parents to know how well their children are doing, but a covering letter explains the expected levels for their age. Moreover, parents have sufficient formal opportunities to discuss their children with staff and they are comfortable approaching the school for further information. Overall, the information parents receive is good. Inspection evidence shows that good use is made of homework and that a suitable amount is set.
43. There is a very active Parent Teacher Association which raises useful funds through the activities it organises and can also help the school to know the community's views of its work. Individual parents are very supportive of many school activities. They help in the library or in lessons, they help with residential visits, they transport pupils to out-of-school events, and many volunteer to participate in school occasions such as the annual Egyptian Day.
44. Almost all parents of children with special educational needs attend reviews and parents' evenings when the co-ordinator is also available. Links with external agencies are good. When necessary, advice is sought from the educational psychologist and experts in other areas. Through the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership, the school has satisfactory access to further specialist services such as behaviour support.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

45. Leadership and management of the school are excellent. This is a great improvement on the last inspection when it was judged to be good. The headteacher has excellent vision for the development of the school and for the education of pupils throughout their school life. He plays an important role in managing the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership, which is instrumental in securing continuity of provision through first, middle and upper schools, but this does not detract in any way from his position as headteacher of St. Osmund's. The headteacher and two deputies work together as an outstandingly effective senior management team. Every aspect of management is clearly mapped out and made known to all staff and pupils. The effects of this are obvious in all aspects of the school.
46. The school's aim to educate children to a high standard in a caring Christian community is certainly accomplished. The ethos is hard-working and purposeful, pupils move between lessons in an orderly fashion, lessons start promptly, behaviour is very good, no time is wasted, relationships are excellent and standards are high.
47. The headteacher and his deputies give excellent leadership to the educational direction of the school, continually striving for improvement in the standards it achieves. They facilitate these by improving teachers' resources and expertise through training for new initiatives, such as the Key Stage 3 Strategy, which is firmly embedded in the practice of teachers of English, mathematics and science, and becoming so in other subjects. The senior management team directs the whole-

school evaluation process most effectively. Very comprehensive annual curriculum reviews take place in the autumn term in conjunction with the performance management cycle.

All staff are involved. Subject leaders are given sufficient time to monitor and evaluate subject provision before the review date. Issues from subject reviews feed neatly into the school development plan via the self-review and strategic planning process.

48. The timing is well planned to coincide with identification of training needs through performance management and the whole-school self-review taking place in January. This is fully considered by the senior management team, governing body committees and the school improvement consultant so that the views of the whole staff are taken into account. Subject leaders all give good or very good leadership to their areas of expertise, and action plans are concise, containing whole-school and personal targets as well as those relating to the school improvement plan priorities. All subject leaders monitor and evaluate their subjects thoroughly, checking plans and books. Most also carry out classroom observations in the form of team teaching. Subject management is very good overall. Many leaders have a large team to administer, such as for English, where it is a matter of great credit that marking is consistently excellent in the team of 14 teachers who teach the subject. Others may not have specialists in their teams but manage to produce above average standards. All subject leaders are directed very closely in their subject reviews by the senior management team, which ensures consistency and completion within the specified time.
49. The leadership of and management of special educational needs are very effective. Working closely with English and mathematics departments, staff and teaching assistants are well deployed. The formation of a 'boys only' English class in Year 6 is a successful initiative. Their progress has been carefully observed in both the discrete English and mixed ability lessons in other subjects, and it is good. Behaviour has improved and their literacy skills have risen to just below average. Close liaison with the first schools about Year 5 pupils enables class support to be increased by efficient deployment. The special educational needs base is centrally placed and very accessible. When shared by two teachers and two groups, the co-operative and the positive attitudes of the pupils help them ignore the noise and activity of the other group. The base is well provided with computers, but the lack of technician support has delayed room networking and further individualisation of work. The co-ordinator is implementing the new Code of Practice effectively. The rise in standards in the core subjects since the last inspection, particularly in the numbers reaching level 4 at the end of Year 6, indicates good improvement.
50. The school is not well funded. It receives the lowest allocation in Dorset. The headteacher seeks to find extra funding from all available sources and is very creative in its use to improve the learning environment, so accommodation is now good. The drama studio, for example, was once a hut belonging to the Post Office which fell into disuse and was purchased for a nominal sum and transformed by the school into a very effective resource. Very hard work on the part of the headteacher and governors resulted in lottery funding which enabled the addition of the excellent sports hall to the school's accommodation. The school is well cared for and welcoming. Pupils' work is displayed proudly in every available location and changed regularly by the pupils, who respect and value their own and each other's work. Teaching resources are very good as a result, again, of careful and prudent financial management.
51. Governors give very good service to the school. They are informed and supportive, and have very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor subject provision well through their attachment to subjects, having a good code of practice relating to visits. The music governor gives excellent support by accompanying for musical activities. Governors play a significant part in school development and improvement, being involved in the school self-review and strategic planning process. Governors also assist the headteacher in the setting and monitoring of the budget, which is firmly based on the priorities identified in the school development plan. This is a well thought out document in which priorities are clearly related to school improvement; the department reviews also relate to the overall school priorities. Sometimes issues are brought up in subject reviews, however, such as gender differences in science, which do not appear to be considered either in the department or the school. Several governors have particular areas of financial expertise of which the school makes very good use.

Funding is used very well to improve the provision for children's education. The school seeks to obtain best value in all that it does – it spends money only after careful and prudent consideration on the benefits of goods and services. It consults parents, pupils and staff regularly for their views. It compares its performance to that of other schools both locally and

nationally, and constantly challenges itself to do better. Each year's National Curriculum test results for 11 and 14-year-olds are displayed in the headteacher's room, and it is obvious there is improvement every year; targets are met and usually exceeded.

52. The school invests heavily in its staff and makes sure that they all have at least good expertise in their subjects. There is highly effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching which has resulted in a highly skilled and competent teaching staff, as can be seen from the very good teaching profile. Performance management is used very well to support staff development. The school has excellent procedures in place to ensure that new staff, including supply and student teachers, settle in quickly and become effective members of the team. Administration by the office staff takes place unobtrusively with great efficiency, using the management computer systems effectively. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, form an effective team with high aspirations and an excellent capacity for further improvement.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

53. There are no key issues, but the governors should consider the following minor issues when forming their next school improvement plan:
- (1) Consistent application of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum (paragraphs 15, 17, 61, 70, 93, 99)
 - (2) Further development of ICT across the curriculum (paragraphs 112, 119, 123)
 - (3) An audit on provision for citizenship to establish learning objectives, the assessment of progress, and staff training needs (paragraph 88)
 - (4) Greater efficiency in the use of assessment to plan curriculum targets (paragraphs 39, 40, 51, 67, 68, 86, 95, 107, 118, 128, 129)
 - (5) Accommodation and technical support in science and ICT (paragraphs 20, 75, 109, 111, 123)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	112
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	12	35	54	11	0	0	0
Percentage	11	31	48	10	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	637
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	6.1
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.3
---------------------------	-----

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	101	79	180

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	81	81	97
	Girls	74	62	76
	Total	155	143	173
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (81)	79 (81)	96 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	74	77	95
	Girls	69	67	76
	Total	143	144	172
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (81)	80 (83)	95 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
618	0	0
00	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0

The 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)	30.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	279

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.9
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	26.9
Key Stage 3	25.3

FTE: full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
----------------	--------

	£
Total income	1,270,287
Total expenditure	1,254,863
Expenditure per pupil	1,963
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,187
Balance carried forward to next year	15,424

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.3

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

635

Number of questionnaires returned

583

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	44	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	55	14	2	2
The teaching is good.	52	46	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	12	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	53	10	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	33	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	46	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	32	1	0	1

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 **very good**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching is a significant factor in well above average examination results
- Pupils are co-operative and hard-working
- Excellent marking helps pupils to improve their work

Areas for improvement

- Monitor literacy across the curriculum to share the various good practices

54. Standards are well above average in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, both nationally and compared with similar schools, and at the end of Year 8, as seen in lessons and workbooks. All pupils make very good progress. Overall, there has been an improving trend, though there was a dip in 2001. The well above average standards at the end of Year 6 are achieved because most pupils, including many of those with special educational needs, reach at least level 4; a high proportion reaches level 5. Though girls' results are better than those of boys, the gap is less than observed nationally. At the end of Year 8, pupils are well placed to attain well above average standards in Year 9 National Curriculum tests. Evidence from the upper schools confirms this. In previous years they have been in the top five per cent nationally.
55. At the end of Year 6, pupils speak and listen very well. Their vocabulary is expanding both generally and technically. Standards of reading are high and pupils reading journals show that many enjoy a varied selection of children's fiction. They are beginning to read Shakespeare by studying 'The Tempest'. All pupils write extensively and choose a style suitable to a diary, a fable or a persuasive piece. They build up a good knowledge of spelling and grammatical rules. When pupils enter Year 5, they have no more than average skills, so their progress is very good.
56. By the end of Year 8, pupils are confident and articulate. They listen very well to teachers and to each other. Much more reading is now done in class and includes poetry, novels and classics (Shakespeare and Chaucer). Pupils continue to write at length and in a variety of styles: poetry, biography, stories and leaflets. Technical accuracy improves, though there are still some spelling errors. Nevertheless, pupils' vocabulary is now very wide and complex sentence construction well developed. Low ability pupils and those with special educational needs receive extra help in small groups and work hard to achieve these standards.
57. The quality of teaching is very good and some is excellent. Expectations are very high but also realistic. Teachers have very good knowledge of all areas of the subject and plan lessons carefully so that pupils' discussions, reading and writing will be integrated. Pupils' learning of, for example, persuasive writing is constantly reinforced in different ways during the lesson. In mixed ability classes, teachers often adapt materials to suit individual pupils. Methods are very good. Much spelling work, for example, is approached investigatively rather than solely through rote learning. Pupils' interest and concentration is maintained because of the variety of activities in most lessons. Marking is excellent because the criteria are very clear, and pupils know how far they have progressed and given guidance on how to improve to meet their individual targets. A very good feature is that pupils learn to look for and correct their own errors. Pupils' use of ICT is good and frequently enhances presentation. On occasion, teachers place factual writing in another context, (for example, historical), and by question and answer build up an essay framework on a topic, such as Ancient Egypt.
58. The management and co-ordination of the department are excellent. Fourteen teachers work very well and consistently to high standards. The analysis of examination data and liaison with the special educational needs co-ordinator ensure that pupils receive much individual help. Regular

visits to the theatre and participation in writing and reading activities all raise pupils' interest. The displays of pupils' work are outstanding and show how much it is valued. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good because standards and teaching have improved significantly and all issues have been addressed.

Drama

59. The weekly drama lessons for all years support oral and listening skills effectively and also other subjects, notably the humanities and English. In the few lessons seen, achievement is satisfactory or better. Pupils work very well together and evaluate their own work and that of others thoughtfully. They improvise scenes, and use dramatic techniques such as mime and freeze-frame. Teaching is good and extends beyond the classroom with a very good programme of extra-curricular activities: weekly meetings, productions and theatre visits. Pupils are encouraged to join the Dorchester youth theatre, and the Weymouth theatre group. Teachers are very willing to help prepare audition pieces. The drama studio offers very good space for lessons and small productions. The subject is well led by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. It is well organised and makes a good contribution to extra-curricular provision.

Literacy

60. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are good. Pupils read well. In Years 5 and 6, their reading journals are carefully monitored to ensure that they read at their own level, and in Years 7 and 8, reading is developed by studying class readers as well. Skim reading is encouraged in geography. Extra-curricular reading such as that done for World Book Day, or by shadowing the Carnegie Award judges, also helps to improve skills.
61. In all subjects, pupils' writing is good and often very good. Their work is well presented and often enhanced by illustration. Much extended writing is done in geography and history and more unusually in science, where a pupil wrote a long story on a science topic. In almost all subjects, pupils use specialist terms well, but in several subjects – geography, history, French and physical education - key words are not sufficiently emphasised. Spelling mistakes are not always corrected. Writing frames are used in some subjects, but not in all. Though literacy is well developed overall, greater consistency across the curriculum would help.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The management and educational leadership of the department
- Attention paid to the raising of standards at all levels
- Teaching and learning
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes
- Use of resources

Area for improvement

- Target setting and consistent use of assessment data
- Sharing expertise by team teaching

62. Standards of attainment in National Curriculum tests in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are above the national averages for level 4 and well above for level 5, and are improving in line with the national trend. Results in 2002 showed boys and girls improving at a similar rate. By the end of Year 7 and 8 standards of attainment in lessons exceed the national expectations and are well above average in all but the lower sets. When attainment on entry in Year 5 is taken into account,

achievement at the end of Year 8 shows very good progress has been made. Results show steady improvement over the last five years.

63. Pupils make good progress through Years 5 and 6. Inspection evidence shows standards to be well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' understanding of basic mathematical skills is good, and their interest and enthusiasm is engaged in well-planned lessons with effective use of starter activities. Whiteboards were observed being used frequently by all groups to promote their learning and to give immediate response to their teachers. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils showed their teacher how they could convert between kilograms and grams with relative ease using their whiteboards, resulting in the teacher's knowing they were ready to move on to the next stage in their learning.
64. In Year 8, evidence shows standards to be higher than the national expectations and standards well above average by the time pupils leave school. An above average group in Year 8, for example, were working at a high level on converting recurring decimals to fractions, using algebraic notation to show their method. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and make good progress as a result. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson where a group of below average pupils were given support from their teacher and teaching assistant, resulting in the pupils finding a relationship between the diameter and circumference of a circle. Pupils use calculators and computers confidently and also calculate quickly and accurately in their head. They measure angles and lines accurately and make correct use of mathematical equipment.
65. The quality of teaching in mathematics is very good overall. Effective use of resources in all lessons results in pupils showing enthusiasm to learn. This was seen in Year 7 where an above average group were working on transformations. They manipulated and interpreted data to present their work graphically. Their teacher demonstrated and explained their task by using appropriate software, so that pupils could see the relationships between combined transformations, thus enhancing the understanding. Similarly in a Year 8 lesson, good questioning skills and effective use of the whiteboard and projector, engaged pupils' interests, resulting in successful learning outcomes relating to the volume of prisms. All teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and this is used effectively to question pupils and offer good explanations.
66. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, and teachers have a clear sense of care and interest in their pupils. This elicits very good behaviour and positive attitudes towards the subject. Positive relationships are encouraged between age groups by the effective use of the 'Buddy System'; pupils take responsibility for each other's welfare, which promotes good behaviour in and out of class.
67. The department is very well managed, and there is an effective and conscientious teaching team. Schemes of work are well constructed and support successful teaching and learning. However, target setting needs to be more rigorous to encourage, motivate and inform pupils of their levels and progress. Presently, targets are written at the back of exercise books, but this is inconsistent and most pupils seem to be unaware of their National Curriculum level or their improvement targets.
68. The department rooms are well equipped, with display boards excellently used to show evidence of the subject's contribution to the development of literacy. The department make use of a very well organised resource area, supporting teachers in their teaching of the subject. However, they do not share expertise enough by, for example team teaching, where teachers could observe the practice of good teaching within the department. Strong links with the feeder schools allows the subject leader to identify various pupils on entry, enabling support and target groups to be developed. Assessment data are available to the department on pupils' entry in Year 5. Such data allow setting to be organised in advance ensuring that pupils are placed in the correct group at the beginning of the academic year. Some teachers use laptop computers within the department to plan lessons and record data, but not all, which inhibits the effective use of assessment data and technology across the department. An enrichment programme allows the high achieving pupils in Year 8 to visit the upper school on several occasions throughout the year to extend their

knowledge and interest in mathematics. This is an excellent opportunity for the pupils and allows good communication to take place between the schools in the area.

Numeracy

69. Through the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the mathematics department lays a good foundation for the development of pupils' numeracy ability. Pupils show mathematical skills in various subjects throughout the curriculum. In design and technology, for example, pupils have many opportunities to develop their numeracy when weighing and measuring. During an ICT lesson, pupils manipulated and interpreted data with the use of computer software. In science, pupils demonstrate their ability to use fractions, decimals and percentages with confidence. Data handling was seen to be good in geography, with examples of pie and bar charts representing statistics well.
70. During a whole-school training day in 2002, all teaching staff gained information and ideas for teaching numeracy in their subjects. However, not all departments are using these ideas to promote the use and understanding of numeracy. This needs to be developed to allow the pupils and teachers to appreciate the importance of numerical skills in everyday life. The methods taught within the mathematics department need to be promoted and used more effectively across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **very good**

Strengths

- Results in national tests are well above average, and all pupils make good progress
- The quality of teaching is consistently good
- The science co-ordinator provides excellent leadership for the subject
- There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties

Areas for improvement

- Two of the laboratories are too small for the number of pupils being taught in them
- The time allocated for support from the science technician is too low

71. In the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002, pupils achieved results that were well above the national average for all schools and well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was higher in science than in English and mathematics. The results have been consistently above average over the last five years and have improved at a greater rate than the national trend during this period. These results maintained the high level achieved in the previous year, with the proportion of pupils achieving the highest levels (level 5 and above) being well above average. There were no significant differences in the standards attained by boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieved very well when compared with their attainment on entry to the school, showing very good progress. Very few pupils achieved results that were below the expected levels for their age group.
72. The standards achieved in the pupils' written work and in lessons are above average in Years 5 and 6 and well above average in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in Year 6 are particularly well prepared for the national tests and their teachers are knowledgeable about test requirements. Effective booster lessons are held for particular groups of pupils, which have allowed the school to achieve well above average results in the national tests at the end of Year 6. There are no great differences in the standards achieved in different aspects of science, although the standards in experimental and investigative science are a little lower because, in some lessons, the teachers miss opportunities to encourage the pupils to predict and to explain their thinking.

73. The consistently good quality of teaching and learning, with a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching in Years 7 and 8 enables these pupils to achieve high standards. Teachers develop pupils' skills of scientific enquiry well so that experiments are carried out effectively, with pupils handling equipment carefully and paying due regard to safety. Pupils record their work well and use their good reading, writing and number skills. Teachers are careful to match the work to the needs of the pupils and they support pupils with learning difficulties very well, aided by the effective work of the learning support assistants. Computer equipment is used in appropriate ways to improve the pupils' learning. In one Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully introduced the idea of making bar charts by actively involving the pupils in the work, so that they quickly grasped the idea of using appropriate scales and axes. This was followed up with work in the computer suite to practise and consolidate their understanding, each pupil having their own computer to use. The lesson was very well prepared and very effectively taught, with good support from the learning support assistant for pupils with learning difficulties. The excellent teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes allowed rapid progress in pupils' understanding of the work so that they attained high standards. In another lesson, Year 8 pupils had a very good grasp of work they had done on the function of the eye. They effectively carried out practical work on light and colour, attaining above average standards in their understanding of the topic because of the skilful and well-planned teaching, which included use of the computers in the laboratory to reinforce learning.
74. The arrangements for assessing pupils' progress through regular testing are very effective and all pupils have individual targets so that they are aware of the standards they are expected to attain. Routine marking of pupils' work is consistently good and usually gives them guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils' learning is also aided by their very good behaviour and attitudes to work, which enable teachers to manage classes well in laboratories which are too small. In nearly all lessons the learning objectives are made clear to the pupils so that they can understand what they need to learn in order to achieve high standards.
75. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards are now higher, progress has been further improved, and there have been improvements in the use and availability of computer equipment. The leadership and management of the science co-ordinator are excellent. The science team is not complacent about its good results and the department works well together, with a clear focus on standards and quality of learning. New developments, such as the National Strategy for improving standards in Years 7 and 8, are being used to increase the range of teaching methods in order to further improve the high quality of learning seen in most lessons. The laboratories are maintained in very good condition and contain good displays of pupils' work to provide a bright and stimulating atmosphere for learning. However, two are too small for the numbers of pupils being taught. Laboratories can only be used with such large groups because the teachers manage the classes very well and the pupils behave very well. The work of the science teachers is well supported by a part-time science technician, who makes a positive contribution to the smooth running of the department and is valued by the teachers. However, the amount of technician time available is below that normally expected in a school of this size, and limits the amount of support that can be given.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- The quality and consistency of teaching
- Subject team ethos
- Pupils' attitudes in lessons

Areas for improvement

- Use of ICT
- Opportunities for pupils to visit galleries & experience residencies

76. Pupils enter the school with standards that are a little below average. By the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly in line with national levels, with girls attaining slightly higher than boys. Towards the end of Year 8 attainment is above average for the majority with a few pupils, mainly girls, attaining higher levels.
77. From the start in Year 5, the school concentrates on skills and techniques. Pupils are encouraged to take a positive approach to working in sketchbooks, which is beginning to increase their skills in research in a more focused way and helps to develop the way ideas are researched and elaborated as pupils move up the school.
78. In the lessons observed, younger pupils were seen drawing from observation, with the emphasis on proportion and scale. They then used this to explore ideas and techniques in clay and in pastel work. Such work was skilfully linked by the teachers to the work of other artists, such as William Morris. Pupils in Year 7 are taught to blend colours carefully and to explore and experiment with a range of different materials before developing their ideas for a self-portrait. Older pupils research ideas about tropical fish, looking carefully at shape and form before developing ideas for making sculptures out of paper and card.
79. There has been good improvement in facilities since the last inspection. The good sized art room has plenty of natural light and is well resourced. Precautions for the safe use of the kiln are being put in place and the subject has written procedures for monitoring and future development.
80. The quality of teaching across the subject is consistently good. This reflects well on both the leadership of the subject and the enthusiasm of the staff. The planning for the subject carefully and clearly indicates the activities and learning objectives, which is particularly helpful to non-specialist staff. Good planning and classroom management, supported by this enthusiasm, make a very positive link between the teaching, the quality of learning and the progress the pupils make. Teachers have good control. They often challenge pupils with difficult questions and encourage them to use the correct words and to have their own opinions.
81. Learning is consistently good across all years. Pupils' attitudes towards art and their behaviour in lessons are very good. They are keen to learn, are polite, share equipment well and support and encourage each other. They listen to their teachers, follow instructions carefully and are keen to answer questions. They are taught to develop their use of tone, line and texture to improve their drawing skills, and use a wide range of materials to explore and experiment with colour, often combining these in imaginative ways. They imaginatively build sculptures from card, paper and clay.
82. Assessment procedures are appropriate. There is some effective oral assessment in lessons and pupil self-assessment is a developing feature. Records of assessment are kept with the pupils' work, but constructive comments and future targets are not written in their sketchbooks. While the quality of the work is generally good, expectations of staff are limiting the capacity for further improvement.
83. Good, positive leadership ensures that non-specialist staff are skilled and resourced to meet the challenges of the subject. There is a distinct team ethos, which generates support and critical analysis, and sustains the desire to improve teaching. The range of extra-curricular activity is wide, and the take-up good, especially in pottery. There is recognition that further developments in ICT and the use of residencies and gallery visits are needed.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good
- Pupils' attitudes are good

- Involvement of the local community
- Work by pupils on behalf of others
- The school ethos

Areas for improvement

- Schemes of work
- Assessment procedures
- Arrangements for monitoring of the subject

84. The school has developed an effective programme for citizenship. It is well taught by teachers in good lessons that are provided for all pupils. These lessons incorporate the long-standing and effective personal, social and health education programme. However, the whole-school ethos and associated expectations also make a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship.
85. All pupils make good progress. Most react positively, and willingly become involved in the various practical activities and class discussions. At this point in Years 6 and 8, most pupils are working above expected national levels. In Year 5, pupils consider issues such as the rights of children, such as child workers in Ghana. Pupils consider their own lives and write biographies that highlight the meaning of friendship and positive relationships. In Year 6, pupils extend their vocabulary to include legal terms, and by Year 8 they have extended their knowledge of healthy lifestyles well. Pupils react very well to having to make judgements about the use or abuse of alcohol. In all years, work is reinforced well by visits and visitors.
86. The strength of the subject lies in the good and, at times, very good teaching. Strong and positive relationships exist in class with obvious mutual respect. This, in turn, enables pupils to feel safe when expressing their views on the issues they examine. Teachers plan well to ensure that there is a good and interesting range of work, and they lead discussions well. However, there exist gaps in marking, and there is little guidance given by staff as to how pupils can improve.
87. Overall, pupils show very good attitudes to the subject. They particularly enjoy practical activities, and the opportunity to discuss at length issues that help them understand the world around them. They react particularly well to the opportunities to carry out active citizenship. They accept responsibilities well, voting for form representatives to the school council, and in Year 8, applying for positions of responsibility. Moreover they carry out their fund-raising work with enthusiasm and commitment on behalf of the local elderly community, a Bulgarian orphanage and the children of Chernobyl. Pupils' learning is particularly well enhanced by the opportunity to meet children from Chernobyl.
88. The subject has developed a very effective policy statement that emphasises its links with the whole-school ethos. Schemes of work have been developed, although there is an urgent need to develop more specific learning objectives, consider work for pupils of differing abilities, and to map out clearly where and when other subjects deliver aspects of citizenship, and how that fits in with the overall citizenship curriculum. Such measures would aid the tracking of progression, as well as allowing the subject to identify where aspects of citizenship, such as critical thinking, are being reinforced in other subjects. Although there are arrangements for pupils to assess their own work, the school has not yet implemented a formal system for assessing pupils' on-going progress. Subject monitoring is carried out on an informal basis only; staff training needs have not been established.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6 and is very good in Years 7 and 8
- Pupils make sustained good progress throughout
- Pupils experience a broad range of appropriate experiences

- Assessment practices are good and relate to National Curriculum levels

Areas for improvement

- Provide a consistent approach to expectations and target setting
- The development of new technology opportunities, such as CAD/CAM

89. Pupils make good sustained progress in design and technology as they move up the school. Their prior experiences are very varied, and attainment on entry to the school is generally below average. Achievement is, therefore, good and standards of work by the end of Year 6 are average. Achievement can vary a little between different units of work in different materials, and when the expectation of research or evaluation varies between teaching groups.
90. Pupils generate a range of interesting and innovative ideas. Initially, younger pupils' designs are poorly communicated and developed, but they sometimes make prototype patterns, which enables them to further their understanding. There is a good balance of short tasks designed for pupils to learn specific skills, and longer tasks with more open-ended outcomes. Some of the project challenges are exciting for pupils, for instance when they design balancing toys in a research project with literacy and international links. By the end of Year 6, they have made a variety of cushions and been given opportunities to use computer control with the electric buggies they have made. In food technology, pupils record their sensory analysis of products and evaluate their outcomes using the opinions of others. Some work is above average by the end of Year 6, particularly where pupils start to develop skills with tools, materials and processes, which they would not experience in most primary schools.
91. In Year 8, standards of work are above average overall, so progress through Years 7 and 8 is good. Pupils start to develop a credible specification, and some of their design work shows detail and is well annotated, for instance in their textile logos. An impressively wide variety of practical outcomes is evident when pupils design and make hats for different needs and purposes; some work is well above average. In contrast, there is little opportunity for individual detailed research or to develop design ideas when making bags in Year 7. In general, pupils do not show how they develop their design ideas very well. At this stage, they are better at making than designing. Pupils with special educational needs in all year groups are well supported by teachers and make equally good progress. Good sympathetic use is made of learning support where present. The achievement of boys and girls is similar, and well monitored by the department.
92. Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good. Most teachers develop well-structured lessons and this maintains pace and pupils' achievement. In a very good lesson, a large class was organised into groups investigating pasta as a cereal food. Good planning and provision of resources allowed all pupils to carry out interesting activities, such as Internet research and planning a restaurant menu, and in turn they learned how to make fresh pasta. In another good lesson, good use is made of special needs support and the technician to ensure that pupils visiting the workshop for the first time worked safely to learn the correct use and application of tools and processes.
93. In Years 7 and 8, teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' expertise is generally very good, and expectations are high. This results in good acquisition of knowledge of appropriate processes. Pupils draw on a range of information when designing or modelling their ideas. Learning is very good when product analysis is used to establish criteria for pupils' own designs, and when there are expectations of varied outcomes to designing. In a very good lesson on computer control, short achievable targets and work building on prior experience led to good progress. In other very good lessons, pupils made a perceptive analysis of bought desserts and a range of hats in order to clarify ideas about their own design possibilities. Literacy is often developed well when key words are identified and writing frames are used to develop evaluations, but the use of literacy and the expectations of evaluation are inconsistent.
94. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The department is very popular. The good management of pupils, attention to health and safety, and pupils' very good behaviour stop the potential hazards of large groups in specialist workshops.

95. Leadership and management are very good. Department priorities are clear and well reviewed. The large team co-operate well and non-specialists are well supported. Risk assessment is well incorporated into planning. The department has developed good assessment practices which are mapped to National Curriculum levels. However, not all pupils know their current working levels, and target setting practice is inconsistently applied. There is a varied and appropriate curriculum which includes opportunities for computer control and limited ICT facilities for research.
96. Since the last inspection, there has been very good improvement in accommodation, boys' attainment, provision for pupils with special educational needs and assessment.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Standards are consistently above average
- Pupils achieve well. They want to learn
- Good interesting teaching
- Leadership and management are very good

Areas for improvement

- Further development of practical work, including fieldwork, to develop numerical and critical skills
- Using assessment data to guide planning

97. By the time they leave middle school, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve above average standards in geography and make good progress from their starting point. They learn well because they want to and because of the improving teaching techniques and work programmes which provide interesting and practical activities. Strong links with partner schools ensure smooth progress through the phases.
98. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good skills, and understand what gives places their distinctive character. They use atlases well. A strong feature throughout is the standard of oral work, as seen in a Year 5 lesson about the destruction of the rain forest. Groups, chosen to include boys and girls and all abilities, helped pupils to share and develop their ideas and to work harmoniously together. Lively discussion channelled by the teacher led to animated presentations, delivered clearly and confidently, each evaluated by the pupils on its merit. The activities helped them to sort their ideas, think critically, and appreciate that people hold different views.
99. By the end of Year 8, pupils have built effectively on earlier work and have developed a good range of skills. They remember information well. Most research and follow structured enquiries well. However, there are too few opportunities for practical fieldwork, particularly to allow above average pupils to devise their own questions, follow them through, reach critical conclusions and at the same time develop, and practise their Ordnance Survey map-work and numerical skills. The majority shows good understanding of geographical patterns, processes, and environmental issues, as in the World Football unit in which they write well argued reports and letters, effectively linking places with economic activities. Some explanations by above average pupils about physical processes, weather and climate, for example, lack detail. Others have gaps in understanding.
100. Throughout the school, most pupils write well at length because teachers structure the work effectively. Good quality worksheets help pupils to find, sort, and arrange their ideas. They assisted below average pupils in one lesson to describe the causes and impact of oil spillages, and then extend their ideas. However, not enough attention is given to consolidating key vocabulary particularly for below average pupils. Pupils are beginning to use ICT well, both for presentation and research.
101. Overall, teaching is good with some very good features. These qualities were exemplified in a Year 8 lesson about oil resources. The teacher used his expertise to plan a well-organised series of increasingly challenging activities. An interesting and topical starter involved pupils in completing a story, thereby clearly focusing them on the aim. A skilfully led class discussion about the problems of non-renewable fuels extended their knowledge and understanding. After assessing the effectiveness of school questionnaires, pupils learned how to design their own questions and tested them for homework. As a result, pupils made very good gains in their learning about the importance of framing accurate questions. Occasionally, teachers do not intervene enough in lessons to maintain the pace, and sometimes miss opportunities to further the learning. Teachers set and mark homework regularly; detailed comments help pupils to improve.

102. The subject is very well led and managed. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues in the last report. Teachers are enthusiastic and work well together. The team leader is very supportive. Work programmes help non-specialists and new teachers well. Procedures for assessing work have improved although methods of standardising it need refining; data are not used enough to guide planning. The department makes a good contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal and social development, including citizenship. Resources are good. Accommodation is well organised with colourful and informative displays.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Standards of teaching
- Pupils' attitudes
- A very good curriculum

Areas for improvement

- The schemes of work
- Ensuring that lesson objectives and plenary sessions are consistently taught
- Assessment and target setting so that pupils understand how to improve their work

103. On entry, pupils have average levels of attainment, but they make good progress and by the end of Year 6 and Year 8, they are achieving good levels in comparison to the national average. This constitutes good and often very good levels of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs progress in line with other pupils as a result of appropriately designed work, and learning support assistants who are well prepared and active in the classroom.
104. Pupils' historical knowledge is well developed across the school. Average pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of how the climate and flooding of the Nile contributed to farming and the religious life of Egyptians. By Year 8, pupils write in detail about the cause and course of the English Civil War. Those above average write in good detail, demonstrating that they can identify closely with how people felt and reacted over issues such as child labour in Victorian times. These pupils debate using accurate information about whether King John was a good or bad king, for example, or whether Oliver Cromwell was a Protector or Dictator. Other pupils do not consistently back up their arguments with the necessary information. This is reflected in source work, and the pupils' ability to raise questions themselves about the work they study. Below average pupils make very good progress in Years 7 and 8 in their approach to source work. They used the written sources of ex-slave Olaudah Equiano to identify the conditions under which slaves lived. However, above average pupils quickly raised the issue of whether the information from an anti-slavery campaigner may be "over-done". For the majority of pupils, their understanding of how to identify weaknesses in evidence is in line with the national average.
105. Overall teaching is good; it was very good in four out of ten lessons seen. Pupils know what is expected of them and react favourably to the establishment of what are very good working environments in class. The teachers clearly explain the task, and pupils settle quickly to their work. Very good pupil management ensures that the use of time is maximised. Good planning by teachers contains a good variety of stimulating material to present to pupils so they may develop and reinforce not only history skills but also their literacy and cross-curricular understanding. They write speeches, debate, work with written and pictorial evidence as well as writing in newspaper reporting form or at length about cause and consequence. However, learning objectives are not always made clear, nor key words highlighted, and there is limited use of effective and challenging plenary sessions. Pupils are not yet encouraged to develop their analytical skills and deeper thinking.

106. Pupils respond very positively in this subject. They concentrate hard, take a pride in their work and want to improve. They particularly enjoy the opportunities to visit places such as a Tudor hall, and participate in the Egyptian Day. These experiences are only one aspect of a very good curriculum that delivers a varied range of activities to pupils. The schemes of work are detailed, and include information about assessment opportunities. They do not give more details about where ICT and citizenship should be included, the expected levels of work, or more specific learning objectives.
107. Management of the subject is very good with clear and appropriate future planning taking place. The subject is very well monitored, although there is a need to take further action based on the assessment data collected. Pupils benefit from on-going target setting, but are not given details of National Curriculum levels and how they can be helpful in showing pupils what has to be done to improve. The subject makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' cultural education. They study women in history, black peoples of America including slavery, and consider a range of moral issues. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in assessment, curriculum and management.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average
- Pupils make good progress. They are enthusiastic and want to improve
- Teachers plan well, devising interesting tasks
- Leadership and management are very good. There are clear ideas for improvement

Areas for improvement

- Technical support to maintain equipment and to help less confident teachers
- Developing Internet opportunities and the use of CAD/CAM for design purposes
- Further developing the use of ICT across the curriculum
- Moderation procedures to ensure consistent assessment standards

108. Standards in information and communication technology are above average - a significant improvement since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are now fully met. Boys and girls all make good progress throughout the school, benefiting from their desire to learn. Considerable investment has been made, linked to training and improving facilities. Work plans have improved, partly as a result of government initiatives, and more emphasis is placed on applying skills. Strong links with partner schools ensure smooth transition between key stages.
109. Currently the lack of technical support to maintain equipment and to help less confident teachers is hindering progress. With the appointment of a new technician shortly, this problem should be resolved.
110. By end of Year 6, pupils have good keyboard skills and use the network and industrial software confidently. They are good at finding and sharing information. They know why databases are used and how they work, and can find simple information. Above average pupils are more confident about asking suitable questions. Below average pupils are well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and classmates. Most pupils use technical words well and have good communication skills. They present work for a variety of purposes, their creativity and the care taken shown in newspaper displays about the Tudors. They develop ideas satisfactorily; they devised a set of instructions for a burglar alarm, for instance. In science, Year 6 pupils show sound understanding of how to use data loggers to measure noise levels although some have gaps in their understanding.
111. By the end of Year 8, pupils have improved their skills using increasingly difficult software to manipulate text, graphics, and data, using the Internet and digital cameras to import images.

Literacy and numeracy are well developed. Editing shows that they think about their ideas, and most use spell checkers to correct mistakes. Their “Granny’s Guide to Internet” illustrates an awareness of the social impact of ICT. They begin to solve problems and test hypotheses, understanding the need for data to test them. They create questionnaires and set up a simple database. They search for information on larger databases, about the SS “Titanic”, for example, using filters to refine their searches. Some pupils find this difficult, not having the benefit from supportive worksheets, for example. They produce graphs to illustrate their findings, above average pupils choosing those best suited to purpose. Attainment in modelling is satisfactory. They can create simple spreadsheet, for example, inputting and changing simple formulae, though below average pupils have difficulty in understanding some of the ideas. In design and technology they assemble a traffic light model and make it work, but their use of the Internet and CAD/CAM for design purposes is underdeveloped. Design and technology has been using computerised sewing machines for some time, but is presently experiencing difficulties with CAD/CAM software.

112. Pupils have good opportunities to use their skills regularly in the majority of subjects to improve and enrich their learning - a major improvement since last inspection. The school recognises that areas like the humanities, French, and art still need further development.
113. Overall teaching in discrete ICT lessons is good with some excellent features. Teachers are hard-working and pupils benefit from being able to develop their skills outside lessons. Teachers are well organised so pupils settle quickly and move around safely and sensibly. They give good-humoured support to pupils, who tackle individual tasks confidently. The best features were seen in a Year 6 lesson about editing a multimedia presentation for an older age group. A brisk introduction checked that pupils were clear about new vocabulary and gave the purpose of the lesson. The teacher skilfully expanded pupils’ ideas using the whiteboard or link computer effectively for focus. During practical work, he gave the right amount of individual support encouraging them to develop their ideas through discussion. There was an interested “buzz”. At the end, by moving to the next computer to evaluating the work, they learned about how to improve. Overall they made very good gains in skills and how to apply them.
114. Time and resources are generally used well. Occasionally, time is lost when the whiteboard is not used to develop an activity; there is a lack of printed and on-line support sheets and pupils switch between programs when formulating questions when a paper exercise would be more appropriate.
115. The department is very well led and managed. The new subject leader has built effectively on the work of his predecessors and has clear plans for improvement. Moderation procedures need refining. Resources are very good. They are effectively distributed and those subjects not having computers have no difficulties in using them provided that they book the facilities in advance. Internet access is well regulated. Accommodation, much improved, is satisfactory. There are enough computers but one room is not laid out in a helpful manner to allow pupils to work away from computers. The library is not a good resource for individual research using computers since it only houses one.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall the quality of provision in French is **good**.

Strengths

- Above average attainment and progress by all pupils
- Good teaching, especially in grammar

Areas for improvement

- Raise the attainment of boys
- Improve assessment procedures so that pupils have a clearer understanding of their level of attainment
- Improve the quality of planning by using information about pupils to set targets for improvement

116. The subject has made good progress since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 make a good start to language learning. They develop oral confidence and clearly enjoy the subject. Standards of work seen during the inspection show that attainment in Years 7 and 8 is above average and that pupils make good progress. All pupils develop good speaking and writing skills, and acquire a wide knowledge of vocabulary. Above average pupils in Year 7 manipulate the present tense of verbs successfully and add information from memory to produce extended oral responses of high quality. They speak with fluency, confidence and good pronunciation. Above average pupils in Year 8 use the three main tenses accurately in extended oral work. The best pupils apply grammatical rules effectively in pieces of extended writing. As a result they begin to use language creatively. Average and below average pupils speak with relative confidence, keen to extend their oral responses. They demonstrate a good understanding of grammar. Below average pupils in Year 8, for example, had successfully memorised the different parts of the present tense of regular verbs. However, they found it difficult to apply grammatical rules in writing. Most pupils develop good listening skills because teachers use French extensively in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers know them well and to support them effectively. The attainment of girls is significantly better than that of boys. Pupils behave well and their attitudes are very good. They listen to each other and support each other well. They work hard in lessons and often set high standards for themselves.
117. Teaching and learning are good overall with many examples of very good and some excellent teaching. Teaching is never less than satisfactory; its quality in Year 6 is very good. As in Year 8, pupils develop good listening skills because teachers have a good command of French and use it extensively in lessons. Pupils' oral competence is improved in the best lessons when teachers insist that pupils themselves use French for basic communication. Pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn because all teachers are successful in creating a very good working atmosphere in lessons. As a result pupils are happy to make contributions knowing that their efforts will be valued. Below average pupils, in particular, learn well because teachers know them well and teach them effectively. As a result all pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Pupils acquire a secure knowledge of vocabulary and structure and develop the four language skills, because lessons are very well planned. In most lessons, there is a clear focus on a particular vocabulary or grammar topic which is then used to develop skills. In the best lessons all four skills are developed.
118. Teachers use a variety of methods to ensure maximum pupil involvement when new vocabulary is being practised. In Year 6, for example, a wide variety of games is used to reinforce learning. Follow-up exercises to develop skills were very effective in one Year 8 lesson with below average pupils, because the teacher had devised a series of tasks to practise all four skills, which were enjoyable yet demanded a high level of concentration by pupils. Pupils learn and achieve well because teachers have high expectations in most lessons. There is a strong emphasis on the learning of grammar, even in lessons with below average pupils, so that pupils have a firm grounding in the structure of language, enabling them to use language creatively. However, progress is impeded because pupils are not clear how they are doing. In most lessons, teachers do not state their expected objectives and do not review learning effectively. Teachers mark work thoroughly and give pupils much encouragement, but they do not show them how they can improve the quality of their work. Although the subject has effective systems for assessing pupils' progress using National Curriculum levels, pupils do not know the level at which they are working, nor what they have to do to achieve the next level. They are not set long-term targets, so teachers find it difficult to monitor progress effectively and cannot take remedial action to tackle underachievement. As a result, the department cannot effectively evaluate how successful it is.
119. Pupils' learning is enhanced because the curriculum provision is very good. The Year 6 introductory lessons are very effective. In Years 7 and 8 pupils have a generous time allocation for French and setting arrangements are well-considered and flexible. There is excellent co-ordination with the upper school. In some classes there is an imbalance of boys and girls which sometimes affects girls' learning. The subject is well led and managed and is very well supported by senior managers. The work of the department including the quality of teaching is well monitored. Teachers form an effective team who work well together. Resources and display are very good.

However, the development of pupils' ICT skills is limited because the planned programme has not yet been implemented.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **very good**. In instrumental and extra-curricular work it is **excellent**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning
- High standards
- Good use of music technology
- Very good attitudes and excellent relationships
- The excellent range of very well organised extra-curricular opportunities
- Excellent accommodation and resources
- Very good leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- Pupils make insufficient use of their own instruments in class music
- the development of music reading
- the regularity of singing in Years 7 and 8

120. Pupils enter the school with variable musical experience but most have average attainment in music. By Year 6, standards are just above expectation, and pupils' achievement is good. Most pupils are working at about level 4 but some talented pupils are working towards level 5 or above. Pupils sing regularly, confidently and with enjoyment; they develop good technique with appropriate breathing, expression, diction and posture. Many join choirs in school, which strengthens work in the classroom. In instrumental work, pupils play with control, for example when developing mood pieces. They make good use of high quality keyboards but make insufficient use of their own orchestral instruments. Pupils compose effective pieces with shape and balance making good use of the technology available. They understand the differences between major and minor, and the most musical pupils improvise pieces to contrast these tonalities. Pupils listen very respectfully to each other when performing, and to recorded music. They appraise sensitively using appropriate musical vocabulary. They show satisfactory general musical knowledge of artists, composers, forms, well known pieces of music and instruments.
121. By Year 8, standards are above average, compared with those expected nationally and pupils' achievement is good. Most are working at level 4 or 5 but a few talented pupils attain higher levels; girls achieve better than boys. Pupils continue to make good use of keyboards but their considerable instrumental skills are not used sufficiently in class and, consequently, understanding of notation and compositional devices are not as developed as they could be. Nevertheless, pupils create imaginative pieces, for example when developing 12-bar blues pieces, and many improvise confidently. Pupils listen well and use appropriate levels of musical vocabulary in discussion when appraising. They show satisfactory general musical knowledge, though not of well-known pieces.
122. Teaching in classroom work is never less than good and some is very good. Teachers show very secure subject knowledge so that they teach confidently. In the best lessons teachers make full use of their musical skills, for example when accompanying or illustrating using the piano. Instructions are clear and teaching is lively; pupils always understand the objectives. Schemes and the content of lessons are well thought out to involve all pupils in making music through performing, composing and listening so that they enjoy lessons. Expectations are high and as a result pupils are challenged. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and make similar progress to the other pupils. Lessons are very well organised and management of pupils is excellent; lessons are orderly, time well used and pupils acquire skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding. As a result, relationships are excellent and pupils are very good-humoured and make a good effort. The most musical pupils are usually challenged, but could be stretched more. Lessons start briskly and maintain a brisk pace so pupils remain focused. In the stronger lessons, the overhead projector and other visual aids are used well. The assessment of pupils is very supportive and encouraging and shows them clearly how they can improve,

especially when they appraise their own recorded compositions. Homework is not normally set - a lost opportunity to extend pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy music; they use equipment very sensibly. They are attentive and work productively and are very supportive of each other, for example when working in groups. Pupils are keen to answer questions and the most enthusiastic involve themselves in opportunities offered by the department and musical opportunities outside school.

123. Leadership and management of music are very good and well supported by the school. Music is well organised and the staff and visiting teachers form a strong team of enthusiastic and hard-working colleagues committed to raising standards. There is appropriate monitoring and evaluation of the subject's performance. Schemes of work, assessment schemes and plans to develop the subject further are all in place and always under review. Staffing is very good but there is no technician for ICT facilities, which imposes pressures. The department has excellent resources and excellent accommodation. There are valuable links with other schools through the music pyramid. Since the last inspection, teaching, accommodation and resources and the numbers involved in tuition have improved.
124. An outstandingly high number of pupils, 165 boys and 213 girls (about 55 per cent of the pupils) receive instrumental or voice lessons from 22 visiting teachers. A unique feature is the excellent support given by the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership Music Service in co-ordinating the provision of tuition. Teaching is mainly good and some excellent teaching was seen in clarinet tuition, for example. Standards are above average and many individual pupils attain high levels. The achievement of pupils is good in relation to their ages and the time they have received tuition. Pupils' attitudes are very positive. However, they do not have practice books so that their work, effort and progress cannot be easily monitored and supported by parents and teachers. The keyboard-focused curriculum in class insufficiently supports instrumental progress, and tuition makes inadequate impact on classroom work. Not all pupils who receive tuition support the instrumental activities to develop their ensemble skills. These are weaknesses the department intends to address.
125. The range of extra-curricular activities in music is excellent and supports the instrumental teaching and standards in the classroom. It includes jazz band, big band, the school choir, an elite harmony group, string group and other ensembles, and the St Osmund's Singers, attended by large number of the pupils. In extra-curricular work, standards and the quality of teaching are very good and often excellent, especially in vocal work, as seen during the inspection and heard in recordings. Pupils' attitudes are first rate. Instrumental staff and other teachers at the school give full support to these groups. The music governor gives excellent support by accompanying for activities. The school promotes regular concerts at Christmas and in the summer involving very large numbers of pupils and pupils visit concerts and musicals locally and further afield. The carol writing competition is a popular fun event. Workshops in school given by musicians further broaden the wealth of opportunities. Music groups perform every day in assemblies and the regular use of music in assemblies is a strength, making a very valuable contribution to all pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the ethos of the school. Groups perform frequently at local first schools, hospices, old folks' homes, festivals, local arts and charity events. Musicians from the school took part in the Schools' Prom at the Albert Hall and recently went on tour to France.
126. These activities reflect the dedication of staff, keen support of parents and the enthusiasm of the many talented musicians whose performances and successes bring great credit to this successful department and the school. The tuition provision and the extra-curricular provision in music are strengths of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Excellent extra-curricular opportunities

- Pupils' very good attitudes
- Good teaching
- Very good management of the subject

Areas for improvement

- The schemes of work
- Ensure a consistency of delivery of learning objectives and plenary in lessons
- Short-term target setting

127. Pupils enter the school with average attainment although there are weaknesses in their skills and knowledge in some areas. By the end of Year 6, they are reaching above average levels of attainment, which are maintained throughout Years 7 and 8. This constitutes good achievement for the majority of pupils and very good progress for some. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with others as a result of appropriate teacher planning, active work by learning support assistants and the help of other pupils.
128. Pupils acquire and develop their skills and knowledge well. In Year 6, pupils show good body control when sprinting, and above average pupils react very quickly when starting from prone positions. Good learning for the majority takes place when pupils rehearse standing and sprint starts. By Year 8, good progress is evident as pupils demonstrate fine reactions and control when practising their table tennis serves. Similarly, good progress is made when pupils carry out warm-up exercises, and talk about the effect on their body of health-related exercise and its importance. The ability of pupils to evaluate their own and other's performances, so as to improve their levels of skills and knowledge is less secure.
129. Overall the pupils are taught well, with examples of very good and excellent teaching taking place. Extremely positive relationships exist in the best lessons, and this contributes to the pupils' feeling of security; they are consequently unafraid to make mistakes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and assess pupils very well during lessons, thereby ensuring that tasks that continually and increasingly challenge the pupils are developed. Pupils respond very well; they want to learn and work hard to improve their standards. However, in their planning teachers do not consistently give opportunities for pupils to perform and evaluate their performances, and thereby think deeply about what they are doing and how they can improve. Lessons do not always adhere to a framework that includes a strong introduction of proposed learning objectives, reinforcement through probing questioning and a distinct, challenging plenary session, so a certain efficiency of timing is missing.
130. Besides pupils' very good attitudes to the subject there are other factors that contribute to the overall very good provision in this subject. Very good management has overseen the development of most appropriate planning, a very good curriculum that allows pupils to practise and progress their skills and knowledge, and very good monitoring of the subject. Pupils are regularly assessed, with data collected, recorded and evaluated. Short-term target setting is not well developed and so pupils' knowledge of their targets is not strong because some do not understand how to improve their performance and rise to the next level. Schemes of work exist for all areas of the subject, but their usefulness is not maximised by the development of more specific learning objectives, more information about expected levels of work. Information about where literacy, numeracy, ICT, citizenship opportunities remains to be included. Extracurricular opportunities are excellent. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in many activities, notably dance, team games, gymnastics and swimming. Since the last inspection, standards have risen, assessment procedures have been improved, and the accommodation is now excellent. This represents very good improvement, which is reflected in the Gold Sportsmark Award recently achieved by the school.