

INSPECTION REPORT

THE PETERSFIELD SCHOOL

Petersfield

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116510

Headteacher: Mr N C Poole

Reporting inspector: Mr K Davitte
15029

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 27th September 2002

Inspection number: 149191

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cranford Road
Petersfield
Hampshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Burton

Date of previous inspection: September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15029	Mr K Davitte	Registered inspector	Education Inclusion, including race equality	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12775	Ms J Goodchild	Lay inspector		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?
13619	Mr B Meech	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30941	Mr K Brammer	Team inspector	English	
5241	Ms C Millband	Team inspector	Science	
8501	Mr P Hartwright	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
8503	Mr A Allfree	Team inspector	Art and design	
18188	Ms C Thompson	Team inspector	Design and technology	
13734	Mr H Davies	Team inspector	Geography	Community links
17732	Mr D Martin	Team inspector	History Citizenship	
32115	Mr J Foster	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18846	Mr P Priest	Team inspector	Music	
23030	Ms C Runyard	Team inspector	Physical education	
101942	Ms A Fraser	Team inspector	Religious education	
4486	Mr M Weller	Team inspector	Drama Special educational needs English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Petersfield School is an 11-16 comprehensive school in Petersfield in the local education authority of Hampshire. It was an 11-18 school until September 2001. There are 940 pupils on roll with 449 boys and 491 girls. The great majority of pupils are white. Seven pupils speak English as an additional language and none are at an early stage of learning English. Overall pupils are from favourable social and economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (7%) is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (11%) is below average with the majority having moderate learning difficulties and some having behavioural difficulties. There is also a below average percentage with statements of special educational needs (4%). Attainment of the majority of pupils on entry to the school is just above average, with rising standards in recent years. Adult education classes are offered at the school. The headteacher has been in post for one academic year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Petersfield School is a good and rapidly improving school. It has the clear potential to become a very good school. There is a determination by effective leadership to raise standards further. The majority of pupils benefit from mainly good teaching, and a substantial amount of very good teaching to make at least good progress. With a well above average budget and with pupils from mainly favourable and supportive backgrounds the school is now providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- National test results at the end of Year 9 which are consistently well above average.
- GCSE results in 2002 which improved further on the above average results of 2001.
- Girls' results at GCSE which are well above average compared with girls nationally.
- The quality and opportunities presented in extra-curricular activities in music.
- The school development plan which sets out how the school proposes to tackle its weaknesses.
- The partnership between the governing body and the headteacher in bringing about change.

What could be improved

- *Boys' results at GCSE, which although above average for boys nationally, are not as good as those of girls.
- Boys' results in French and Spanish which have been below average in the last two years.
- Greater consistency in the application of policies, including to eliminate the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small but influential minority of pupils.
- The quality of timetabling to avoid pupils' continuity of learning being affected by having different teachers for a subject from one lesson to another.
- *Better use of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum.

**Signifies areas already identified as priorities for development by school.*

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Results in national tests and GCSE have improved considerably from the time of the last inspection in 1996, when they were mainly average. A significant factor in achieving this in recent years has been a rigorous analysis of test and examination results and the necessary follow up action. Boys are now achieving more highly, but girls are well ahead at GCSE. The unsatisfactory attitudes of some pupils to learning, noted at the last inspection, still exist. The role of middle managers in monitoring lessons is still

in need of development. The quality of teaching has improved and the proportion of very good teaching is now much higher. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	C	C	B	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Official national averages for 2002 are not yet available and therefore the performance grades above only go up to 2001. GCSE results improved considerably in 2001 with above average results compared with all schools nationally, but they were still not high enough to close the gap with results attained by similar schools nationally and similar schools in Hampshire. This was largely rectified in 2002 with another leap in results bringing the school up to the level of the higher attaining comprehensive schools in Hampshire. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades for example rose from 48 per cent in 2000 to 58 per cent in 2001 and 70 per cent in 2002. The improvement from 2000 to 2002 was spectacular but necessary and surpassed the school's targets. Results also improved at A*-G and A*/A grades. Boys' and girls' results have improved but the gap between them has widened as a result of girls improving at a faster rate. In 2002, 79 per cent of girls attained five or more A*-C grades and 61 per cent of boys. In French and Spanish in the last two years and in religious studies in 2002 boys underachieved in contrast to the well above average results of girls in those subjects. In English in 2002 the gap between girls and boys narrowed considerably. In contrast to most subjects, results in business studies declined in 2002.

Results in national tests for 14-year-olds at the end of Year 9 have been well above average in each year since 1997, representing very good progress from Year 7. Results of boys and girls have been similar in mathematics and science, but girls have attained higher results than those of boys in English.

Standards seen at the inspection in Year 9 and Year 11 were well above average in mathematics, science and above average in English. Standards were average in most other subjects. Any comparison with previous results has to bear in mind that current pupils are only at the beginning of Year 9 and Year 11 and that the school's analysis of their performance shows that they have the potential to do as well as the 2002 year groups. Higher, middle and lower attainers generally make similar progress. The exceptions are in those classes when the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils holds back their progress and that of others.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: most are prepared to work hard but there is a small element that takes little pride in their achievements or that of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory: generally good around the school. Behaviour ranges from very good to unsatisfactory in lessons. Small numbers behave badly.
Personal development and relationships	Good: most are prepared to take responsibility and form good relationships but a small minority show too little respect for others.
Attendance	Satisfactory: overall attendance average. Unauthorised absence slightly

	above average and the school is working with parents to reduce this.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall including in English, mathematics and science. At the inspection, teaching was very good or better in 34 per cent of lessons, a huge improvement from the last inspection when only nine per cent of lessons reached that level. Where teaching and learning are very good or better, teachers' expectations are high and methods and choice of tasks well suited to pupils of different ability in the same group. Some lessons which were judged to be good at the inspection could easily have been very good with more involvement of pupils. In lessons which are satisfactory, teachers prepare thoroughly but sometimes err on the side of caution and allow one method to dominate. Teaching provides well for the needs of higher, middle and lower attainers overall, but in some classes where lower attainers predominate, teachers struggle in attempting to cope with a wide variety of needs. On the whole teachers' knowledge and understanding are significant strengths but in a small number of classes in information and communication technology teachers lack the specialist knowledge required. Whilst marking is thorough in most cases, there are inconsistencies. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Although there are examples of some good use of information and communication technology, teachers are not as yet making sufficient use of the very good facilities available in most departments. The use of homework was satisfactory during the inspection, but is not always sufficiently challenging. Most pupils apply themselves well to their learning, but there is a tendency for some pupils to rely too heavily on the teacher and to become passive learners, if given the chance. There were some lessons which did not go as well as they could have done because teachers, including very good teachers, were prevented from doing their best because of the obstructive attitudes of a minority of pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: good range of subjects and extra-curricular activities but vocational options limited. Much improved community links. Planning for the new subject of citizenship has not been thorough enough to meet requirements. Information and communication technology is not used enough by most subjects. Weaknesses in timetabling affect the quality of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: very good literacy and numeracy support programmes. Small classes work best. Teaching can be less effective in larger groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: all are proficient in English and well integrated. Three received additional support when they joined the school but no longer need it. Good links with external services ensure expert advice where needed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory: good for moral and social development but weaker for spiritual and cultural. Cultural development being boosted by performing arts, but generally insufficient opportunities to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures. A very good example however is the school's 'Japan Day' which explores aspects of Japanese culture.
How well the school cares	Satisfactory: good monitoring of academic performance and attendance,

for its pupils	but weaknesses in the monitoring of behaviour and inconsistent responses from staff when poor behaviour occurs.
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Links with parents are satisfactory. There is very good financial support from parents through the Petersfield Trust. Parent volunteers provide invaluable support in the school particularly for lower attainers.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the headteacher is giving a clear direction. Heads of department have played a key role in raising academic standards. Inconsistencies exist in the application of policies including in relation to behaviour and support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good: governors work well with the headteacher and have made brave and positive decisions in restructuring the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: helped enormously by the analysis of results and reviews with departments.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: a well above average budget is used to ensure that departments are very well resourced. Much of the large surplus is earmarked for a building programme for the performing arts. The school applies best value principles well and for example ended sixth form education in 2001 because it was not cost effective.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of teaching is good. • Pupils like school and are expected to work hard to achieve their best. • Pupils make good progress. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. • The clear direction given by the headteacher. • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem. • Improved resources and facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher attainers being stretched more. • Homework policy applied consistently. • The poor behaviour of some pupils. • Closer working relationships with the school. • Responses to complaints which vary too much depending on who is dealing with the matter. • Better organised parents' evenings. • Timetabling to reduce the number of classes where pupils have more than one teacher in the same subject.

Inspectors agree with parents/carers on what pleases them most. In relation to what parents would like to see improved, inspectors agree that there is scope for improvement on most points. Higher attainers are mostly being challenged well but a whole-school policy for 'gifted and talented' pupils is in its infancy and needs to be accelerated. In recent years the school has concentrated on systems to improve test and examination results and that policy has been successful. What has not been done yet is to ensure that there are equally thorough and consistent systems operating elsewhere. The handling of parents' complaints, for example, does depend too much on who is dealing with the matter, including on issues of bullying. Another factor influencing parents' views is the organisation of parents' evenings. Many parents feel there are insufficient opportunities to discuss with teachers what their children should do to improve further, including for higher attainers. That too should be addressed. The 'open door' policy encouraging direct access to the headteacher, including designated time during the early evening, is a

very positive move in establishing closer links. Good newsletters are valued by parents but more prior information on extra-curricular activities on offer would help as there is much more going on than parents are aware of. Although the use of homework was satisfactory during the week of the inspection there was evidence of some inconsistency over time in both quality and quantity of homework. There is an onus on departments and heads of year to monitor homework much more carefully. The quality of timetabling is clearly an issue for the school to address.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been consistently well above average overall compared with all schools in each year since 1997. They have been consistently well above average in English and mathematics and mostly well above average in science. Results of boys and girls have been similar in mathematics and science, but girls have attained higher results than boys in English. The trend in results since 1997 has been above the national trend and represents very good achievement and progress from pupils' starting point on entry to the school.
2. Results in national tests compared with similar schools in 2001 were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. National comparisons are not yet available for 2002.
3. GCSE results at the end of Year 11 have been more mixed than national test results at the end of Year 9, but have improved significantly. In most years prior to 2001 GCSE results were average and not high enough for The Petersfield School. Results improved considerably in 2001 and were above average compared with all schools nationally but still not high enough to close the gap with results attained by similar schools nationally and similar schools in Hampshire. In 2001 results were below average compared with similar schools nationally. This was largely rectified in 2002 with another leap in results bringing them up to the level of the higher attaining schools in Hampshire. The improvement in results since 2000 has surpassed the school's targets. This makes the 2003 targets, set some time ago, look rather modest.
4. The proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C rose from 48 per cent in 2000 to 58 per cent in 2001 and 70 per cent in 2002. The improvement from 2000 to 2002 was spectacular but necessary. By 2002 grades had also improved at A*-G and at the highest grades A*/A with the latter in 2002 accounting for 22 per cent of all grades awarded. Another significant improvement in 2002 was the proportion of pupils attaining one or more GCSE grades A*-C (97 per cent) compared with the below average performance of only 93 per cent in 2001. The results of 2002 gave strong indicators that higher, middle and lower attainers were being well served and that too was reflected in the much improved average points score per pupil in 2002. This also reflects the determination of the school to cater well for the needs of all pupils.
5. At GCSE both boys and girls are achieving well but girls are doing much better than boys, and girls are improving at a faster rate and therefore widening the gap in performance. In 2002, for example, 79 per cent of girls and 61 per cent of boys achieved five or more grades A*-C. The school has targeted the improvement of boys' performance in its development plan. The gap in performance has been particularly marked in French and Spanish in the last two years where boys have underachieved. That was also the case for boys in religious education in 2002. In these subjects girls in contrast have been well above average. In contrast with most subjects, results declined in business studies in 2002.
6. In the core subjects, mathematics has made great strides in the past two years moving on from average GCSE results in 2000 to well above average results, with both boys and girls achieving very well. In science, results have been consistently well above average in the double award examination, with boys and girls achieving well. Results

have varied more in the single award science. In English language and English literature, girls have been consistently well above average and achieved better than boys but the latter improved considerably in 2002 to achieve above average results. Results in science at Advanced Supplementary Level (AS-level) taken by pupils in Year 11 who were entered for GCSE in Year 10 were above average in 2001 but declined in 2002 with coursework grades lower than expected. At the time of the inspection the school was appealing to the relevant examining body for an upgrade of results for four of the candidates.

7. Standards seen at the inspection in Year 9 were well above average in mathematics, science and above average in English, with pupils making very good progress. Standards were average in most other subjects by Year 9 and above average in history, modern foreign languages and religious education, with pupils making good progress overall. In drama, whilst standards are above average in Years 7 and 8, they are below average in Year 9.
8. Standards seen in Year 11 were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. In most other subjects, standards were average and in geography, history and religious education above average. Any comparison with previous results has to bear in mind that current pupils are only at the beginning of Year 9 and Year 11. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are generally making good progress and achieving well, but there are examples of girls making better progress than boys.
9. Higher, middle and lower attainers generally make similar progress in relation to their previous results. The exceptions are in those classes when the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils holds back their progress and that of others. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils but in lower sets in English in Years 7 to 9 such pupils only make satisfactory progress. Where smaller groups are employed in English, including in Years 10 and 11, pupils with special educational needs achieve well and progress is very good in mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9 and in drama in all years. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. All are fluent in English. Three pupils with English as an additional language received additional support when they joined the school but no longer need it.
10. Some teachers feel that the attitudes of current Year 11 pupils are not as good as the Year 11 group of last year but there is time to address that. In addition the national test results of the current Year 11 pupils, when in Year 9, indicate that they have the potential to do at least as well as last year's GCSE pupils.
11. It is too early to make overall judgements on standards in citizenship but it is unlikely under present arrangements that all pupils will receive their entitlement and therefore reach the required standards by the end of the school year.
12. The comparatively small numbers of pupils taking examinations in Years 10 and 11 leading to General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in 2002 were all successful in the unit tests and examinations.
13. As a result of very good provision across the curriculum, standards of literacy are above average and rising. Standards are above average in reading, writing and speaking, but in writing there are examples of poor presentation of work and weak spelling and weaknesses in the writing of lower attainers. Listening skills vary and in English some middle and lower attainers are not good listeners. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in their spelling and reading ages in

Years 7 to 11. Standards in use of number and mental arithmetic are very good as a result of the quality of pupils' learning in mathematics lessons but application and reinforcement of skills through other subjects vary considerably.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The attitudes of pupils' towards school are good. Most are prepared to work hard, show a determination to succeed, and develop during their time at school into confident and articulate young people. Relationships between the majority of pupils and with staff are good. Pupils readily approach members of staff if they are experiencing difficulties with their academic work but some do not place sufficient value on the support they receive.
15. The standard of behaviour within the school is satisfactory. Behaviour in the majority of lessons and around the school is at least satisfactory, and on occasions very good. Lunchtimes are orderly but behaviour in corridors before the start of lessons varies from excellent to poor depending very much on standards set by departments and particular teachers. Where pupils are noisy when lining up before entering a lesson this inevitably spills into the classroom. There is a healthy respect for property and pupils are responding to the school's emphasis on litter control and site cleanliness.
16. In lessons a small minority of pupils pull down overall standards and do not mind making life difficult for teachers. Sometimes the behaviour of such pupils is extremely difficult to manage. There are also examples where behaviour is not managed well. Some pupils interviewed expressed concern that their learning was being held back when they found themselves in the same classes as those who caused disruption. That happened in 13 per cent of lessons observed at the inspection and confirms some of the concerns shown by parents. Examples exist in most subjects and in all year groups, but most commonly in Year 9.
17. Divergent views were expressed by pupils during the inspection about the degree of bullying in the school. This ranged from their perception of little bullying taking place to concern being expressed by some pupils that incidences of bullying still remain and that the response from staff is inconsistent.
18. The number of exclusions is higher than at the time of the last inspection but is justifiable and reflects a firm line being taken by the headteacher. Last year there were 60 fixed-term exclusions, involving 33 boys and 27 girls, and three permanent exclusions, involving two boys and one girl.
19. Pupils are willing to show initiative and take responsibility but this is sometimes restricted by lack of opportunities. During lunch and break times pupils organise themselves without excessive levels of adult supervision. A number of pupils in Year 11 have volunteered to act as prefects and help with the incoming Year 7. They have set up a lunchtime homework club to support these young pupils. In lessons most willingly support each other in their learning but there are examples of pupils who are reluctant to contribute because of the unkind comments of others. Although pupils are encouraged through discussion to express their feelings on a wide range of moral and social issues not all listen sensitively to the views and opinions of their peers if they differ from their own. In assemblies pupils listen attentively and with respect, including when reflection is required.
20. There is a small element within the school that does not value academic achievement. The school in its development plan has recognised that pride in achievement in the school does not have a high enough profile but the vastly improved examination results

are helping. Pupils interviewed at the inspection said they can now 'hold their heads up high' when discussing the virtues of The Petersfield School with friends who attend other schools in the area, and which in the past have achieved much better results.

21. A large number of pupils respond positively to taking part in events organised by the school, after the school day, such as the orchestra, sports activities and school productions. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or with special educational needs, are fully integrated into the school community.
22. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average but unauthorised absence for the year 2000/1 was slightly above the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in Years 7 to 9 and 10 and 11. A third of teaching observed was very good and that is a distinct improvement from the time of the last inspection when only nine per cent of teaching in lessons was judged to be very good. Examples of excellence were observed at the inspection and some very good lessons came very close to that. There has also been a decline in the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching from the time of the last inspection, down from 13 per cent to five per cent.
24. Teaching overall provides well for the needs of higher, middle and lower attainers but in a minority of lessons too little attention is given to appropriate tasks for lower attainers as seen in a few cases in geography. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good when taught in small groups. There are lessons where teachers struggle in attempting to cope with the wide range of learning and behavioural needs in a class, particularly when extra support is not provided.
25. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well but the literacy programme is better co-ordinated across subjects than the numeracy initiative. Whilst there are examples of some good use of information and communication technology, teachers are not as yet making sufficient use of the very good facilities available in most departments.
26. Where teaching and learning are very good or better, teachers' expectations are high and methods and choice of tasks well suited to pupils of different ability in the same group. Higher expectations in art and design are driving up standards. In lessons in mathematics where teachers know pupils well there is a very good match of teaching methods to pupils' needs including those with special educational needs. Very good teaching was seen where questioning skills drew out pupils and encouraged participation, as in some lessons in food technology and in music.
27. In the best lessons tasks are suitably varied, pupils are given some opportunity for independent learning and time flies. Where lessons are very good in geography, for example, pupils are expected to think independently and carry out enquiry tasks. Pupils in such lessons realise that praise which they receive is well earned and therefore means something and they leave the lesson with a feeling of satisfaction and even of excitement. In science there are some well-chosen links between experiments and pupils' interests and experiences which help in generating and retaining attention. Learning in mathematics is often made practical, meaningful, enjoyable and fun. In electronics good practical application and simplification of potentially complex ideas aids learning. There are some excellent features in dance with an effective balance between learning new skills and the opportunity for creativity and involvement. In the best lessons in all subjects, feedback is accurate, ongoing and thorough and backed

up with diligent marking, such as in science. The best teachers make very good use of stimulating displays which are designed to make pupils think. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which help learning, are a common feature of very good or excellent lessons, as observed in the teaching of history.

28. Very good teaching was seen at the inspection in lessons with pupils of all abilities. The issue was not necessarily the composition of the class but the skill of the teacher in managing pupils with varying initial attitudes and stimulating them to achieve their best. This was successfully illustrated in one class in personal, social and health education where activities included pupils analysing their strengths and weaknesses.
29. In good lessons teachers' preparation is of a high quality and lessons mainly meet their objectives but the involvement of pupils is not usually high enough to make it a very good lesson. In lessons where teaching and learning are satisfactory teachers prepare thoroughly but sometimes err on the side of caution, allow one method to dominate and do not ensure that all pupils are challenged and stretched for the whole of the lesson.
30. In unsatisfactory lessons teachers occasionally do not have the skills to manage challenging behaviour and motivate potentially difficult pupils. This is usually through lack of experience. There is another important factor, however, which makes for some lessons being unsatisfactory. There was a significant number of lessons at the inspection where the quality of teaching and learning could have been better but for pupils' attitudes. There are occasions when very good teachers struggle with some classes where they are not being given a fair chance by some pupils who disrupt learning. Although the quality of learning is good overall and most pupils want to succeed, there are pupils who are prepared to rely too much on teachers' efforts in the classroom and to be passive learners if allowed.
31. In a small number of classes, including in information and communication technology, teachers lack the specialist knowledge required. On the whole, teachers' knowledge and understanding are significant strengths and have an important bearing on the success of religious education lessons, for example. Again in the very good teaching of drama, teachers' expertise and knowledge enable very clear explanations and demonstrations leading to expressive performances from all pupils.
32. Whilst marking is thorough in most cases there are some inconsistencies, for example in design and technology. Some teachers, such as in modern foreign languages, make frequent and useful reference to National Curriculum levels but that is not a consistent feature of teaching.
33. Good examples were seen in several subjects of teaching assistants making an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning and working well with the teacher. The quality of technician support in practical lessons also helps in raising standards.
34. Use of homework was satisfactory during the inspection but some tasks set are uninspiring. Examples of innovative homework were seen in modern foreign languages but occasionally homework lacks challenge. In physical education the homework assignments of some pupils are incomplete and homework assignments not always challenging enough for higher attainers. Greater challenge could be introduced into homework in information and communication technology.

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

35. The school's curriculum is satisfactory. A good range of subjects is offered but despite improvements vocational options are rather limited and more pupils could benefit from a broader curriculum in that respect, including pupils with special educational needs. The school is planning to expand such provision. The school's increased concentration on performing arts is being accomplished without diluting provision elsewhere. Improving standards in dance, drama and music as seen at the inspection and the greater contribution which those areas are making to pupils' education are testimony to the growing success of that policy. Currently, however, boys are not taught dance in Year 9.
36. Statutory requirements are mostly met but current plans for teaching the new subject of citizenship have not been thought through carefully enough to ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement. The quality of teaching and learning of information and communication technology is good when taught by specialists in separately timetabled lessons, but there is insufficient use of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum and some subjects are not meeting their statutory obligations in that respect. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in their literacy development. The school has recognised this in its development plan.
37. There are very effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy in English and also through other subjects. Although mathematics makes a very good contribution, the teaching of numeracy is not as well co-ordinated through other subjects compared with literacy. Very good literacy and numeracy recovery programmes are run for pupils with special educational needs, including additional support during registration time.
38. Weaknesses in timetabling result in pupils having different teachers for the same subjects from one lesson to another, which invariably affects continuity of learning. Although the school's policy for setting and grouping has been reviewed, and is becoming more settled, parents are not sufficiently clear on either the school's philosophy or its practice. Whilst setting arrangements are improving opportunities for higher attainers there are a few classes with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs where learning is not as effective, for example in English. However, in English, where pupils are withdrawn from mainstream classes or operate in small groups, as seen in Years 10 and 11, pupils with special educational needs make great strides. In mathematics, setting arrangements work particularly well. Equality of access is good but food technology attracts few boys compared with girls. Business studies does not attract pupils from the full ability range and is seen too much as an alternative for lower attainers. In science the experimentation with separate classes for boys and girls in Years 8 and 9 has coincided with the raising of standards. The early entry policy for higher attainers in GCSE science in Year 10 is providing extra challenge as is the subsequent AS-level in science in Year 11. This year a talented pupil in Year 9 is being entered for GCSE music.
39. There is a very well organised personal, social and health education programme which benefits from having a specialist team of teachers. This ensures appropriate coverage of aspects such as sex education and drug abuse, sometimes working in conjunction with other subjects. Much of the success of a very well organised programme of work experience in Year 10 can be attributed to the preparation and follow up which takes place in personal, social and health education lessons.
40. Extra-curricular activities are good and those in music are one of the strengths of the school. There are adequate opportunities for study support outside the school day through the library and study centre. A successful Easter revision school extending

over three days was offered for the first time last year with half of Year 11 pupils attending in the crucial run-up period to GCSE.

41. The quality of links with the community is good and improving. There is some good provision to extend higher attainers through 'master classes' run in conjunction with other schools. There are some innovative links with primary schools in science through the British Association of Young Scientists and there are firm plans to expand curriculum links in general with the primary sector. Links with a local company are aiding the introduction of computer-aided design. Ongoing links with a major local food outlet provide an external venue for displaying art. Close links with post-16 institutions enable a smooth transition for pupils at the age of 16. The school contributes very effectively to the training of new teachers through its links with Portsmouth University with mutual benefits for the school and trainees.
42. The provision for personal, including social, moral, spiritual and cultural, development is satisfactory overall. Whilst provision for pupils' spiritual development is strong through the teaching and learning of religious education it is weaker elsewhere. Attempts are being made to introduce a greater spiritual element into assemblies, including opportunities for reflection, but that is at an early stage of development. Nevertheless assemblies are making a much better contribution to reinforcing the school's values, and in encouraging pupils to think carefully about a range of issues, including race and discrimination. The element of formality introduced into assemblies is having a beneficial effect and, for those involved, starts the day on a very positive note. The school's plans to include contributions from external speakers and a regular input from pupils are apt and timely.
43. Provision for social and moral development is good. A key contribution is made by the personal, social and health education programme, which ensures through its planning and specialist team that social and moral issues are covered well. In one lesson with Year 10 the social aspect of how pupils could relate better to each other was explored. It was made crystal clear to them that the negative attitudes of some pupils discouraged others from becoming actively involved and participating in discussion. That message is not being reinforced strongly enough throughout the school. Although improving there are still insufficient opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and contribute to the life of the school as a community. The introduction of the senior prefect team is one recent positive initiative and also provides the opportunity for older pupils to become role models. Measures to improve the functioning of the school council through greater involvement of all pupils are equally positive. The raised status of the school council was seen in its recent involvement in the process of the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. There is no formal mechanism, however, for pupils to express their views on the quality of education they receive and how that can be improved. In competitive sports the school's high expectations for fair play and sporting behaviour are influential in pupils' development. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in fundraising and therefore to consider the needs of others and this generates as much as £3000 in a year.
44. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The school's thrust on performing arts is bringing an additional cultural dimension to the school as seen in classes in drama, music and dance at the inspection. There are some very good features of provision but the school has not moved on quickly enough since the last inspection in increasing opportunities for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures. The very successful 'Japan Day' is an example of what can be achieved and an expansion of such events is envisaged by the school.

45. Extra-curricular activities provide a host of opportunities for social and cultural development. Some of the highlights are the annual Year 7 camp, the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and weekend exhibitions, musical and theatrical productions, an annual exhibition of art, various trips in Britain and abroad and sporting fixtures. Visits to museums and historic sites are strengths of the teaching of history. Although English is planning to expand its provision there are already visits by touring theatre companies and speakers, a writing club, a Year 11 Poetry Conference. Some extra-curricular activities make a very good contribution to enabling higher attainers to exhibit and develop their prowess including in sport, music and public speaking.
46. The concept of 'The Petersfield Promise' by which all pupils would have a minimum exposure to cultural events and activities, is a philosophy worth implementing to reinforce both equality of opportunity and equality of experience. An audit of provision and take-up is planned for this academic year with the objective of having the 'Promise' in place by September 2004.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The educational and personal support and guidance which pupils receive is satisfactory. Care is given to the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. From Year 8 onwards pupils stay with their tutor group throughout their time at school but staff changes have at times disrupted this arrangement. The quality and use of tutor time in the morning varies between groups and some groups do not have the same quality of guidance and support received by others. The use of volunteers to provide extra help in 'guided reading' for selected pupils in the library during tutor periods is working well. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The introduction of the 'cashless card' for lunches means that those entitled to free school meals cannot be identified by other pupils.
48. The personal, social and health education contributes positively to personal development. Careers education focuses sharply on pupils making appropriate choices when deciding on post-16 options and prepares pupils well for the next stage of education or the world of work.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Effective use is made of a computerised attendance recording system to identify patterns of non-attendance and truancy. Daily print-outs of absentees help pastoral staff in monitoring and tracking pupils. Pupils whose attendance is becoming a cause for concern are identified and support systems, such as telephoning home, are put in place. The importance of regular attendance is emphasised by the weekly publication of the tutor group with the highest attendance. Awards are given for 100 per cent attendance. Currently there are no awards for improving attendance. The headteacher is determined to reduce unauthorised absence and is seeking the support of parents to achieve that end.
50. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory. New reporting procedures have been introduced this year, together with a code of conduct for pupils, but are not being consistently implemented by all teaching staff. This reduces the effectiveness of monitoring the incidence of poor behaviour where the learning of others is disrupted. It also prevents the development of strategies and support systems to promote good behaviour amongst this significant minority of pupils.
51. The code of conduct for pupils, implemented this year, is being supplemented after half term with a 'stepladder' of clearly defined consequences so that both pupils and staff

will be aware of what action will be taken if it is not adhered to. Pupils identified as having underdeveloped social skills in Years 7 and 8 are offered specific group work to support them in this area by the special educational needs team.

52. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are unsatisfactory. Currently there are no systems in place to systematically record incidents of oppressive behaviour. In addition what constitutes bullying varies too much depending on staff dealing with the issue. Some pupils and some parents also report that incidents of bullying are not always taken seriously enough and effectively dealt with by pastoral staff. On the other hand there are also pupils who feel that bullying is dealt with promptly and one pupil interviewed at the inspection was relieved that the bullying which he had experienced in his earlier years had now stopped. The school takes strong action on the rare occasions when racial incidents occur and when its race equality policy is breached.
53. The arrangements for child protection are good. All the appropriate procedures are in place and it is part of the induction programme for new members of staff. Systems are being put in place to monitor the progress of children being looked after by the local authority. Health and safety procedures are very good and ensure the safety and protection of pupils. A specific mentoring programme, including involvement of external agencies, has been introduced for 'at risk youngsters' and the school has evidence of a subsequent improvement in attendance of such pupils. Year 7 social skills groups were run last year for pupils identified by primary schools as vulnerable. Pupils from all years attend mentor groups run in conjunction with the Christian Youth Enterprise or the Youth Service and over the year 2001/2 a total of 62 pupils attended one-to-one support sessions. A large number continue to attend Youth Service activities outside the school. Although exclusions have risen two pupils on fixed-term exclusions were re-integrated into the school because of the contacts maintained with them.
54. During the inspection, during good weather, lunchtime arrangements worked well but some parents at the pre-inspection meeting raised concerns about arrangements when weather was poor.

Assessment

55. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The results of external examinations are systematically analysed and this makes a significant contribution to the improving standards. The achievement of boys and girls is also monitored and some departments are making use of this information to plan strategies to address any differences. Analysis shows that there are no significant differences between the performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the rest of the school community. Gifted and talented pupils are now identified but, as the school recognises, there is some way to go to ensure that the best methods are being used consistently to stretch such pupils. This is highlighted in the school development plan.
56. Use of assessment information is good. It is very good in both mathematics and science. National test results from primary schools, and data from the school's own assessment procedures, are used to build up a profile of pupils' attainment when they enter the school. This forms a baseline for tracking pupils' progress over their time in school. Predicted grades for end of Year 9 national tests, and GCSE, enable teaching staff to set appropriate targets for pupils. Pupils are not always aware of their predicted grades but do know the level they are working at throughout their time in the school. Termly progress reviews give a very good overview of pupils' progress across all subjects. There is some good use of National Curriculum levels, and frequent

reference to levels, in modern foreign languages for example, aids progress. In English there is insufficient reference to National Curriculum assessment criteria in lower years. Although systems are in place in design and technology, National Curriculum levels are not used consistently across the department. Assessment procedures have improved in physical education but are not backed up sufficiently with more uniform use of National Curriculum levels. In information and communication technology there is a lack of ongoing feedback on levels and grades being achieved.

57. Pupils with special educational needs have a clear idea of their progress and are consulted and well informed of the targets set for improvement. Plans are specific and manageable. They include the nature of pupils' difficulties, long-term aims, specific targets, success criteria and details of provision made and the nature and frequency of support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The parents' views of the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves are good. Sixty-two parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection and 28 per cent of parents completed the pre-inspection questionnaire on their views of the school. Whilst strengths outweigh weaknesses in the quality of links with parents there are some significant issues to address.
59. Parents are most pleased by the fact that their children like coming to school, are making good progress and are expected to work hard to achieve their best. They acknowledge that the current headteacher is giving a positive and clear direction for the development of the school and that teaching is good overall. They value the improved resources and facilities. Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem. Parents express concerns about the need to extend higher attaining pupils more and the inconsistency of setting and marking of homework. They feel that too much homework for earlier years involves drawing or 'colouring in' tasks. They would like to see the poor behaviour of some pupils eliminated. They feel that the quality of response to their complaints varies too much depending on which member of staff is dealing with the matter. They are frustrated by the organisation of parents' evenings where often it is impossible to see all subject staff and when parents of higher attaining pupils are told that there is no need to see teachers. Parents would like to see a reduction in the number of subjects where different teachers take the same class and to receive more advanced notice about extra-curricular activities and trips.
60. Inspectors agree with parents/carers on what pleases them most. In relation to what parents would like to see improved, inspectors agree that there is scope for improvement on most points but that higher attainers are mostly being challenged sufficiently well. In recent years the school has concentrated on systems to improve test and examination results and this policy has been successful. What has not been done yet is to ensure that there are equally thorough and consistent systems operating elsewhere, so that some of the very good practice in the school applies at all times. There are policies in existence, such as the homework policy, use of planners and a home-school agreement, that have too little impact in practice. Pastoral staff are not always fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in their job descriptions, particularly their checking and monitoring function. The handling of parents' complaints does depend too much on who is dealing with the matter, including issues of bullying. Inspectors judge reports and their frequency to be good but there is variation between subjects and teachers. Clearly parents' evenings are not being used well enough to discuss progress. Newsletters are valued by parents but the request for more prior information on extra-curricular activities is valid as there is clearly much more going on than

parents are aware of. The use of homework was satisfactory during the week of the inspection but there was evidence of inconsistency over time in both quality and quantity of homework. There is an onus on the school to monitor this more carefully. The quality of timetabling is an issue for the school to address and in particular the problem of classes having different teachers for the same subject.

61. The contribution of parents to their children's learning is good. The very good results attained by pupils in last year's external examinations are due in part to the high quality support from parents. The Petersfield Trust Fund established in 1989, based on a gift-aid scheme, generates significant monies, about £1000 a month, which enables the school to purchase additional equipment to support pupils' learning. Most parents willingly collaborate with the school to resolve difficulties, but there are limited systems in place for consulting parents on their views or for any social interaction between parents and the school. Periodic questionnaires are not used and should be considered. Some parents play an important role in acting as volunteers to hear pupils read on a regular basis.
62. Communication with parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Parents are kept well informed and involved and encouraged to play a part in helping pupils to reach their targets.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. Leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership is ensuring a clear educational direction and having a significant effect in raising standards. The higher expectations by leadership and management of what pupils are capable of achieving are paying dividends and there is a collective will to improve academic standards further. Rather than adopt a piecemeal approach the current headteacher in his first full year at the school has taken careful stock of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has shown the clarity of vision necessary to move the school on rapidly. This is also illustrated in the school development plan which gives an excellent steer to what needs to be accomplished. Heads of departments are beginning to have a much better appreciation of the management functions expected of them and greater opportunities to carry them out. Leadership and management of departments are mostly good, including of special educational needs, and in some cases very good. Heads of departments have played a key role in raising standards. The range of responsibilities allocated to the special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is excessive, as she currently has responsibility for gifted and talented pupils as well as pupils with a range of other special educational needs. Some additional administrative support is also needed in that area of the school's work, particularly at the beginning of the year.
64. One of the strengths of leadership and management is the way it uses data on pupils' prior attainment, sets targets and monitors outcomes. This function, allocated to an assistant headteacher, is carried out well with a good and growing involvement of staff. Some heads of department too are particularly adept at using such data in raising standards.
65. Although there is consistent application of policy in operation to raise academic standards, that is not always the case elsewhere. There is currently no guarantee that policies in relation to such matters as behaviour, homework, use of planners and the home-school agreement will be consistently applied. The code of conduct recently reviewed 'with the express aim of ensuring that all youngsters have an inalienable right not to have their learning disrupted by others at all times' is not working well enough.

The good quality teamwork evident on the academic side is not being matched by that on the pastoral side where tutors, heads of year, heads of department and senior managers are not yet working as one. Formal monitoring of lessons takes place but not regularly enough by senior and middle managers. There is too great a tendency to attribute unsatisfactory behaviour to weaknesses in the management skills of the teacher rather than the unacceptable behaviour of some pupils. The number of lesson observations planned by senior management for the current academic year is not high enough and an extension could enable a better understanding of issues and more back-up.

66. Governors make a very good contribution and are well informed of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A wide range of skills and experiences is married to produce a perceptive governing body. The named governor for linking with special educational needs is well informed after only a comparatively short time in that role. Governors are prepared to make brave and positive decisions on key staff appointments and in utilising the school's resources to the best advantage. Sixth form education, for example, ceased in 2001 because it was not cost effective. The nettle was grasped. This has allowed the school to concentrate on raising standards for the remaining 11-16 provision, and with great success. Governors work closely and effectively with the headteacher but are also prepared to stand back and hold the school to account.
67. The school has a well above average budget. It is therefore able to allocate well above average sums to learning resources and this shows to good effect in the quality of learning. Despite healthy expenditure in all areas an unusually large surplus has been accumulated in the budget. This is planned with a purpose and much has been earmarked for costs associated with the envisaged building programme for performing arts.
68. Meticulous monitoring by the bursar and his team ensures that principles of best value are applied and best value for money is obtained. There is constant checking of prices to reduce costs and costs have also been reduced by purchasing equipment rather than renting in some cases. Maintenance has been made more efficient by recruiting additional skilled labour and providing staff with better tools to do the job. Good links have been struck up with a local major retailer which have provided both educational and financial benefits, including sponsorship. Where contractors or suppliers are not supplying best value changes are made. The closure of the sixth form with falling numbers was well thought through in terms of cost implications and savings. The full return from high investment in information and communication technology, however, has yet to be realised as some departments are not making enough use of that facility. In addition current timetabling arrangements do not make the best use of staffing. The school compares its results vigilantly with other similar schools, and with much improved results the school is now providing satisfactory value for money.
69. Very good accommodation is also used well but facilities in the music department are a little cramped at times. The library is very well used, including its computing facilities. It offers a welcoming and supportive environment. The librarian monitors usage meticulously, including departmental use, and acts on that information. Discussions have taken place with the modern foreign language department to explore opportunities for greater usage.
70. The school is finding it increasingly difficult to fill some teaching posts satisfactorily, particularly at short notice. The high cost of housing in the area is sometimes an obstacle. Standards have sometimes suffered where stop-gap policies have had to be

used. The school is considering a number of ways to improve recruitment and retention, including offering a range of 'unique staff benefits'. In the last two years staff turnover has been affected in particular by the closure of the sixth form as well as normal reasons for teachers leaving, including promotion to posts in other schools. The use of staff is satisfactory overall. Staff benefit from class contact time being below average overall and therefore greater time being available for preparation and marking. A careful and supportive eye is kept on new staff, including newly qualified teachers. The assistant headteacher responsible for that area has an acute appreciation of what goes on in the classroom and what kind of support senior management should be providing. Arrangements for professional development are good, including for those support staff whose main involvement is with pupils with special educational needs. The learning support assistants are monitored and receive professional reviews to which teachers contribute.

71. Administrative and support staff make a very good contribution in supporting teachers, in their vigilance to secure best value for money, and as a first point of contact with parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve boys' results at GCSE to narrow the gap between their performance and that of girls by:
- departments which are underperforming in relation to the results of boys giving specific attention to teaching and learning strategies to improve boys' achievements;
 - accelerating the upward trend in performance elsewhere;
 - heads of departments and senior management monitoring progress rigorously.
- (Paragraphs 5, 8, 111, 154, 160, 166)
- (2) Improve boys' results in French and Spanish which have been below average in the last two years by:
- re-evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods to see what works best for boys;
 - rigorous monitoring by the head of department and senior management against agreed targets.
- (Paragraphs 5, 149)

- (3) Ensure greater consistency in the application of policies, including those to eliminate the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small but influential minority of pupils by:
- all staff applying agreed policies and procedures consistently;
 - better systems of recording misbehaviour and the regular analysis and follow-up action;
 - tutors, heads of year, heads of department and senior management working in greater unison to eliminate such behaviour;
 - senior management providing ongoing support through the more regular monitoring of lessons.
- (Paragraphs 17, 50, 52, 59, 60, 65)
- (4) Improve timetabling to avoid pupils' continuity of learning being affected by having different teachers in some subjects from one lesson to another by:
- taking immediate action to improve the current situation wherever possible;
 - longer-term projections to ensure better timetabling in the next academic year.
- (Paragraphs 38, 59, 60, 124, 144, 153)
- (5) Make better use of information and communication technology by subjects across the curriculum by:
- implementing the objective already outlined in the school development plan to broaden the use of information and communication technology in learning;
 - making full use of very good facilities and improving those in music;
 - fully involving the library and its resources in any planning;
 - providing additional training for staff where required.
- (Paragraphs 25, 36, 87, 99, 115, 133, 140, 148, 152, 158)

In addition to the above, the following less serious issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plans: an early review of the citizenship programme to ensure all pupils are better informed and will receive their entitlement (paragraphs 11,116,118,119); ensuring more opportunities for pupils to understand and appreciate the diversity of other cultures (paragraphs 44,129,167); improving the organisation of parents' evenings (paragraph 59); and reviewing the range of tasks allocated to the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to make the workload more manageable (paragraph 73).

COMMUNITY LINKS

Overall current development of community education is **good**.

Strengths

- The commitment of the governors and headteacher to develop the community programme for the benefit of pupils and the local area
- The links already established with the local district council and other organisations in Petersfield and further afield

Areas for development

- Some departments have not fully realised the potential to enhance learning by contact with clubs and organisations in the local area and the value of the Internet as a link with the 'global community'
- Consultation with parents on curricular and procedural matters which is limited at present

72. The Petersfield School is not a designated community school but the governors and headteacher are committed to developing community links, to enhance learning and personal development opportunities for pupils and to enrich the community by greater contact with the school, its activities and pupils. Currently, links with the community are good and growing.
73. The school's aims include a statement on its intention to raise pupils' awareness and appreciation of the needs of others in the local and wider communities. The school development plan also highlights the need to increase pupils' awareness of their role in the wider world and to increase community involvement.
74. An adult education programme, launched in 1996 is run at the school in conjunction with a college of further education. This encourages adults on to the site during the day and evening to take advantage of this local facility. The programme operates somewhat independently from the school and there is little overlap in use of staff and in the use of classes by pupils of the school. Nevertheless it is a very good opportunity for adults to take advantage of very good resources including those in information and communication technology.
75. Some good links already exist with Petersfield organisations as well the local district council, which impact on both the school and the community as a whole. There are links with Petersfield Rugby Club and the use of facilities by some local football teams and the Bowmen of Petersfield. The Petersfield Youth Theatre rehearses at the school and involves pupils as well as others from the town. Regular meetings of the Petersfield Christian Fellowship, involving staff and pupils and the wider community are held at the school and the group has carried out some environmental work on the site. The East Hampshire District Council has close links with the school and has contributed to a number of its activities.
76. An interesting new venture this term has been the setting up of a community orchestra, based at the school and involving the junior schools and The Petersfield School pupils together with adults from the town. This builds further on the good existing links in the community in music. The school provided most of the music for the town's Jubilee Day celebrations and has participated regularly in music festivals. The school's 'Pete's Jazz' group is in much demand. The art department offers the town an opportunity to view and enjoy art of a high quality in exhibitions in the school, at a local superstore and at County Hall. During the week of the inspection the annual art display attracted a wide range of representatives from the community and was suitably embellished by music from the school's jazz players.
77. One particular good link is the King's Arms day and after-school club. This club caters for young people of all ages and one of the school's staff has been very closely involved in its development and management. Mentors from the club staff have been into the school to assist pupils having difficulty managing their school and personal lives. The Christian Youth Enterprise has provided similar valuable help.
78. Some effective identification of opportunities and marshalling of parents, members of the community and business organisations has taken place. For example, the design and technology department has very productive links with the Portsmouth education and training initiative and a local engineering company. In science, good links have been established with a national computer company and with parents, and their contribution to pupils' learning has been extremely beneficial. A valuable contribution has also been provided by elected members and officers of the local district council in

terms of input into the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of local democracy and citizenship.

79. Currently teachers are taking advantage of people and organisations in the wider community to extend the curriculum. Local people contribute to 'Japan Day' held in geography. There is also a good input from the Environment Agency into environmental issues such as re-cycling. The physical education department has taken advantage of soccer coaching from Portsmouth Football Club. Some departments have not fully explored the opportunities for making wider use of the Internet to communicate with the wider world but there is some good use in design and technology in linking with a local firm.
80. The school rightly believes that it has considerable capacity for outreach into the community, particularly in drama and music. Currently a flood-lit multi-game area is in the planning stage and this facility would enable existing links with sports clubs in the community to be extended. If the re-application for performing arts status is successful, the school will have even better facilities to involve the local community. The school's commitment to this is seen clearly in the prospectus where it refers to 'advanced plans to build a prestigious performance space which will be used for music, drama and dance and it will fulfil a community role'.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	168
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	51	54	48	7	2	0
Percentage	3.6	30.4	32.1	28.5	4.2	1.2	0

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	940
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	69

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	104

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	48

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	91.1
National comparative data	90.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	74	105	179

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	51	61	59
	Girls	91	92	86
	Total	142	153	145
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 [76]	85 [77]	81 [75]
	National	64 [63]	66 [65]	66 [59]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	41 [43]	61 [59]	55 [49]
	National	31 [28]	43 [42]	34 [30]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	62	55
	Girls	84	88	74
	Total	132	150	129
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	74 [74]	84 [77]	72 [86]
	National	65 [64]	68 [66]	64 [62]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 [40]	55 [58]	56 [56]
	National	31 [31]	42 [39]	33 [29]

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	97	87

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	51	92	94
	Girls	56	78	78
	Total	107	170	172
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	58 [48]	92 [93]	93 [96]
	National	48 [47]	91 [91]	96 [96]

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40.8 [38.3]
	National	39 [38.4]

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	11
	National	n/a

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
898	57	3
4	2	0
21	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
5	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	16.2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	482

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.9
Key Stage 4	21.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
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	£
Total income	2,985,731
Total expenditure	2,926,566
Expenditure per pupil	3,124
Balance brought forward from previous year	874,520
Balance carried forward to next year	933,685

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	35
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	23.2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	940
Number of questionnaires returned	260

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	58	5	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	30	51	6	1	11
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	55	12	6	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	10	51	18	10	11
The teaching is good.	18	62	6	1	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	53	15	5	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	46	6	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	42	9	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	17	47	22	6	8
The school is well led and managed.	22	55	6	2	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	23	62	8	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	45	13	3	17

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are pleased about the improving standards in the school; the 'open door' policy adopted by the headteacher, including times put aside to meet parents after school hours; the induction of Year 7 pupils to the school; and improved facilities.

Parents are concerned about responses to complaints by the school which vary too much depending on who is dealing with the problem, including on issues of bullying; the organisation of parents' evenings and the limited time for discussion with teachers; timetabling where it results in pupils having more than one teacher in the same subject; lack of advanced information on extra-curricular activities; and homework diaries not used consistently as a means of communication between the school and parents.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well in relation to their standards on entry to the school
- Girls attain well above average standards
- Teachers challenge pupils and have high expectations of them
- Departmental leadership and management offer clear educational direction

Areas for improvement

- Further strategies to improve the performance of boys
- More use of national test level criteria to show pupils what they need to do to improve
- Closer links with the special educational needs department to ensure that the wide range of needs in the lower ability teaching sets are being met in Years 7 to 9

80. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been consistently well above average compared with all schools in recent years and girls' results have been higher than boys'. Results were above average compared with similar schools in 2001 and well above in 2000. Pupils do better in mathematics and science than in English.
81. GCSE results were above average in English in 2000 and 2001 but many pupils did not attain as well as in their other GCSE subjects. Results for 2002 show a significant improvement in both girls' and boys' performances when compared with the national averages for 2001 with girls' results well above that average and boys above that average.
82. English literature results were well above average in 2001 and an improvement on the previous year. Pupils' attainment in 2001 was significantly better than their attainment in their other subjects. Results for 2002 showed continued improvement. Girls' results have been well above average since 2000, and boys' above average.
83. Standards of work seen are above average in all years and pupils' achievement and progress in relation to previous attainment are good. In speaking and listening, standards are often well above average though some middle and lower ability pupils are not good listeners. Pupils are encouraged to talk in all lessons and most are articulate and able to answer questions, discuss, express opinions, solve problems, negotiate and make group decisions. The most able are fluent and argue convincingly.
84. The technical accuracy of pupils' writing is improving. The standards of writing are above average by the end of Years 9 and 11; girls' attainment is well above by the end of their final year, particularly in English literature. Lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9 can write simple but interesting stories, poems, diaries, magazine articles, letters and reports, as well as responses to literature. The more able confidently use complex sentences, a wider range of vocabulary and some original imagery. They can also write convincingly to persuade and argue, and they justify their opinions very effectively. A Year 7 class produced very good quality personal writing on the Arab-Israeli conflict which was impressive because of both the pupils' careful research and their well-reasoned moral judgements. In Year 11, the most able pupils often make notes

unprompted, and their books and coursework show a good range of writing, discursive and personal as well as creative. There are also carefully considered responses to literature and media texts.

85. Reading comprehension is above average. In Year 9, most pupils can make some inferences, deductions and predictions based on their reading of a wide range of fiction, poetry, media and other texts. All are given opportunities to read for enjoyment and to seek for information in class and for homework. Both boys and girls readily volunteer to read aloud in lessons and Year 7 pupils keep a record of their private reading. In Year 11, many pupils can read fluently and with good understanding but a significant number of both boys and girls rarely read books for pleasure.
86. Lower attaining pupils taking 'progress units' in Year 7 are achieving well. The achievement of those with special educational needs in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, but the large numbers of these pupils in the lower ability sets, with a wide range of needs, often affect the pace of learning and not all teachers have a sufficient range of strategies to deal well with these classes. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 10 and 11 achieve well because they are in smaller classes and receive more individual attention from their teachers and support assistants.
87. Pupils have opportunities to use information and communication technology to develop their learning, but their experiences vary depending upon which teacher they have. All Year 7 use the Internet and PowerPoint in their Shakespeare project, and other years use computers for research, presentations and wordprocessing. The department is currently devising a plan to ensure that all pupils receive equal access and use information and communication technology more imaginatively and frequently.
88. Teaching is good. In nearly two out of five lessons it is very good. The best lessons are characterised by good subject knowledge and planning, high teacher expectations, a variety of teaching styles and learning opportunities and class management which provides a supportive, purposeful and enjoyable work atmosphere. In the one excellent Year 11 lesson, below average pupils, most of whom were boys, were readily able to describe their responses and their enjoyment of 'Charlotte O'Neil's Song' because their teacher made the poem accessible to them by linking it with their own experiences and brought it further to life with his own anecdotes, humour and enthusiasm. In lessons with some shortcomings, there was inadequate management of poor behaviour and teaching plans did not meet the needs of all pupils. The positive, conscientious and mature attitude of many pupils makes a significant contribution to their achievement. However, a minority of all abilities, particularly in Years 8 and 9, lack self-discipline and have poor listening skills and motivation; their unsatisfactory behaviour affects both their own and others' learning. Teachers carefully monitor pupils' attainment and achievement. Comments are positive and helpful, particularly on the work of Years 10 and 11. However, in lower years, there are few references to National Curriculum assessment criteria with advice on how pupils can achieve the next level.
89. The leadership and management of the department are very good. The department is well organised; teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are regularly monitored; and effective use is made of a wealth of pupil performance data to set individual, class and departmental performance targets. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Key skills across the curriculum – literacy.

90. The provision for literacy across the curriculum is very good. Standards are above average and rising because departments see literacy as an important tool in raising pupils' attainment in all subjects. Because of their above average English skills, many pupils do not have difficulties with speaking, reading and writing. Some pupils are however poor listeners.
91. There are frequent opportunities in lessons for pupils to evaluate both their own and others' performances and learn from each other through talk. Very good examples of this were seen in drama and dance; pupils' comments were positive and encouraging, and showed good analytical skills and awareness of how assessments are made. In mathematics there is often high quality discussion leading to effective problem solving. In history pupils benefit from good opportunities to learn about historical characters and events through role-play and, in science, pupils are encouraged to give class presentations and gain in confidence from the experience.
92. Pupils are encouraged to read in most subjects and standards are above average. In history, geography and religious education, for example, pupils read a good variety of texts, including newspapers and magazines, and some departments enlist the help of the librarian to produce project boxes for class use. All departments encourage pupils to make good use of the subject-specific vocabulary displayed in teaching rooms, both in their speaking and writing.
93. Writing standards are above average but there is some poor presentation and weak spelling, particularly, but not solely, among boys. The school has identified about 40 pupils from Years 7 to 9 who need help with handwriting and has produced very effective individual programmes to help them improve. There are weaknesses in the writing of lower attainers but they receive help with their extended writing through the provision of structured prompt and question sheets by many departments.
94. The National Literacy Strategy is very well managed. As a result of good training and organisation, all departments have a literacy policy and identify opportunities for speaking, reading and writing in their lesson plans. A common approach to the marking of spelling, punctuation and grammar is now emerging and a whole staff working party regularly meets to share best practice and evaluate progress. Heads of department are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of literacy in their subjects but clear success criteria have yet to be established.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Well above average achievement and standards at the end of Years 9 and 11
- Very good leadership and management with a clear focus on raising standards and expectations
- Very good relationships between pupils and teachers
- Effective confident teaching
- Very good analysis of assessment data to monitor achievement and set targets

Areas for improvement

- Continued development of ICT resources for teaching in the classroom
- Develop strategies to improve the attitudes to learning of a small minority of pupils

95. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved consistently over the past five years and have been consistently well above average. Results were well above average compared with similar schools in 2000 and 2001. With average attainment on entry to Year 7, this reflects consistently very good progress through Years 7 to 9. GCSE results have improved significantly in each of the past two years. Results were well above average compared with the national average in 2001 and improved further in 2002. Boys' and girls' results have been similar in the past two years.
96. Current standards are well above average in Year 9. The evidence from work seen in lessons and from pupils' books confirms very good progress from Year 7 to 9, including for pupils with special educational needs. There is good continuity from primary school in the development of numeracy in Year 7 and mental arithmetic skills are systematically reinforced and extended. In a Year 7 class pupils engaged in excellent discussion of place value when playing a game to create the largest or smallest number from a random selection of number cards. There is a continuing emphasis on numeracy in Year 8 and pupils of all abilities can handle equivalent fractions and decimal equivalence. More able pupils use vector notation to describe translation and use function notation with confidence. In Year 9 there is challenging work for pupils of all abilities in number, algebra and geometry. By the end of Year 8 more able pupils are well into GCSE work in a number of topics. There is good, systematic development of skills in investigative work from early in Year 7 resulting in some very good work in Year 9.
97. Pupils make good progress overall in Years 10 and 11, including those with special educational needs. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress. Current standards in Year 11 are well above average with pupils of all abilities achieving well in relation to their predicted grades. All pupils develop confidence in their work with algebraic expressions. There is demanding work in the solution of equations both algebraically and graphically, but some lower ability pupils in Year 11 find solving simultaneous equations challenging. Pupils have a good understanding of proof as opposed to demonstration and can follow the proof of the cosine rule well. Work with powers, roots and surds in Year 10 shows good extension of number from Year 9, but some pupils of above average ability are less confident with the general rules of arithmetic. Investigative work builds well on pupils' previous experience and their work shows good understanding of investigative method and the formulation of hypotheses. Pupils can explain rules and patterns algebraically and in words and write at length about their investigations. There is some exceptional work from more able pupils. Last year two Year 11 pupils, after visiting Southampton University for a lecture on encryption, shared the third prize for submitting the first correct solutions to the first three of five encoded messages put out as a challenge by the university as part of its' Golden Jubilee celebrations. The competition was open to persons under 19 years old and is therefore a fine achievement for pupils in an 11-16 school.
98. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. The department analyses assessment data well to monitor progress against previous achievement. As a result, teachers have a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils, including those with special educational needs, and lessons are well planned to match pupils' needs. A range of strategies and activities are used to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. In a Year 9 lesson with pupils of higher ability working on problems with external angles of polygons, the teacher used shapes marked out on the floor so that pupils could walk round them and verify the constant sum of the angles. As a result pupils were enthusiastic as they checked their

own examples, working hard and making good progress. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and the majority of pupils are keen to participate in answering questions or explaining their ideas. In a Year 11 lesson on co-ordinate geometry pupils were working on problems involving the distance between two points. The teacher was able to use hints and challenges to enable pupils to derive their own solutions, promoting some very effective understanding. Pupils are grouped by ability in mathematics and there is good use of in-class support for groups of lower ability. In some classes a minority of pupils are less well motivated and despite good classroom management these lessons are less productive than they could be.

99. The work of pupils of all abilities shows them to have considerable skills in using information and communication technology. The department is beginning to develop the use of information and communication technology for teaching. This needs further development to maximise the good access to resources. An example of what can be done was shown in a Year 9 class where there was excellent use of the interactive whiteboard to present Pythagoras as a special case of a more general relationship.
100. The department is very well led and managed. The head of department is providing clear direction for the development of the department with a clear focus on raising achievement. The issues from the last inspection of progression in using and applying mathematics, of appropriate challenge for more able pupils, and of sharing good teaching practice have all been addressed. Despite significant changes in staffing in the past year there is a good team spirit within the department, ideas and responsibilities are shared and staff work well as a team.

Key skills across the curriculum – numeracy.

101. Standards of numeracy and mental arithmetic are very good. The mathematics department has developed its schemes of work to incorporate the National Numeracy Strategy and there is good development of number skills in Year 7. As a result mental arithmetic with both integers and fractions is good. The school is beginning to develop a whole-school policy for numeracy but has not yet mapped the mathematical requirements of other subjects from Years 7 to 11. As a result, the evidence of pupils applying their mathematical skills varies considerably between subject areas.
102. There is a good policy for developing mathematical skills in science. Year 7 pupils are given opportunities to develop their understanding of force diagrams and resultant forces. By Year 9 pupils can make calculations of formulae such as Ohm's law and understand the principles of cross-sectional area in relation to the resistance of a wire. In Year 11 pupils display good skills in measuring distance and time and applying Newton's laws for calculating acceleration. In geography there is effective and regular use of numerical calculations and graphical illustrations of data in topics such as climate and weather, settlement and population and comparison of prices in euros across the European Union. In GCSE coursework there is frequent collection and interpretation of statistical data. Similarly in history, when comparing casualties in World Wars One and Two, pupils collect and interpret statistical data providing illustrations with graphs, bar charts and pie charts. Work in design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education routinely involves accurate measurement, timing and basic arithmetic calculations. However, in these and other subjects, and particularly in GCSE coursework, opportunities for pupils to interpret and present data from their research in tables and graphs are often missed.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Well above average standards in national tests and GCSE examinations
- The number of pupils attaining top levels and grades in these tests and examinations is high
- Expert analyses of test and examination results to judge departmental performance and set targets for improvement

Areas for improvement

- Increased opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of scientific enquiry in lessons
- Explore and use a wider variety of inventive teaching styles
- Procedures for tackling negative attitudes towards learning of a significant minority of pupils
- Formal evaluation of teaching and learning to share good practice

103. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been well above average in recent years with an increase in the percentage attaining the highest levels. Results were well above average compared with similar schools in 2000 and 2001.
104. GCSE results were well above average in the double award science examination in 2001, and in the previous year, for both boys and girls. Results were similar in 2002 and well above average, compared with the national averages for 2001 (national averages for 2002 not yet available). Both boys and girls achieve very well including at the highest grades. Results were above average in single science in 2000, well above average in 2001, but declined in 2002 being average compared with the national average for 2001.
105. Those who take their science examinations in Year 10 sit AS-level science in Year 11. Results in 2001 were well above average. In 2002, results declined. They were below average at grades A-B and coursework grades were lower than expected. Overall, a notable number of pupils gained B-C grades and results at grades A-E were above average.
106. Current standards in Year 9 are well above average. This represents very good achievement and progress in relation to pupils' standards on entry to the school in Year 7. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils. Early in Year 7 pupils begin to recognise chemical symbols and can write a word equation to summarise what happens. They sharpen up mathematical skills as they measure current flowing through different parts of an electrical circuit with a voltmeter. They also increase their technical vocabulary by explaining, for example, 'potential difference'. Pupils in Year 9 (top set) were seen dealing with ideas usually introduced in Years 10 and 11, as they considered how the cross-sectional area of a wire might affect resistance. Analysis of books also shows that early in Year 9 higher attainers can calculate the quantity of heat given out or absorbed in a chemical reaction and learnt the term 'thermal decomposition' as they moved into the higher levels of the curriculum. Lower attainers know that saliva can contain an enzyme (chemical substance) capable of changing starch and can illustrate this by experimentation. Completed work in books shows that standards of presenting records are not always good and there are also inconsistencies in labelling accurately two-dimensional diagrams. Class experiments are usually structured and guided but not balanced by enough independent investigation work for pupils to suggest hypotheses, plan work and explore their own ideas.

107. Standards in Year 11 are well above average. Achievement and progress in relation to earlier attainment in Year 9 are good overall including for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils in the Year 10 'express' set understand the relationship between the activity of chemicals and their electronic structure and how this determines their position on the Periodic Table. They know this from testing their own suggestions about reactivity being determined by the number of electrons. Some pupils however need and receive helpful support in learning how to balance the complex chemical equations. Other higher attainers in a top set grapple well in understanding the complexities of diffusion of nitrogen in and out of living tissue through semi-permeable membranes. Lower attainers can write conclusions about practical work but have difficulty giving reasons for observations. Some pupils would rather have the facts given to them than work things out for themselves but teachers' insistence that this should not happen wins through. Analysis of work shows that pupils do not always present their records well although they all know how to record investigations.
108. Teaching overall is good with some very good practice and pupils learn well as a result. The best teaching makes the content relevant and memorable. The interest of a class of boys, for example, was swiftly captured, as they had to imagine themselves squirming through a narrow drainpipe. The teacher continued to grip their attention as he casually referred them to a formula that 'A-level students have to calculate'. They responded enthusiastically because of their teachers' high expectations of what they were capable of understanding. At the same time, they were complimented about the level they were attaining, consequently, progress in learning about electrical resistances was very good. Year 11 pupils were amazed to see a huge jet of black smoke suddenly billow from a flask when two colourless liquids were mixed together. They quickly learnt more about chemical changes because their teacher then skilfully made them relate the demonstration to the chemistry it was describing. Their efforts were treated with respect and generosity, all of which added substantially to the quality of their learning. Pupils in a Year 7 class clearly enjoyed using a skateboard in their lesson about balanced forces. They already know about skateboarding so could more easily connect this well-chosen resource to their new learning about 'reaction' forces. Similarly, a teacher's explicit 'home-made' model helped Year 10 pupils grasp ideas about molecular movement. Books are regularly marked giving good feedback to pupils.
109. Lessons where teaching was satisfactory shared some features of good lessons but progress in learning was slower. These lessons were not planned imaginatively, were rarely lively because pupils were not involved enough in solving problems, and expectations were pitched too low with undemanding tasks. In all lessons, there were some lost opportunities to nurture investigative method in class work. A small minority of pupils do not have good attitudes towards learning and this hinders their progress and that of others.
110. Leadership and management are good. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and standards have risen dramatically. Experimentation with separate classes for boys and girls in Years 8 and 9 has also helped in raising standards. Performance is meticulously analysed and assessment well used in identifying targets for pupils and the department. Technical support is of high quality and contributes a great deal to the quality of science education. Resources are very good and provision for using computers in a variety of ways is now good. Teaching and learning is not monitored regularly enough through formal classroom observations and analysis of class books. The department plan is well prioritised but is not fully costed and does not specify deadlines for completion of its targets.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Improved management of the department, which has raised standards
- Improved GCSE results, which are now in line with the national average
- Improved standards achieved by boys in all years

Areas for improvement

- Continue to improve the attainment of boys
- Ensure there is a balance in sketchbook work between observational drawing and other means of researching ideas
- Ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to make art using computers
- Improve the behaviour of some pupils so that all pupils reach their potential

111. Over the last three years standards at GCSE have improved significantly. In 2001 the number of pupils gaining grades A*-C was in line with the national average. Boys' results are in line with the national average and girls higher, both in overall results and the number who gained grades A and A*. No national averages are yet available for 2002 but results show further improvement with boys in particular doing much better than previous years. These results represent very good achievement and progress.
112. Current standards in Year 9 are average. Above average work in ceramics of pupils in Years 7 and 8 shows competence in hand-building techniques, with a sensitive use of glaze and decoration. In sketchbooks where younger pupils have experimented with media such as printmaking, collage and texture collections standards are above average, but the contribution of observational drawing to the development of ideas is not as good. In lessons the majority of pupils show work of at least average standard with all abilities reaching their potential. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils. Although the majority of pupils attain at least average standards there are exceptions when either a whole class or small numbers in a class do not reach their potential. For example, in a Year 9 lesson where pupils were looking at the visual ambiguity of scale and context, pupils gave insufficient attention to what they were asked to do and therefore underachieved.
113. Current standards in Year 11 are above average and represent good achievement for all groups and abilities. The improvement of recent years is being sustained. Although GCSE results show that the standards attained by boys have improved there is a difference in the quality of the visual diaries for the journeys project produced by girls and boys in the current Year 11. The work of girls shows sustained effort and a thoughtful collection of visual information, which results in diaries which are stimulating and interesting and which will provide a good starting point for future work. Those of many boys tend to be rushed and superficial providing a poor starting point for further work. Sketchbooks show that standards of observational drawing are improving but there is lack of balance between observational drawing and other means of researching ideas. Pupils in Year 10 who have just started their GCSE course are attaining average standards. In a drawing lesson where pupils made tonal studies using charcoal and chalk, observation skills were average but the ability to use tone below average. In contrast to this their bold drawings indicated an above average confidence in their approach to drawing. The indications are that these pupils should reach high standards by the end of Year 11.

114. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils. For example in a Year 10 drawing lesson, clear objectives were set supported by the use of well-chosen examples of drawings which helped pupils to focus what they were expected to do. This meant that pupils approached their work with confidence, both in terms of the use of materials and the scale of the drawings they made. A strength of teaching is the increasing emphasis being placed on the use of sketchbooks. There are occasions when more thoughtful planning in individual lessons could ensure more effective learning, for example in the selection of the resources used to investigate texture. During the inspection some teachers were in the early stages of being integrated into the working of the department. In the lessons seen work was not always well matched to the needs of the pupils and when pupils were not clear enough on what they were being asked to do pupils of all abilities did not reach their potential. The majority of pupils respond well and are fully engaged in what they are asked to do, but there are instances of poor behaviour by both boys and girls which results in unsatisfactory learning. Such behaviour is challenging for teachers to manage and a distraction for those pupils who want to get on with their work.
115. The management of the department is good. Effective steps have been taken to arrest the decline in standards at GCSE and to revise the curriculum for younger pupils, thus providing a more coherent experience which mostly reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. Resourcing and the management of resources have improved, and teachers now work well as a team. The majority of issues raised by the last inspection have been addressed. The lack of opportunity for pupils to make art using computers was a weakness at the last inspection and remains an issue. Though featuring in the department development plan it should be addressed as a matter of urgency. This is a much improved department with a very good understanding of what needs to be done to improve further.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall the quality of provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- The discrete citizenship course in Year 10
- The potential of humanities subjects and a specialist team of teachers of personal, social and health education to ensure that statutory requirements are met
- Some good existing opportunities for pupil participation
- The allocation of responsibility for developing citizenship to a new head of humanities who has sufficient seniority and experience to provide effective leadership

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring that those lessons which are intended to contribute to citizenship have better defined links to an overall scheme of work
- Informing pupils that citizenship is a new subject which they are required to study and how it will be covered and assessed
- Devising systems for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' achievements in citizenship including end-of-key stage descriptions

116. Even taking into account that citizenship is a new subject and that it will be developed and shaped by the school over time the foundations which have been laid in the run-up to its introduction are unsatisfactory. Pupils of all year groups interviewed during the inspection had little or no idea that citizenship is a new subject which they will study and what that entails. Whilst an audit has been carried out to identify which subjects

could contribute to citizenship through the topics which they cover there is some considerable way to go to ensure that total contributions cover the requirements of the programmes of study for citizenship. Current arrangements do not guarantee that all pupils will receive their entitlement. Much store is being placed on humanities subjects and the personal and social education programme to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

117. During the week of the inspection citizenship was only being taught in Year 10. Standards in Year 10 where citizenship is taught through a timetabled lesson are adequate for this early stage of the course. Pupils are able to describe some human rights and show some limited understanding of the concept of citizenship but as yet pupils show little enthusiasm for the subject. Some pupils do not yet have folders to store their work, and much of the written work seen does not reflect a high degree of pupil engagement. The quality of teaching and learning in the limited number of lessons seen was satisfactory. A strong feature of the more effective teaching is the good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers' management of pupils was generally very good and controversial issues such as the abuse of children were dealt with sensitively. Year 10 pupils were able to identify some human rights and were able to use documentary sources to explore the historical development of the concept of human rights. The relative weakness in teaching at this early stage is a failure to sufficiently engage the interest of pupils in the theoretical aspects of the subject.
118. One example of activities outside the formal curriculum which contributes to citizenship is the school council. This provides an opportunity for pupils of all ages to develop skills of participation and to consider responsible action. All have the opportunity both to stand as candidates and to vote. The school's efforts to ensure that there is a regular flow of communications from year groups to the school council and vice-versa is adding to the value of the school council and therefore its contribution to citizenship. Elsewhere there are additional opportunities for pupils to participate and take responsible action. All Year 7 pupils for example take part in fundraising for charity and all Year 8 pupils take part in the community service week as part of their personal, social and health education programme. The recently introduced senior prefect system too is not confined to a small group of pupils and a substantial proportion of Year 11 are given the chance to negotiate, decide and take part in this school-based activity. As invaluable as these opportunities are there is no coherent school view to ensure that all pupils have access to comparable activities and this is an area that requires improvement. There are some good contributions to citizenship from some subject areas such as English, geography and information and communication technology. However, at the moment these are not made explicit in schemes of work, to pupils or mapped across Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11 to ensure curriculum coverage and adequate progression for pupils. The specific contribution of school assemblies has not been considered and how they could fit into an overall scheme. A well-organised school library too has the potential to make a significant contribution.
119. Little thought has been given to the range of assessment systems required so that annual reports to parents on citizenship are valid and are based on end-of-key stage descriptions for particular year groups.
120. A new head of humanities has only just taken up the post and has been given the responsibility for developing citizenship. She is aware of what needs to be done and has the experience, drive and necessary seniority to provide effective leadership.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average overall
- The gap between boys' and girls' achievement has narrowed
- The quality of teaching in electronics, food and resistant materials in Years 10 and 11

Areas for improvement

- Building National Curriculum levels into teaching and learning across all areas
- Greater consistency in the quality of marking
- Improving the quality of graphical design

121. GCSE results were well above average overall in 2001 and an improvement on the above average results of the previous year. The upward trend continued in 2002 with overall results well above the average for 2001. Girls have been well above the average in each of the last three years and have achieved very well. The gap between boys and girls has narrowed and boys achieved well in 2002. In 2002 results were well above the 2001 average in electronics and resistant materials and above average in food. Results in graphics were about average.
122. Current standards are above average in Year 9 and Year 11. The majority of pupils make good progress as they move through from Years 7 to 9. In one Year 9 class most pupils were able to use Pro-desk top successfully, a CAD/CAM package, as a design tool to produce ideas for their final model of a mobile 'phone. In another Year 9 class pupils were making final templates for their clock faces influenced by the work of Salvador Dali. They can handle tools, materials and equipment skilfully. For example in a Year 8 food technology class pupils were making flapjack, which requires accuracy in measuring ingredients for a successful product. In a Year 7 resistant material class pupils worked hard to attain a good quality finish on their piece of wood using the power drill and sander for their desk tidies. Some graphical designing was unsatisfactory. The majority of pupils maintain and build on their achievement in lower school and make good progress in Years 10 and 11. They continue to extend their knowledge and skills in the separate specialist areas. They can design well, develop a specification and produce good quality outcomes particularly in electronics, food and resistant materials.
123. The quality of learning and teaching is good overall. The teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory overall but ranges from very good to poor. Where it was good or better the teachers have a very good knowledge of their specialist subjects, are totally committed, efficient, organised and they set clear expectations. Where it was less than satisfactory, the teachers lacked specialist knowledge and work did not challenge or inspire the pupils. Teaching in Years 10 to 11 overall is mainly good. Highly organised and well-structured lessons provided clear guidelines about expectations, including in resistant materials. Individual tuition during many of the lessons helped pupils of all abilities to achieve their potential. Good practical application and simplification of complex ideas in electronics aided pupils' understanding of the theory behind the subject more easily. A good variety of teaching strategies and high quality questioning skills in a Year 10 food technology lesson enabled the pupils to be challenged to think for themselves. The ongoing use of assessment is satisfactory. Assessment, using levels, is in place, but is not consistently and effectively used across the department. There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking particularly in Years 7 to 9. There are good examples of the use of technician time to support the teacher and pupils.

124. The leadership of the department is good and there is a clear vision for the further development of the subject. The introduction of CAD/CAM linked to a local engineering company is introducing new initiatives into the department. The curriculum is well planned and covers all specialist areas. Weaknesses in timetabling result in some classes having more than one teacher for a subject which affects continuity and the tracking of pupils' progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

DRAMA

The overall quality of provision in drama is **good**.

Strengths

- The standard of practical performance is well above average in most lessons
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- The important contribution made to the development of pupils' personal and social skills
- The clear vision for the further improvement and development of the subject

Areas for improvement

- Attainment in the present Year 9 which is below average
- Standards of written work which are not as high as for physical performance, particularly the writing of lower attaining pupils
- Strengthen cross-curricular links further, for example to contribute to citizenship and to increase awareness of living in a multicultural society

125. Results at GCSE are improving. The results for 2002 were above the previous year's national average. Although girls are attaining higher results, the gap narrowed considerably in 2002 with both girls and boys achieving well.

126. Current standards in drama are above average in Years 7 and 8 with pupils achieving well, but below average in Year 9. Standards in Years 10 and 11 are above average with pupils showing high levels of practical performance. In Year 7 pupils understand the importance of voice projection and can demonstrate the appropriate use of voice in improvisation and when using a script. Year 8 pupils are able to use the 'thought-tracking' technique to communicate character and to establish atmosphere. They are very capable of evaluating their own performances, commenting on pace, volume and tone of voice. Although Year 9 pupils present lively performances some lack of self-control, poor audience awareness and inappropriate facial expressions limit their attainment. Year 10 and Year 11 pupils of all abilities, both boys and girls, demonstrate well above average performance skills. They effectively communicate character through mime, tableaux, improvisation, movement, facial expression, gesture and use of space. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils make good progress with written work at GCSE level. There are good examples of clear analysis and evaluation in their journals of work in progress, excellent examples of writing in role, and excellent use of research, for example into the Tolpuddle Martyrs. However, the written work of lower attaining pupils in all years is well below the standard of their practical performance.

127. An overall strength in drama in all years is the development of pupils' personal and social skills and the very positive attitudes evident in the majority of lessons. Pupils remain focused and sustain concentration. They listen attentively to the teacher and to each other, showing respect for the ideas of others and appreciation of each other's performances. They collaborate well in small groups and most are able to perform imaginatively with control and self-discipline. There is still some lack of self-control in

Year 9 classes, but pupils are learning to be tolerant and to work co-operatively and creatively.

128. Teaching and learning are very good at all stages. Features of effective teaching include high teacher expectations, stimulating resources and a variety of activities and groupings. Very clear teacher instructions, explanations and demonstrations lead to purposeful, controlled and expressive performances from all pupils. For example in an excellent Year 8 lesson where pupils were initially self-conscious and giggling the teacher's very high expectation that all pupils would participate and produce focused work quickly led to an appropriate response. She established close observation through a warm-up exercise; then used two pupils to demonstrate how characters can reveal their inner thoughts through thought-tracking technique. She then challenged pupils to show how they could create an atmosphere using the same technique. The attainment of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils was continually extended as the teacher established an initial dramatic situation and then challenged pupils to build in additional techniques. For example Year 11 pupils working on character development around a wedding theme were invited to include a significant prop; then to incorporate an improvised group 'flashback' into a dramatic monologue. The pupils showed great inventiveness in their responses. Although teachers introduce and encourage the use of the technical vocabulary of the subject there is not always sufficient time within a single period to develop lower attaining pupils use of language for analysis and evaluation in GCSE lessons.
129. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear plan for the development of the performing arts. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 benefit from having regular weekly drama lessons and there are good opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities such as the drama club and school productions. At present provision is about the same as reported in the last inspection, but drama should achieve a higher profile over the next few years. New schemes of work are being developed. The opportunity should be taken to include more cross-curricular work such as support for the citizenship curriculum, and increased awareness of the diversity of cultures and ethnic groups in our society.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Well above average GCSE results for both boys and girls
- The overall quality of teaching: teachers plan lessons well, providing a range of appropriate activities
- The development of pupils' independent enquiry and learning skills
- The leadership and management of the subject

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and sharing good practice
- Development of effective strategies to deal with the poor attitudes and behaviour of some pupils
- Extension of the use of computers and the Internet as a tool in teaching and learning

130. GCSE results in 2001 were well above average and an improvement on the average results of the previous year. Half the candidates achieved A*/A grades which is considerably above the national average. In 2002 results were above the national

average compared with the national average for 2001. No national averages are available as yet for 2002. In both years boys and girls results were very similar, both achieving very well.

131. By the end of Year 9, attainment overall is average. Progress in lessons and over time is good in relation to pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 7. From observations in lessons and from scrutiny of books pupils are developing an appropriate range of knowledge, understanding and skills. They show in written work and orally in lessons a growing ability to think about geographical ideas and processes. While mapping skills are weak on entry, they develop these skills effectively by the age of 14. A significant number have a satisfactory grasp of subject language and they carry out enquiry work well. A particularly good example was seen in Year 9 in homework on volcanoes and earthquakes. In Year 8, pupils are developing a sound understanding of the composition and characteristics of the European Union and the variation and reasons for differences in prices across countries.
132. From lesson observations and looking at pupils' books standards in the current Year 11 are above the national average. Girls are currently attaining at a higher level than boys. In lessons progress is good but overtime it has been hindered by changes of teachers in Year 10. A significant majority of pupils are effective independent learners and are also developing good discussion and decision making skills. This was seen in lessons on the growth of tourism around the world and in activities involving the location of a tourist resort. The attainment of a small number of pupils is affected by an inability to sustain a mature attitude to their study, despite the very good teaching they are now receiving. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.
133. Teaching and learning overall are good. Teachers are very secure in their subject knowledge and they provide a range of appropriate activities to motivate pupils. In fact, in a significant number of lessons very good teaching engages pupils and this results in very good progress. Particularly good examples were observed in lessons in Year 7 on global connections and on the tourist industry in GCSE lessons. A significant number of lessons are well planned to meet the majority of pupils' needs. In a very small number however, too little attention is given to providing appropriate tasks for lower attaining pupils. Teachers have high expectations, which has a positive influence on learning. Pupils are expected to think independently and carry out enquiry tasks. The vast majority of pupils respond well but a small number do not and this adversely influences their progress. In a very small number of lessons, mainly in Year 9, improved strategies are required to deal with the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils, who disrupt learning and have a detrimental influence on the learning of others. Computers are employed to assist learning but use could be extended to widen learning opportunities. The department is making a satisfactory input into the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress comparable to other pupils.
134. The newly appointed head of department has already made a number of appropriate improvements in the management of the subject. An action plan has identified necessary priorities for development. Schemes of work, which in the past were very sketchy, are being re-written and greater emphasis is being placed on assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Leadership is good and has the potential to be even better over time, when changes have had time to take effect and influence pupils' standards.
135. Since the last inspection the department has made good progress, particularly in the significantly improved GCSE results achieved over the last two years. The quality of

questioning to test pupils' knowledge and understanding has improved and the overall quality of teaching and learning is better. There is still however insufficient formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The behaviour of a small number of poorly motivated pupils still remains a problem. The department lacks computer resources and this limits the range of learning activities which can be employed. Currently too little emphasis is placed upon the development of citizenship and the raising of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness in both schemes of work and in lesson plans.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The improved standards at GCSE
- The increased numbers of pupils opting for history at GCSE
- The shared commitment of the history department to improvement
- The visits to museums and historic sites

Areas for improvement

- To ensure a better match of tasks to learning for lower attaining pupils in Years 7 to 9
- To make more effective use of information and communication technology

136. The pupils' performance at GCSE over the past three years has consistently been above the national average. In 2001 it was above the national average for grades A*- C and well above for the highest grades A*/A. These high standards were maintained in the 2002 examinations and are the result of the good teaching by an experienced team of history teachers. The two areas of strength within this picture at GCSE are the increased numbers of pupils achieving the very highest grades and the relative improvement in the attainment of boys.
137. The standards of work achieved by the pupils in the current Year 9 are just above national expectations. This represents good achievement for many pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs. Achievement is satisfactory for those lower attaining pupils who do not receive additional support. Pupils of all abilities demonstrate increasingly good factual knowledge and understanding, such as the Year 9 pupils who were able to explain what nineteenth century factory conditions were like in their writing in the role of factory inspectors. Pupils demonstrate an increasing skill in handling historical sources and interpretations such as the Year 8 pupils in both higher and lower teaching sets who successfully explored film images of Queen Elizabeth I.
138. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that the standards of work being achieved by pupils in the current Years 10 and 11 are above average. This represents good achievement over the two years of the course for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. What all pupils can do well is to describe historical events such as the First World War. Middle and higher attaining pupils are able to analyse and then explain complex historical issues such as the weaknesses in the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. The relative weakness in the work of lower attaining pupils is their failure to use accurate historical detail to support their answers.
139. History has become a very popular option growing from 33 pupils in 2000 to 110 pupils in the current Year 10. The quality of teaching and learning in history is good. Strong features of the most effective teaching are the good relationships between teachers

and pupils. Teachers' management of pupils is generally very good, despite two lessons observed where the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils adversely affected the learning of all. Teacher planning is a strong feature, both of individual lessons and of a series of lessons. Year 8 pupils were able to develop a good understanding of the different images of Elizabeth I in feature films and television as the lesson built upon their previous work on portraits. The best teaching is also characterised by very sharp teacher questioning which forces pupils to refine their thinking and to more carefully explain their ideas. At GCSE the teachers' knowledge of the syllabus enables them to prepare pupils very well for their examinations. In a Year 11 lesson the pupils recapped their knowledge of the Wall Street Crash through annotating a contemporary cartoon. The very focused teaching also ensured that their ability to analyse cartoons was markedly improved and the homework set gave them the opportunity to practise and reinforce this skill. The relative weakness in teaching is where teachers' exposition is too long, slowing down the pace of learning and where teachers are not sufficiently matching the demands of the work to the abilities of lower attaining pupils.

140. The leadership of history is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, most notably in the improved examination results from the increased numbers opting for history at GCSE, and the number of visits which involve all pupils such as in Years 7 and 8. The strong team of specialist historians are very committed to their work. The schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 and GCSE give effective guidance to all those teaching history, although they do not currently specify the expectations for pupil attainment at each level of ability. The head of history monitors the teaching of the subject through lesson observation. Resources for history are now good and coupled with the very good accommodation is having a very positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. Insufficient use is currently being made of information and communication technology.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good accommodation
- Good resources and potential for development
- A head of department who is well organised and makes effective plans for the future
- Well-structured schemes of work

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum
- Staffing to ensure that all teachers have the appropriate skills to teach information and communication technology
- The information and communication technology timetable which currently results in some classes having different teachers from one lesson to another
- The ongoing assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress

141. Results for GCSE information and communication technology have been above the national average in recent years. However in the most recent year, only a small number of pupils sat the examination. Girls generally gained higher results than boys.
142. Current standards in Year 9 are average. Pupils have knowledge of spreadsheets, wordprocessing, PowerPoint and desktop publishing through a variety of planned tasks. This is an improvement since the last inspection and represents satisfactory progress.

Year 7 pupils rapidly gain skills and confidence in using information and communication technology so that after a few weeks they are able to assemble text and diagrams using a desktop publishing programme. Current Year 8 pupils are using a commercial scheme of work that very effectively structures their learning and provides regular tests. Year 9 pupils continue to progress so that their attainment is maintained in line with national expectations overall. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs and the most able pupils is similar to that made by other pupils.

143. The standard of work of pupils on the current GCSE course, which is available to pupils who show an aptitude for information and communication technology, is generally above average. There is little evidence of pupils having exceptional information and communication technology skills. Attainment in the Year 10 key skills classes varies from average to below average and some pupils are underachieving. Some key skills pupils fail to correct spelling and grammatical errors in their final printed work. The numeracy skills of pupils are being improved by the use of spreadsheets.
144. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The structured programme of work and the departmental documentation enable most teachers to deliver effective lessons. The progress of pupils is greatly influenced by the enthusiasm and expert knowledge of the teacher. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it results from a lack of specialist skills in the subject. The management of pupils is generally good but, where teachers are inexperienced in the teaching of information and communication technology, expectations are low and poor pupil attitudes to work become apparent. Although the curriculum topics are carefully planned in advance there is not enough detailed planning to ensure that lessons always have a clear beginning, middle and end. For example in some Year 10 lessons, an Internet research topic continued for several weeks without enough specific short-term goals which affected the pace of learning and productivity. More regular homework and ongoing assessment of specific tasks could also provide greater motivation in some lessons. Most teachers are making good use of the interactive demonstration facilities. There is a serious lack of continuity which affects learning when pupils have different classes and different teachers for their information and communication technology lessons. This reduces the effectiveness of the teaching and makes the monitoring of progress more difficult. A high proportion of pupils have access to a computer at home and are encouraged to use them by the teachers.
145. Pupils with special educational needs and the most able are well integrated into the classes. However, both could benefit from extra help. Although some classes are large, classroom assistants are not always present and pupils therefore have to wait too long for help.
146. Pupils generally have good attitudes to their information and communication technology lessons. They behave well and stay on task when the time given for the task is appropriate. Pupils often help each other with new techniques. Departmental management is good overall. An appropriate curriculum has been prepared by the head of department for Years 7 to 9. It effectively concentrates on the processes and skills needed by the pupils.
147. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The senior management team and the head of department have identified appropriate targets for the development of the department in terms of the hardware, software and teaching styles. The head of department has prepared very detailed and comprehensive schemes of work for each year group and provides good leadership. Although an effective assessment and recording system has been developed by the head of department it is not at present in

use. The department is working towards improving the system and maintaining a regular record of assessment grades from a variety of sources for each student. As at the time of the last inspection the expertise of some staff needs to be further developed to improve their skills.

148. Information and communication technology is not used consistently by all school departments. Science makes a contribution in the area of computer measurement by using temperature, light, pH and movement sensors with whole classes. However the control component of the information and communication technology curriculum is taught by the design and technology department and not all pupils are involved in this. A very good example of the use and potential of information and communication technology can be seen in design and technology where pupils can send their designs electronically to a local company and receive feedback. Mathematics is beginning to make better use of information and communication technology and there is some excellent use of the interactive white board. Although there is some use in English, and there are plans for expansion, currently whether or not a class uses information and communication technology depends too much on the teacher. The lack of opportunities to make art using computers is a weakness and there are similar weaknesses in most other subjects, and in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Having invested much in very good information and communication technology resources such deficiencies should be addressed by the school. The school has already included this as one of its priorities in the school development plan.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Strengths

- The leadership of the department
- The good quality of teaching
- Pupils can learn a second modern foreign language from Year 8
- Accommodation provides an excellent learning environment

Areas for improvement

- The underachievement of boys at GCSE, especially in Spanish and French
- The disruptive behaviour of a minority of boys in Years 9, 10 and 11
- The use of information and communication technology to enhance learning
- Strategies to stretch the most able pupils
- Strategies to develop pupils' oral skills

149. In the years following the previous inspection in 1996 standards at GCSE fell, until 2002, when mainly the performance of girls raised standards. In 2001 Spanish, German and French were among the school's weakest subjects at GCSE. There were considerable improvements in the results of all three languages in 2002. Boys' results improved in German, but they still underachieved in Spanish and French.

150. Beginners make rapid progress in writing in French and by the end of Year 7 all can write about themselves and express likes and dislikes. Higher attaining pupils can write accurate extended paragraphs and by the beginning of Year 8 they are writing about the past using a wide range of verbs. Over half the year group also takes up the study of either Spanish or German in their second year at the school and make similar rapid progress. By Year 9, pupils' listening skills are well developed, but they are less good at expressing themselves orally. Few lower attaining pupils are capable of speaking in

complete sentences. Overall attainment is in line with the national average; higher attaining pupils are progressing beyond expectations in two modern foreign languages, but lower attaining classes are underachieving. In Years 10 and 11, where almost all pupils continue to study at least one language, overall standards are above average, but girls progress far better than boys. At this stage also reading, writing and listening skills are good overall, but very few pupils are fluent orally.

151. Most pupils behave well and some very good attitudes to learning were seen, especially in Year 8 and also in GCSE groups. However in some classes in Years 9, 10 and 11 the poor behaviour of a minority of boys, an issue raised at the previous inspection, made the teachers' work difficult and disrupted learning.
152. The lessons observed during the inspection indicate a pattern of improving teaching and learning. In three-quarters of the lessons observed teaching and learning were good or better and were good overall. Very good planning and clear lesson objectives ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and how to achieve it. Frequent reference to National Curriculum levels, regular assessment, helpful marking and reports home show pupils how to improve. In lessons where the teacher speaks the foreign language predominantly, pupils are more likely to use it as the main means of communication in class. This use of the language needs to be extended, in order to improve pupils' weak oral skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, especially when they have the help of a learning support assistant. Gifted pupils are now identified, but teachers are not yet consistently employing strategies to stretch them. Examples of innovative homework were seen which motivated and stretched all pupils, but these were not the rule. On occasion homework lacks challenge. As yet there is very little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to aid learning, but the department now has the use of a brand new, state-of-the-art information and communication technology facility.
153. Curriculum provision is good; pupils are able to study a second modern foreign language from Year 8. However, there are far too many classes with more than one teacher, which adversely affects pupils' learning, especially in Year 7. The department makes a strong contribution to the development of literacy skills through its emphasis on language awareness, spelling strategies and grammar. Reading for pleasure, however, remains neglected. Library stocks of foreign language books also lack appeal and books are rarely borrowed.
154. The leadership of the department is good. The head of department, who is supported by a committed, well-qualified team of specialists, has a good grasp of the challenges confronting the department. She has ensured that its improvement plan and in-service training provision address these issues. Detailed schemes of work are also now in place. However, monitoring of classroom practice, though carried out regularly, needs to be more systematic and evaluative, so as to improve teaching and learning further, including the performance of boys at GCSE. Accommodation, enhanced by outstanding display, is excellent and creates a very good learning environment for the work of this rapidly improving department.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress
- Extra-curricular work, which supports learning very well

Areas for improvement

- Resources for computer-aided learning for all pupils
- Accommodation for the full range of learning activities

155. While results at GCSE have been a little below average, those for 2002 were in line with the national average for 2001. Numbers of candidates are high, well balanced between boys and girls. No A* grades have been achieved in recent years.
156. Current standards are above average in Year 9 and Year 11. Year 7 pupils make good progress in skills of notation, keyboard playing and reflective listening. A Year 8 group listened with rapt attention to an unaccompanied Gaelic folk song and articulated their feelings very well about its effect. Pupils in Year 9 showed delighted interest in a video showing the playing of tabla in an Asian context. However, some showed less positive attitudes and self-discipline in practical work following this, limiting the progress of others. Nearly all those in Years 10 and 11 receive instrumental tuition, which is a valuable support to their learning and progress. Most develop well the ability to write about music heard with increasing technical knowledge and an appreciation of its emotional impact. Compositions often show a strong personal involvement, a good standard of manuscript notation and some use of computers. Girls achieve better than boys overall. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.
157. Teaching is good overall, with some points for development. Strengths are preparation, stimulating questioning and good subject knowledge and skill, used to good effect to improve pupils' learning. Teachers' enthusiasm for music helps to stimulate pupils and move them on. Tasks are usually well matched to pupils' needs and to what they are capable of achieving with effort and concentration. Marking of pupils' work for GCSE is encouraging but also gives comments which makes it clear what pupils need to do to improve. Assessment for younger pupils is thorough, systematic and includes pupils' own evaluations and targets for improvement. The individual needs of pupils are well known by staff and accommodated where necessary. One talented Year 9 pupil is being enabled to take GCSE this year. Teachers, both of classes and of instrumental groups, are energetic in demonstrating enthusiasm for music and for learning. Learning is adversely affected when teachers do not use their speaking voices with variety to engage pupils. Teaching does not spell out in enough detail the stages of tasks in practical lessons in order to keep all focused and on task. Teaching does not manage pupils in the spaces and accommodation available effectively enough to ensure the best visual and listening communication, which musicians and learners need.
158. The leadership and management of music are good. The new head of department has established good policies and systems including in the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. Previous weaknesses arising from staffing problems have now been resolved. Schemes and resources for learning are detailed and clear, with progress demanded, and are under constant review. Further scope for improvement and expansion is acknowledged in the development plan and progress made in many areas, for example literacy, the range of ensembles available and resources for computer-based work. The latter means that insufficient use is made of information and communication technology in the teaching of music. The fostering and organisation of extra-curricular work is a strength of the department and of the school and is an integral part of the school's curriculum in music. Such activities contribute positively to the personal development of pupils and to the school's links with the community and provide good value for money for the financial contribution made by parents and the school. Teachers work hard to maintain the wide range of activity, which includes workshops, visits and GCSE classes after school for pupils who wish to take music as

an extra subject. While support from senior management is good, further action is needed on provision of computers and music software and accommodation is cramped and not soundproofed. Greater and earlier consultation is required on the school's timetable to enable better planning to take place.

159. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards have been maintained. Listening and singing are no longer under-represented in schemes of work, and assessment and extra-curricular provision are now very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Improved GCSE results
- Improved quality of teaching
- The quality of the provision for dance
- The quality and range of extra-curricular activities

Areas for improvement

- Raising the attainment of boys in theory work at GCSE
- The attitudes and behaviour of a minority of pupils especially in GCSE physical education
- Monitoring of teaching to ensure consistent application of policies
- Inequality of access to dance for boys in Year 9

160. GCSE results were below average in 2001 and were well below average in the previous year with pupils underachieving. In 2002 results improved considerably and were above average compared with the national average for 2001 but boys were still underachieving.

161. The majority of pupils in Year 9 are of average attainment. A minority of boys have above average football and gymnastic skills. Dance is a strength. Boys and girls use their imagination to create exciting dances. Girls have good rhythm and interpret the music well performing with sophistication. Pupils have good evaluative skills and use this information to improve their work. For example in a Year 8 boys' gymnastic lesson the pupils watched each other's sequences and then made comments that helped them to refine their work. They understand why exercise is important for a healthy lifestyle and warm up effectively before activities. The few pupils working below average have limited ball skills in netball and have co-ordination difficulties in gymnastics. Overall the pupils achieve well, but there is a small minority of pupils who are underachieving because of their poor attitudes in lessons. Overall pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils.

162. Standards reached by the majority of the pupils in Year 11 are average and they achieve well. A few are working below expectation and a minority are above. The boys' football skills become more advanced and refined both in performance and in their use of tactics in games. The girls understand the principles of aerobic exercise and have a high work rate when performing routines. Girls' badminton is an area for development. They often play with a square stance and are slow to anticipate the shuttle. The current Year 11 pupils taking GCSE physical education are of average attainment. A significant minority, especially boys, is below average in their theoretical work. They have a limited recall of facts and their notes and homework assignments are often incomplete. Those pupils who are above average are effectively able to draw links between their practical

and theoretical work. There is some underachievement in practical work by pupils who have behavioural difficulties. They are disruptive and have little inclination to refine their skills through practise. Dance GCSE has just been introduced and the pupils have made a very good start to their studies. They produce work that is technically difficult and have a good understanding of choreography, and pupils of all ability are achieving exceptionally well.

163. The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when a significant amount of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The best teaching is in dance where there are some excellent features. These lessons effectively balance the learning of new skills with the opportunity for creativity and pupils work well both on their own and with others. Pupils with special educational needs are managed particularly well and work with a sense of value and pride in their work. In all lessons aims are clearly introduced and there is a logical progression of tasks building to the final activity. The use of question and answer sessions provokes thought and consolidates knowledge. The pupils respond well to the popular extra-curricular programme and enjoy team and individual success at local and county levels in sports such as rugby, football, netball and athletics.
164. The rate of learning in Year 11 physical education GCSE practical lessons is unsatisfactory when a minority of pupils' disruptive behaviour is not successfully challenged and as a result other pupils' progress slows. Year 11 theoretical work has a strong emphasis on practising examination questions. This is effective but the pupils lack a wider range of experience to stimulate skills such as research and extended writing. This is being addressed in Year 10 although homework assignments are not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Teaching time is shortened in a significant number of lessons because pupils are late to arrive. As a result the final activity is rushed and skills are not successfully consolidated. Non-participants are not fully involved in the learning process of the lesson.
165. New leadership is already having a beneficial impact on the department and is building on the positive initiatives from previous years. Assessment procedures have improved but still do not give a sharp focus on what the pupils can do and what they need to do to improve further. A new development plan should link to school initiatives focusing on formal monitoring of teaching that ensures improvements in consistency of teaching, agreement on standards linked to National Curriculum levels and a greater contribution to the development of cross-curricular initiatives such as numeracy and citizenship. There is a better balance and progression of activities for all pupils but boys are not taught dance in Year 9.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the quality of provision for religious education is **very good**.

Strengths

- The teaching in all years challenges pupils of all abilities
- The quality of the core provision in Years 10 and 11
- The assessment procedures enabling pupils to improve their work
- The very good contribution the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Areas for improvement

- The opportunity to experience places of worship and members of different faith communities

- Reporting to parents needs to make clear what pupils can do and how they can improve

166. GCSE results were just above average in 2001 and not quite as good as the above average previous year. In 2002 results were average when compared to the national average of 2001 but whereas girls were well above that average boys were well below that average and underachieved. An above average proportion of the year group entered for the subject in 2002.
167. In Year 9 the overall attainment of pupils is above the expectations of the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus and also above average in Year 11. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. There are many opportunities to consider the existence of God. Moral issues are discussed and the pupils develop socially as they learn to accept these are very complex issues with no clear answers. Cultural development is through the study of aspects of world religions. In a Year 10 lesson on a poverty cloth pupils consider the impact art can make and how the culture and the faith of the artist influences the way the picture is depicted. At present there is no first-hand experience of non-Christian faiths. A variety of teaching and learning strategies provide appropriate challenge for all abilities ensuring good gains in knowledge and understanding as in a Year 9 lesson on Hinduism when pupils learn to see God expressed in many ways. Achievement and progress are good in all years, including for pupils with special educational needs.
168. Teaching overall is very good. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and manage pupils well. Work is carefully planned and teachers have high expectations for every pupil. The emphasis on oral and paired work allows pupils to participate fully in lessons. The presence of learning support assistants help those with special educational needs succeed. The encouraging atmosphere and good relationships between teachers and pupils make the vast majority of pupils eager to learn and the pace of learning very good. Conclusions to lessons help to reinforce the learning which has taken place.
169. Most pupils take a pride in their work and enjoy their lessons. In Year 11 core lessons pupils in participating fully made informed responses to contemporary issues such as abortion. The very good assessment procedures ensure pupils know exactly what it is they need to do to improve their work but this is not reflected well enough in the reports to parents. The use of homework is very good.
170. The subject is very well led and teachers work collaboratively, sharing best practice with a shared commitment to improve. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Assessment procedures are now more consistent and informative. The use of tasks which challenge pupils of all levels of attainment is now well established and supported by good resources and very good accommodation.