

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST EDMUND'S CE GIRLS' SCHOOL**

Laverstock, Salisbury

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126468

Headteacher: Mrs J Goodall

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Greenfield  
7070

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 249260

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Modern (non-selective)
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Female
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Jones
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7070	Mrs J Greenfield	Registered inspector	Citizenship	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9189	Mr J Horwood	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?
20709	Mr D MacIldowie	Team inspector	English Drama	
30553	Mr R Fuller	Team inspector	Mathematics	
30433	Dr C Corp	Team inspector	Science	
15406	Mrs J Adey	Team inspector	Art	
4607	Mr D Ward	Team inspector	Design and technology	
30743	Mr N Cowell	Team inspector	Geography	
23016	Mr T Morrison	Team inspector	History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18032	Mrs I Randall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
4617	Mrs R Fox	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
24026	Mrs C Holland	Team inspector	Music	
4647	Mrs J Evans	Team inspector	Physical education	
4372	Mr R Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education	
20622	Ms A Sydney	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Edmund's CE Girls' School is a voluntary controlled secondary modern school, catering for girls between the ages of 11 and 16. The school, which is smaller than most other secondary schools, has 798 pupils on roll and is a popular school. As a secondary modern school, it admits pupils who have not passed the selection tests for grammar school education and an increasing number who elect not to take the tests. Pupils' attainment on entry is close to the average. The school has fewer of the highest attaining pupils. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds, providing a balanced mix. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The small proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritages are mainly White/Black Caribbean, White/Black African, Bangladeshi and Chinese. A lower proportion than average has English as an additional language: two pupils are in the early stages of learning English. There are seven pupils from Traveller families. The school has provision for up to six pupils with specific learning difficulties. This provision is part of the wider special needs provision in the school, which is committed to an inclusive approach. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Twelve pupils have a statement of special educational need, which as a proportion of the school population is broadly average. The range of special needs includes specific and moderate learning difficulties, communication, behavioural and physical difficulties, hearing impairment and autism. The school is a Specialist Sports College and has gained a number of awards, including a School Achievement Award in 2003, SportsMark Gold and Investor in People and has been elected a member of the Specialist Schools Trust's *Most Improved Schools Club*.

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

St Edmund's CE Girls' School is a very good school. Pupils achieve well and sometimes very well, and standards overall are above average. Under the very good leadership of the headteacher, the school promotes an ethos in which all pupils are valued and given the confidence to succeed. Excellent attitudes to work, together with the very good teaching, enable pupils to make very good progress. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards are above average at both key stages and are well above average in English, science and geography.
- Pupils are achieving well, as the very good quality of the teaching has a strong impact on their learning and the standards they attain.
- The school's ethos and the very good provision for pupils' personal care, together with excellent provision for their moral and social development, ensure that attitudes and relationships are excellent.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and provides a clear sense of direction to school improvement.
- The very good quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils, especially the extra-curricular and enrichment activities, enhance their personal development very well.
- The very good links and relationships with the community and partner schools through its Sports College status contribute significantly to pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

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

- Assessment information is not always used effectively enough to monitor progress and inform curriculum planning, and parents are not given enough information about their child's progress.
- Some of the accommodation, especially in science, art, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and music, has an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning.
- There are insufficient learning resources to support pupils with special educational needs and in geography, history, ICT and music.

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



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in May 1997. Standards are much higher and the quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably. Changes in leadership have led to the establishment of a much clearer educational direction for the school. The provision for, and use of funding to support, pupils with special educational needs are more effective. The roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the pastoral care and guidance of pupils have been clarified. Attendance levels are well above average. Better provision is made for higher attaining pupils and the school's links with parents are improving. Timetable changes have ensured that learning is more systematic, although further work is required to reduce the number of classes taught by more than one teacher. The school has shown that it has a very good capacity to improve.

## 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	B	C	B	B

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

The school does well for its pupils by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Since the last inspection, standards have risen at a faster rate than the national trend by the age of 14 and in line with the national trend by the age of 16. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, the results were well above the national average in English and science and in line with the average in mathematics. When compared with similar non-selective schools the results were well above average overall and very high in English. Overall, pupils' current work confirms this positive picture and standards are well above average in English, science and geography; above average in design and technology, history, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education; and in line with the average in the remaining subjects. Overall, most pupils are achieving well. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the results were above the national average overall and when compared with similar schools. The best results in 2002 were in English, science, design and technology, French, geography, music and media studies, although in almost all subjects the results were above the national figures. The results were weakest in business studies and history, although still in line with the average, and in human physiology, which were below average. Pupils are achieving well in Years 10 and 11 and their attainment by the end of Year 11 is well above national expectations in English, science, design and technology, geography, French and music and above expectations in all the remaining subjects other than mathematics and art and design where they are in line with the standards found nationally. Most pupils are achieving well and in some subjects very well. The school exceeded its targets in 2002.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Excellent.</b> Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school and take part in the many activities available to them with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are happy and keen to learn in lessons, in which they participate fully.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Very good.</b> Only very small numbers present behaviour below the high standards expected by the school and this is well managed. Whilst the number of fixed term exclusions is relatively high, this is a reflection of the high standards expected by the school.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Excellent.</b> Pupils are friendly, confident and polite. Relationships with each other and with all adults in school are very good. There are excellent opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and to take on personal responsibilities, which they do with pride and commitment.
Attendance	<b>Very good.</b> Attendance is well above the national average, with unauthorised absence below the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching throughout the school is mostly very good and is one of the main reasons why pupils make such good progress and achieve well. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Only one lesson was less than satisfactory. The teaching is very good in English and science and good in mathematics. In nearly all subjects, there are many examples of very good and sometimes excellent teaching. The overall quality of teaching in all subjects is never less than good, although not all teachers are as confident in using ICT to support subject teaching. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well in the main. Teachers use their subject expertise well to plan lessons that include a variety of activities to interest and challenge the pupils. As a result, most pupils learn very well and make good progress. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall and is particularly effective when they are withdrawn for more focused support or receive additional help in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn and apply themselves to their work very well, maintaining very good concentration throughout.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Very good.</b> The curriculum provides a broad range of opportunities for pupils and meets their needs very well. The range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities is extensive, especially in physical education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Very good.</b> The identification of needs and planning are thorough and very effective. Pupils receive very good support, which enables them to make good progress overall.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The small numbers of pupils learning English as an additional language are making good progress, but the two pupils in the early stages of English fluency do not get enough support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	<b>Very good.</b> The provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent, contributing significantly to their personal development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and it is satisfactory for their cultural development.
How well the school cares	<b>Very good.</b> The pastoral systems ensure that pupils are well known to

for its pupils	staff. Procedures for supporting pupils are effective. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall but are not used consistently.
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The lack of provision for food technology is a weakness in the curriculum and in modern foreign languages and science, too many classes are taught by more than one teacher. Relationships and links with other schools and the community are very good. Careers education and guidance are very good. The school does not do enough to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society. The school's partnership with parents is good and has improved since the last inspection.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Good.</b> The headteacher's very effective leadership, with the good support of senior staff and governors, has successfully consolidated an ethos in which all pupils are valued and expected to work hard and achieve well. Many middle managers lead their departments well, some doing so very well, but there is inconsistency across the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Good.</b> The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well in the main although it does not comply fully with all statutory requirements. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and make a positive contribution to strategic leadership and management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Good.</b> The headteacher and senior managers are active in evaluating the school's performance and there is a strong commitment to further improvement. They use performance data well to monitor progress. Some middle managers do not monitor or evaluate progress rigorously enough, although there are a number of examples of effective practice.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good.</b> The school uses its resources well to meet its priorities, although funding is not linked closely enough to the school improvement plan. Every effort is made to apply best value principles in spending and management decisions.

Staff are well qualified and experienced to meet the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, with good accommodation in some areas but weaknesses in science, art and design, design and technology, ICT and music. Resources for learning are unsatisfactory overall, and in some subjects affected by the weaknesses in the accommodation. The learning resource centre is very good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school's high expectations and the good progress their children make.</li> <li>• The good standards of teaching.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have any problems or concerns.</li> <li>• The way the school helps pupils to become more mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about the progress their children are making.</li> <li>• Better consistency in the arrangements for setting homework.</li> <li>• Closer working relationships between the school and parents.</li> <li>• A wider range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views of the parents. Inspectors consider that the range of activities outside of lessons is very good although improvement could be made in the provision of 'non-sport' activities. The school's procedures for working with parents are comparable to those of other schools but it is an area the school is trying to develop further. The homework procedures are appropriate but not always applied uniformly across subject areas. Parents receive good information about the work of the school, but insufficient information about their child's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards overall are above average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11, although not consistently in all subjects. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. In a few subjects, for example English, science and geography, pupils achieve very well. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the GCSE examinations have improved since its last inspection. The improving trend in the GCSE examination results has been at a similar rate to that found nationally.

2. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is close to the average. Based on their performance in the national tests at the age of 11, pupils' attainment is below average. On entry in 2002, standards in English were broadly average but were below average in science and well below average in mathematics. However, pupils' scores on the standardised tests, which they take soon after they arrive in the school in Year 7, indicate that pupils' attainment is closer to the average. Although the intake into Year 7 spans the full range of attainment, there are far fewer higher attaining pupils than is usually found in most secondary schools. Because of the selective system in the area, about 30 per cent of the highest attaining pupils transfer to the local grammar school. A few, however, choose not to take the selection tests for a grammar school education, preferring to transfer to St Edmund's.

3. The school does well for its pupils by the age of 14. Since 1998, the school's overall results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have been at least in line with the national average and more often better than this. For the last two years, they have been well above the national figures. The rate of improvement in the school's performance over the past five years has been at a faster rate than the national trend. In 2002, the results were well above the national average in English and science, and in line with the average in mathematics. In English and science, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 5 or above and higher Level 6 or above was also well above the national averages. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 or above was above average but in line with the average at Level 6 or above. In relation to their earlier attainment in the national tests at the age of 11, pupils achieved very well, indicating that they made very good progress during Years 7 to 9. When the results are compared with other similar non-selective schools, the school's performance in 2002 was well above average overall and very high in English. The results were well above average in science and above average in mathematics. By the end of Year 9, standards of pupils' current work are well above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. In all three subjects, pupils are achieving very well when account is taken of their baseline on entry to the school in Year 7.

4. In the other subjects formally assessed at the end of Year 9 in 2002, teachers judged the overall attainment of pupils as being above the national average in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, and in line with the averages in information and communication technology (ICT) and modern foreign languages. For the most part, these assessments are confirmed by pupils' current work. However, from the evidence available, inspectors judge that these assessments underestimate pupils' attainment in modern foreign languages and overestimate their attainment in art and design. By the age of 14, standards are well above average in geography; above average in design and technology, history, French, music, physical education and religious education; and average in art and design, German, ICT and drama. There is insufficient evidence to make clear judgements about pupils' attainment in citizenship. During Years 7 - 9, pupils make good progress overall in most subjects and achieve well when account is taken of their earlier attainment. In English, science and geography, they achieve very well.

5. In 2002, the GCSE examination results and in the GNVQ art and design course were above the national averages overall. They were well above average for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A\*-C, above average at one or more grades A\*-G and average at five or more grades A\*-G. When the school's performance is compared with similar schools, the results were above average overall. Pupils are achieving as expected when account is taken of their earlier performance in the national tests at the end of Year 9. Since 1998, the school's results have improved in line with the trend found nationally. The school exceeded the targets it set for itself in 2002.

6. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were well above the national average in English, both in language and literature, and in science, and were slightly above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, the results were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Pupils achieved very well in English and science when account is taken of their earlier attainment, but did less well than expected in mathematics. In other subjects, the results were significantly above the national averages in design and technology, French, geography, music and media studies, and above the national averages in art and design, drama, German, Spanish, statistics, physical education and religious education. The results were close to the average in business studies and history, and below average in human physiology.

7. Key skills qualifications in ICT, communication and application of number are offered as options in Year 11 to a small group of pupils who can elect to be entered for the test in any of the three areas. In 2002, all those entered passed at level 2. The larger number of pupils entered at level 2 in January 2003 were less successful in the formal test. The greatest success was in communication, with almost all passing the written test, whilst two-thirds of the ICT entrants and just over half of those attempting application of number were successful.

8. The work seen in lessons and in pupils' work broadly reflects the picture shown by the examination results and is above average overall. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above the national expectation in English, science, geography, French and music; above average in design and technology, history, ICT, German, physical education, religious education and drama; and in line with expectations in mathematics and art and design. Standards in art and design in Year 11 this year are not as high as those achieved in the GCSE examination in 2002 because of the capability of the group. However, pupils in Year 10 are attaining above average standards and are on course to attain higher standards next year. In history, standards are better than the results in 2002 would suggest, indicating a return to the above average GCSE results of the previous two years. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make good progress and in most subjects achieve well. In a few, for example English, science, geography and music, they achieve very well.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Many of these pupils leave the school with five GCSE passes. Some pupils with a statement of special educational need no longer require the same level of provision as they move up the school. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress throughout the school, with the majority attaining similar standards to their peers. There are, however, isolated cases of pupils who have not been identified and who struggle with comprehension, tenses, punctuation and higher writing skills. Consequently, they do not achieve as well as they might.

10. St Edmund's is an inclusive school. The very small number of settled travellers pupils and children looked after by the local authority are well supported and making satisfactory progress and achieving as expected. There are no refugee pupils. There is no evidence of any race inequality but there is insufficient monitoring of the achievement of different groups of pupils on a systematic basis.

11. Where gifted and talented pupils have been identified by departments and are challenged, they make good progress. In English and geography, they make very good progress. Where there has been no identification, their progress is satisfactory. The last inspection report judged that higher attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged. This is still the case in art and design, mathematics, history and ICT. Some departments, for example physical education, provide enrichment and extension work. The school's draft policy for able and talented pupils places more emphasis on providing more challenging work within lessons. Progress in implementing the policy has been slow since the last inspection but staff have now been identified to take a lead on this issue.

12. Standards of literacy in subjects across the curriculum are above average. Pupils enter readily into class discussions in science and religious education, and they develop good negotiating skills in drama. They listen particularly well in physical education, where they also observe and analyse movement, using technical language with confidence. In ICT, pupils are articulate when explaining the purpose of a task and what they have done, although some PowerPoint presentations are textually inaccurate. Although not expected to write extensively in mathematics, they are able to make clear and coherent statements to support their solutions. In those subjects where written assignments are regularly set, such as geography and history, standards are above average.

13. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils join the school with relatively undeveloped numeracy skills but this aspect of their work is given appropriate emphasis in mathematics lessons. In Year 7, pupils make very good progress from the outset, developing understanding and confidence when working with number. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very well structured support, which enables them to participate in class debate and to experience success when working independently. Pupils progress very well and are at the expected standard by the end of Year 9. Pupils are good at mental arithmetic and can describe steps in solving problems logically. Data handling techniques are understood and are used well in science and in geography. In design and technology, pupils show good understanding of the metric system when measuring and in applications to isometric drawings, but the development of their numeracy skills is not always evident in lessons.

14. The school is very successful in engendering a positive ethos and work ethic which gives pupils a great deal of confidence in their ability to succeed and do well. The pupils' excellent attitudes to work, together with the very good quality of most of the teaching, are very strong contributors to the standards pupils achieve when account is taken of their starting points at the beginning of Year 7. The high quality of relationships between pupils themselves and with staff enables them to work very well together to enhance their learning. Over the past two years, the high turnover of staff in modern foreign languages and mathematics has affected pupils' learning and progress in these subjects. Although staffing has improved in modern foreign languages, the school has difficulty in recruiting specialist mathematicians. In history, there is insufficient specialist teaching in Years 7 - 9, which affects pupils' historical experience.

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

15. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are excellent, fully reflecting the excellent ethos of the school. Pupils arrive at school in an orderly manner although the large number of pupils arriving by bus for the three schools on the site does lead to congestion at the front of the school. All pupils like school and they show considerable enthusiasm throughout the day. Pupils have excellent manners towards each other, to visitors and to staff, both in lessons and around the school. The layout of the school requires pupils to move between the numerous buildings but they move in an orderly and purposeful manner, again a reflection of their motivation.

16. Attendance of pupils at school is very good: in 2001/2002, it was well above the national average and unauthorised absence was below average. Punctuality at the start of the day is sometimes affected by the late arrival of the school buses but punctuality at lessons is very good.

17. The overall standard of behaviour is very good. Around the school, including during the short breaks and lunchtime, behaviour was always very good, with no evidence of any type of oppressive behaviour. In lessons behaviour is rarely less than satisfactory and in most lessons it is far better than this. Parents and pupils identify that occasional bullying or inappropriate behaviour does occur but consider that the school deals with it well. The area of most concern relates to behaviour on the buses outside of the school but even here the school works with the other schools to improve the situation. In the last academic year, there was one permanent and 36 fixed term exclusions; the majority of these were for fighting or name calling. Although the number of exclusions is relatively high, this is a reflection of the high standards of behaviour expected by the school and the implementation of the behaviour policy, which is clearly effective within the school.

18. The ethos within the school, and the responsibilities accepted by the pupils, result in a school environment where mutual respect and trust exists, with minimal and discreet supervision carried out only to ensure safety. All activities are adequately supervised within the school, as are the arrival and departure procedures at the school entrances and bus stops. Pupils are allowed in their tutor bases throughout the day without supervision and the condition of the rooms clearly shows that they treat them with respect. Whilst staff oversee general safety and security, the pupils themselves supervise most lunchtime activities.

19. Pupils form very good relationships within the school. The school ethos encourages positive relationships; the tutor periods and the effective pastoral provision promote these from an early stage. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility are excellent and much of the success of the personal development policy is due to the school's determination that all pupils will have some responsibility, within the school, of which they can be proud. Whilst there are the normal responsibilities available within class, to support the teachers and tutors, it is the direct responsibilities given to pupils that

are such a strength within the school. Positions of head girl and senior prefects are the most responsible positions and these are strongly contested each year, with pupils having to be nominated and selected democratically: the number of pupils wanting to carry out these duties is exceptional. The school ensures that responsibilities are shared throughout the school, identifying a large number of prefects and senior girls as well as sports captains and other roles with specific responsibilities. There is a very active school council, allowing pupils to make a significant contribution to the running of the school.

20. A significant proportion of the pupils joins in the numerous after school activities. These are mainly focused on sports but include an increasing number of other opportunities, both academic and recreational. There are also many opportunities for activities at lunchtime, with pupils having good access to facilities.

21. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the life of the school. Most of their teaching, apart from short periods of individual support, takes place alongside their peers. Relationships between pupils with special educational needs and their peers are good, and they are able to work together without significant tension or aggression. This applies also to pupils with English as an additional language.

22. The school has made very good progress with all aspects of attitudes, behaviour and attendance, having improved on what was already a strong situation at the time of the last inspection. Although not as overt as in some other voluntary controlled schools, an adherence to Christian principles underpins its ethos and approach.

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

23. The quality of teaching as a whole is very good and is one of the main reasons why pupils make such good progress and achieve well. There is very little difference in the teaching and learning in Years 7 - 9 and in Years 10 and 11. As pupils in Year 11 were on study leave during the inspection, only a small number of lessons were seen with this year group. Judgements have been based on these lessons and a comprehensive scrutiny of their current and past work. There has been a considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, with a much higher proportion of good and very good teaching and an elimination of almost all the unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching is satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of lessons; over a third is good and around a half is very good and sometimes excellent. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, at less than one per cent, is very small and represents a significant reduction since the last inspection when it was slightly over 10 per cent. In the one poor lesson, inadequate planning and lack of clarity in the teacher's explanations resulted in confusion amongst pupils, who rapidly lost interest. Since its last inspection, the school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning and, in this regard, the school has been very successful. Senior managers have tackled underperformance firmly.

24. The teaching in English, science, geography, physical education and religious education is mostly very good, as is the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. In the remaining subjects, the teaching is mostly good, with numerous examples of very good and occasionally excellent teaching in most subjects. The teaching of ICT in the discrete lessons in Year 7 - 9 is generally good, with examples of very good teaching in some lessons. In Year 10 and 11, however, the teaching of ICT through individual subjects is only satisfactory, as not all subjects develop or use pupils' ICT capability sufficiently to enhance their learning. However, some subjects, including art and design, music and textiles, do so well. There is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the teaching of personal, social and health education or citizenship as no specific lessons occurred during the inspection. However, the outcomes, in terms of pupils' very positive attitudes and response, their active involvement in the daily life of the school and the excellent quality of the relationships, indicate that teaching and learning in these areas are likely to be as successful as in other areas.

25. In lessons, pupils co-operate extremely well with one another and are very keen to learn. They maintain very good concentration throughout and apply themselves to their work very well. They contribute effectively in nearly all lessons. In most subjects, there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills through skilful and often challenging use of questioning and an emphasis on the correct use of subject vocabulary and key words. Some particularly effective and perceptive questioning occurs at times in geography, history, ICT, physical education and religious education. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to respond at length and use a range of methods to engage them fully in their learning. Pupils rise to the challenges and work productively in lessons, making good use of the time available. Their capacity to

think and learn for themselves, as well as their ability to reflect on and evaluate their own work, is developing well in many subjects, showing an improvement since the last inspection.

26. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy is generally good and there are numerous examples across the curriculum of the reinforcement of key words and the use of writing frameworks to enhance learning. The teaching of the skills of numeracy is not as consistent as those for literacy and overall it is satisfactory. They are developed well in mathematics and also in science, art and geography, and satisfactorily in modern foreign languages. In design and technology lessons, teachers placed less emphasis than is usually found on teaching and reinforcing pupils' numeracy skills.

27. Most teachers' subject knowledge is good and in many subjects very good, which enables teachers to provide pupils with a range of interesting and, in many cases, challenging, tasks and activities to keep them motivated and to ensure that learning is effective. Subject knowledge is particularly strong in English, science, geography, French, German, music, physical education and religious education. The more effective teachers use their expertise to insist on high standards, encouraging pupils to work hard in lessons. In addition, teachers prepare pupils very well for the demands of national tests and GCSE examinations, particularly in English, geography and modern foreign languages. There are some weaknesses in subject expertise in a few subjects which affects the quality of pupils' learning. In history, the use of non-specialist teachers in Years 7 - 9 limits the historical experience of pupils. In ICT, some teachers' lack of skills and confidence, as well as insufficient computers, reduce the opportunities provided for pupils to apply their ICT skills to support learning in different subjects. In mathematics, the use of supply teachers, some of whom are not subject specialists, to cover staff shortages affects the learning of some groups of pupils over time, although the progress they make in individual lessons is generally satisfactory.

28. Most lessons are very carefully planned with clear purposes to ensure that pupils' learning is developed in a systematic way. There are examples of very good planning in English, drama, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education. In the best lessons, careful planning ensures that the learning develops stage by stage through a series of linked and often varied activities. Most teachers share the objectives of the lesson with their classes so that they know what the lesson is about. Many lessons start with a sharply focused whole-class introduction that builds on previous learning and checks and reinforces what pupils have learned in earlier lessons. Good examples of this occur in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. There are many instances of effective three-part lessons, in line with the guidance of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy. These sessions end with a review of what has been learned in the lesson and usually set a context for the next. Such strategies are successful in consolidating pupils' learning.

29. Most teachers use a wide variety of effective teaching methods to interest and motivate their pupils. Nearly all lessons include an appropriate balance between whole-class activities, individual, pair and group work. Pupils work very well in pair and group work, and listen attentively to the views of others. Explanations by teachers are usually clear and well focused. The majority have very high expectations of pupils' response and the content of written work. Lessons are generally brisk and instil a clear sense of purpose, which leads to effective learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers manage and organise their pupils very well. Through their ability to involve all pupils in the lesson and encouraging a co-operative approach, there is a strong sense, throughout the school, of teachers being in control of their classes through the quality of the teaching and learning, rather than needing to apply any overt behaviour management strategies. Very occasionally, with some lower attaining groups, when explanations and the purpose of the work are unclear, pupils do not respond at the high level found in most other lessons, affecting their learning. A range of suitable resources is used well in most subjects. However, the lack of sufficient resources in supporting pupils with special educational needs and in some subjects, including geography, history and music, affects pupils' learning. In addition, the use of ICT in some subjects is constrained by the lack of sufficient resources and teachers' confidence.

30. The school meets the needs of all its pupils well in the main. A small number of pupils with specific learning difficulties are withdrawn from lessons for structured tuition, either individually or in very small groups. Teaching in these sessions is very good due to very good planning and individualised programmes of work. Pupils make very good progress because of this and their excellent attitudes to work. At present, there is a vacancy for a specialist teacher for specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The teaching assistant, who currently takes these classes very competently, is completing specialist training. In mainstream lessons, the best progress is made where pupils with special educational needs have been identified in the



lesson planning and where they have a teaching assistant to support them. In the best lessons, the teacher and teaching assistant work effectively together to draw attention to new vocabulary, provide writing frames or word banks, encourage a range of methods for recording work, and use a variety of visual aids and lively activities for the pupils to participate in.

31. Teaching assistants are attached to most subject departments and are used particularly effectively to support learning in English, science, art and design and history. Funding enables pupils with a statement of special educational need to have a teaching assistant in class with them for several lessons each week. They give very good, sensitive support and promote independence. Some are highly qualified, whilst others have had appropriate training. The funding for special needs does not enable all departments to have a teaching assistant, and they are not in every class. Information technology is not exploited sufficiently to help pupils at these times. Some teachers, for example in humanities, have started to work successfully with their teaching assistants to produce adapted teaching materials to support pupils and this is an area identified for development across the school. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively to pupils with special educational needs.

32. Support for two early users of English has been withdrawn by the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service, although it is recognised that these pupils still have needs. Both pupils' understanding of English is improving fast with total immersion in lessons. However, most staff do not identify the small number of pupils with developing skills in English in their lesson planning and this affects the rate of progress of these pupils.

33. Teachers give good praise and encouragement to pupils to help them learn and think more deeply. They assess pupils' work and progress in lessons, clarifying misunderstandings and giving constructive feedback on what they need to do to improve. However, the quality and use of assessment are not as strong as other aspects of teaching. For example, assessment in history is not used effectively enough to influence curricular planning as it is insufficiently rigorous; procedures in modern foreign languages are inconsistent, not sharp enough in religious education and require further development in music and physical education; and procedures to assess pupils' ICT capability within subjects have yet to be established. The marking of pupils' work is regular in most subjects and, at its best, provides positive and constructive feedback, identifies clearly what pupils need to do to improve, and gives clear and consistent information on their attainment and progress. However, these attributes are not a consistent feature of some marking, either within departments or across subjects. In several subjects, including English, science, art and design and history, the marking does not give sufficient help to pupils on what they need to do to improve. In mathematics, there is an absence of marking in some pupils' books, particularly where they are taught by supply or temporary teachers. Homework is used well to reinforce, extend and enhance class work. Inspectors found little evidence to support the concerns of a small number of parents that the setting of homework across the school is inconsistent. The headteacher is aware that a small number of teachers do not always follow the prescribed timetable and has taken appropriate steps to tackle the situation.

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

34. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has developed with the acquisition of sports college status and the introduction of vocational courses of study. These have improved the provision for physical education and extended the school's role within the local community. Overall, the curriculum provides a very broad range of opportunities for pupils, meeting their interests, aptitudes and particular needs.

35. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught throughout the school. Teaching time is above that recommended for pupils in Years 7 - 9, and the curriculum is enhanced by the provision of drama, and the opportunity to study an additional modern foreign language. The Key Stage 3 National Strategy has been implemented effectively across the school. In addition to the core and foundation subjects offered in Years 10 - 11, pupils make guided choices from the enhanced provision offered that includes Spanish, business studies, drama, dance, media studies, the Junior Sports Leader Award, and GNVQ courses in art and design, leisure and tourism, and health and social care. In addition, key skills qualifications in ICT, communication and application of number are offered as options in Year 11 to a small group of pupils who can elect to be entered for the test in any of the three areas. The range of courses on offer is good, enabling the curriculum to be broad and suitably balanced. However, there

remains no provision for food technology, and only a small number of pupils choose to continue with an additional modern foreign language.

36. Several pupils with specific learning difficulties are correctly disapplied from modern foreign languages to allow them to have individual or small group lessons, and this is appropriate. There is a limited range of non-GCSE courses, such as a certificate of achievement, in Years 10 and 11 and the school has identified a number of girls who would benefit from an alternative modular course. Some pupils are able to take GCSE in their home language.

37. The governing body is closely involved and knowledgeable about the curriculum, as the curriculum committee meets regularly with members of the senior management team. The school is committed to high achievement, and is active in ensuring that the pupils have access to all the opportunities that it provides. A very small number of pupils do not follow the full curriculum in order to meet their particular needs. Although the school has made progress since the last inspection, some aspects of the organisation of the curriculum do not, as yet, ensure that learning for some pupils develops systematically. A significant number of modern foreign language classes are taught by more than one teacher, as are some science classes in Year 7. This impedes pupils' learning.

38. Overall provision for literacy is good. The school has a well established policy for developing literacy skills across the curriculum, and this is reflected in the consistent approach of most subject departments. Teachers encourage the correct use of subject-specific vocabulary through the display of key words and frequent references to them in lessons. There are good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in drama, science, history, modern foreign languages and religious education. Although teachers give pupils practice in reading and interpreting a range of written texts, there are few opportunities outside English and drama for them to read aloud. Original writing is encouraged in design and technology, where pupils create travel brochures to support their textile projects, and in history where they are sometimes expected to write poetry. A good range of writing is also required in science and geography. The quality of display and the encouragement of accuracy in spoken and written English are particularly strong in mathematics, geography, music and physical education. The development of numeracy is satisfactorily planned as an integral part of most subjects but the number and range of applications are limited. The planning for developing numeracy in ICT lessons is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work includes very few applications of numeracy and lacks adequate use of spreadsheets.

39. ICT is used more widely to help learning than at the time of the last inspection, and pupils are well prepared to do so by the thorough training that the department gives them in Years 7 to 9. The use of ICT is still uneven: there is good use in design and technology, art and music, but in other subjects, it depends too much on the actions of individual teachers. Pupils who have good ability to use ICT independently are, therefore, not being given full opportunities to do so.

40. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education, which is well planned and coherent, and contributes to the overall ethos of the school. It includes appropriate sex education, drugs education and careers guidance. There is thoughtful planning to ensure pupils are introduced to elements of sex and drugs education in ways suited to their ages and stages of development. Statutory requirements in respect of sex education are met. Personal, social and health education is taught as a discrete subject to all pupils, largely by tutors. It is enhanced by an annual cross-curricular day. Contributions by outside speakers, often specialists in their own fields, are relevant and informative, and contribute particularly well to raising pupils' awareness. The programme has a positive influence on the attitudes of pupils, particularly where their learning is helped by tutors committed to using a good variety of teaching aids and methods to stimulate interest and extend learning. The school's provision for citizenship, which is satisfactory, is taught through subjects of the curriculum and the personal, social and health education programme.

41. Careers education and guidance, organised through the personal, social and health education programme and tutor time, are very good. The well structured careers programme begins when Year 7 pupils are given an awareness raising activity. It develops each year so that pupils have very good information on which to base their curriculum choices for Years 10 and 11. Pupils take part in a well organised work experience programme during Year 10, with their learning supported by visits from local employers. Almost all pupils, and all who have special educational needs, take up the offer of a personal guidance interview with a careers adviser. There is a full programme of visits and speakers including

contacts with all of the local sixth form and training organisations. Pupils have good access to reference information through the good careers library, assisted by the services of a careers librarian.

42. The provision for extra-curricular activities, visits and study support is very good. The physical education department makes an outstanding contribution. There is an extensive range of recreational and sporting opportunities at lunchtime and after school and the award of Sportsmark Gold in 2002 recognises the excellent quality of this provision. Two-thirds of the school regularly take part in these activities and during the inspection, the school won both the National Basketball Final and the Under 17 Salisbury Area Schools' Athletics Championship. English, drama, music and the special educational needs department all make a very good contribution through a variety of workshops, clubs, performances, trips and competitions. The design and technology department produced the only 'all girls' team to enter the Model Car Racing at Silverstone. These opportunities extend and enhance pupils' experiences and their learning. Parents are particularly appreciative of the range of opportunities that is offered in 'Activities Week'. Parents note that many extra-curricular activities take place at the same time and the inspectors accept that choices have to be made. Limited free accommodation affects some lunchtime clubs and those pupils who rely on bus transport at the end of the day cannot always attend after school sessions.

43. Links with primary schools and other educational institutions have developed since the last inspection, and are now very good. Despite the high number of contributory primary schools, all are visited by the co-ordinator for Years 7 - 9, and successful efforts are made to welcome the pupils into the school. Many subject areas are developing curriculum links and support activities such as drama productions and workshops. The School Sports Co-ordinator programme has established strong links with local primary schools. In addition, a small group from a local school for pupils with severe learning difficulties comes into St Edmund's weekly for physical education. They are taught by Year 11 pupils who are following the Junior Sports Leadership Award. This is very successful and the Year 11 pupils show commitment, skill and confidence. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 studying health and social care attend Salisbury College, whilst the school provides some A-level teaching in physical education and design technology for the college's students.

44. Community links are very good, and have been strengthened by the school's sports college status. There are very well developed links with local organisations, and the school makes good use of its links with the college to enhance the range of learning opportunities for pupils. The school plays an active part in the local community through its involvement with local organisations and the local business community. For example, it works with a variety of governing bodies on the strategic development of the relevant sports, and also welcomes a wide range of organisations into the school. Pupils have a very clear idea of what it means to live and work in a community.

45. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school recognises the importance of these aspects and their impact on pupils' progress, attitudes and achievement and has plans to enhance further these important features of pupils' personal development. Since the last inspection, the school has a much greater awareness of the need to develop a systematic approach to pupils' development in these areas. There are several references to these aspects in the school's documentation, especially with regard to behaviour, equal opportunities and bullying. The personal, social and health education programme, co-ordinated and taught by form tutors, is an important vehicle for developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Whole-school planning for these aspects of pupils' personal development is in the early stages of development and the audit of departmental contributions has yet to be completed. However, a very well structured planning document recognises the issues to be tackled. This will enable the school to develop a more systematic and co-ordinated approach to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with a shared policy for the planning, teaching, and monitoring and evaluation. The religious education syllabus provides very good opportunities in these areas, and there are some valuable examples of opportunities for reflection and discussion of spiritual and moral issues.

46. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good overall. Assemblies take place twice each week, for each year group. The school does not provide pupils with a daily act of collective worship. Assemblies occasionally constitute worship and, although one assembly did provide a small opportunity for reflection, practice is inconsistent. Several points in the Christian year are celebrated such as Advent, Christmas and various lives of saints. Tutor time is not used to develop a structured programme, such as 'Thought for the week'. Consequently, the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met. There is

some evidence of planning in departments for spiritual development, but this is inconsistent and lacks structure. The personal, social and health education programme does not make any specific curriculum contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Teaching styles in some subjects provide clear opportunities for pupils to develop their attitudes, explore feelings and develop insights and self-awareness on a range of issues. Opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils occur in some subjects. For example, the religious education curriculum makes a very good contribution. Pupils are encouraged to consider and respond to questions about the meaning and purpose of life. In English, teachers increase pupils' understanding of literary texts and link some to religious themes, thus enabling pupils to express empathy and compassion for others in their writing. In music, pupils are encouraged to express themselves through their music and to explore its meaning and power. However, opportunities are missed in other subjects to enhance this aspect of pupils' personal development.

47. Provision for pupils' moral development is outstanding. Opportunities are targeted largely through the personal, social and health education programme. Topics such as attitudes to bullying, sex education, drugs awareness, globalisation and equal opportunities all provide a sound curriculum for discussion and the development of attitudes and values. Teaching styles, especially in music, English and religious education, allow pupils to express their views, explore moral dilemmas and form judgements. The school has clear expectations of pupils knowing right from wrong and pupils respond exceptionally well when they are corrected. The headteacher and staff are excellent role models for pupils. Assemblies contribute well in this area. Topics such as freedom of choice, forgiveness, citizenship and caring communities all provide opportunities to explore a range of moral principles and values. Several subjects contribute very well in providing opportunities for moral development. In religious education, pupils are able to respond to aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues. In physical education, there is a clear awareness of the importance of playing by the rules. Pupils respond extremely well to the sporting achievements of school teams. In English, pupils became increasingly aware of making moral judgements through consideration of literary texts and poetry. Several other subjects, such as modern languages, ICT, art and design, science, geography, history, music and religious education, all provide opportunities for pupils to develop sound moral attitudes and values.

48. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. Many opportunities are available for pupils to take responsibility and develop social understanding. The pastoral programme considers topics such as friendship, self esteem, life changes, rights and responsibilities, healthy environment, democracy and sex education, making a valuable contribution to developing attitudes and fostering independent thinking. In addition, lunchtime clubs and sporting activities all help to develop skills of social interaction. The school's council provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their communication skills and make important contributions to the life of the school. Work experience also provides significant opportunities for pupils to develop self-confidence and social skills. The prefect system enables many pupils to undertake additional responsibilities. Many pupils apply for the roles of head and deputy head girl. They submit applications and undergo interviews. There is a 'buddy' system where Year 9 pupils are involved in helping Year 7 pupils to settle into the life of the school. The recently introduced Citizenship Cabinet enables pupils throughout the school to be actively involved in community service. All these opportunities enable pupils to develop self-confidence. All subjects contribute towards pupils' social development. For example, pupils work extremely well together and many opportunities are provided for them to express their views in pair and group work and general discussion. In physical education, visits to other schools provide many opportunities for pupils to enhance their social skills and relationships.

49. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are several opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities that extend their cultural awareness. The curriculum provides some opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the variety of different cultures and traditions that exist in this country, and there are aspects of religious education that make a significant contribution, especially in terms of the study of different religions and the cultures that support them. Citizenship and the pastoral programme provide further opportunities. For example, topics such as respecting others, individual differences, tolerance and discrimination make some contribution. However, in all areas of the curriculum, positive planning to prepare pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain is under-developed. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. It is recognised by the school as an area for development. The wide range of well-supported trips and visits to theatres and museums, together with visits abroad all enhance this aspect of pupils' personal development. Some subjects make a significant contribution to cultural development, for example, the study of artists from other cultures in art and design.

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

50. The school provides very good care for its pupils. The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last inspection report. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The child protection policy is in place, fully meeting requirements and identifying the designated teacher for child protection, who is fully trained. Procedures for ensuring that staff are aware of issues and procedures are also very good. The school has a sound approach to health and safety and has recently issued a revised health and safety policy. Regular inspections are carried out throughout the school and governors are fully involved in these. A recent audit had identified some improvements that were required in the documentation but these have been addressed, as have all the health and safety concerns identified in the last inspection report. Procedures for risk assessments within the school are very good. The school carries out all equipment testing, fire drills and alarm testing as required. There is a well-equipped medical room and whilst the school does not have a full-time nurse, there are good first aid procedures with sufficient trained staff.

51. The pastoral support within the school is very strong, with a dedicated staff knowing the pupils well. Tutors, well led by the assistant headteacher and the key stage co-ordinators, provide very good support to the pupils. The tutor periods ensure that the tutor/pupil relationships are developed at an early stage, although during the inspection the length of these was sometimes reduced as the tutor was late arriving. A strength of the pastoral system is the fact that the two key stage co-ordinators share an office, which facilitates the sharing of information and good practice. Through the pastoral system, pupils are given good guidance on dealing with school life and making full benefit from it.

52. Pupils' personal development is monitored mainly through the direct contact of pupil and tutor and the reporting systems. The morning registration period allows daily contact between tutor and pupil, enabling relationships between them to develop as they move through the school. Pupils with specific learning needs are monitored closely by the learning support department.

53. The standard of care for pupils with special educational needs from staff in the learning support department is high. Staff work with commitment as a team to ensure the welfare and academic progress of all these pupils. The learning support co-ordinator has effective links with outside agencies and information from them is acted on through meetings with pastoral staff and the social inclusion co-ordinator. There is an efficient two-way flow of information between the learning support department and subject departments. Annual reviews of statements involve the pupil and parents. Pupils' individual education plans generally give good information on pupils' difficulties but lack strategies to assist teachers in providing more targeted support. The individual education plans are more helpful where subject staff contribute specific short-term targets for the pupils, for example in science. Teaching assistants keep good records for pupils with specific learning difficulties who are withdrawn from lessons and test their reading ages regularly.

54. Support for pupils with English as an additional language from within school occurs only where a pupil also has learning difficulties. External support by the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service for the two pupils in the early stages of learning English has been withdrawn, although there is recognition that these pupils still have needs. Not enough is being done to ensure that the needs of the small numbers of pupils in the various stages of learning English are adequately monitored and addressed.

55. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and are secure. Tutors call the register at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. The teachers also take registers in lessons. The school has a rewards system to encourage attendance: one being that good attendance is a requirement for the sought-after positions of head girl and senior prefects. Because the pupils like coming to school, there are no attendance problems and the most common reasons for pupils arriving late for school are the late arrival of buses. The school has opted, so far, to use the formal register as the record of individual attendance as this allows easy communication between the tutors and the administration staff. Analysis of attendance figures to support the rewards systems and to identify any trends and concerns is carried out weekly.

56. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school's ethos and the maturity of the pupils result in generally high levels of behaviour. The school has high expectations of behaviour, which sometimes results in pupils being disciplined for behaviour that other schools might accept as normal. The procedures are well known to staff and to pupils who are all supportive of the standards.

The procedures to prevent bullying are very clear and part of the school ethos: the lack of oppressive behaviour demonstrates the effectiveness of the policies. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported well by the pastoral system, the social inclusion co-ordinator, the Child and Family Service and the learning support department.

57. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall, with some areas of strength and other areas of weakness. The setting of targets for most pupils and the school's overall knowledge of the levels at which pupils are working are generally good. A new assessment policy, scheduled for introduction in September, is intended to produce a uniform system across all subjects and year groups, and to result in more meaningful information to parents as well as facilitating the analysis of data within the school. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' attainment are inconsistent in some subjects, for example history, ICT, modern foreign languages and religious education, whilst they are strong in many others, such as physical education and science. The outcomes of assessment are also used to a varying degree at present, with lack of systematic use of the data to inform curricular planning, especially for pupils with English as an additional language and those who are identified as gifted and talented. As a result of these inconsistencies, together with only one meeting and one report each year, parents receive insufficient meaningful information about the progress their child makes. Where departments have already introduced elements of the new policy, there are indications of more useful information becoming available for parents. As part of the new procedures, additional opportunities will become available for the information to be shared with parents. For example, a trial tutor/parents' meeting day is proposed for Year 7 parents which, if successful, will be extended to all parents. The marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent: many areas do not provide adequate comments on the work or what pupils need to do to improve it. Whilst the school policy is to ensure verbal comment on pupils' work is given as the main means of feedback, not enough is done to ensure that sufficient written comments are made on the work to help pupils at a later date, as well as to assist parents in supporting their child.

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

58. The partnership between parents and the school is good. A home/school agreement is in place and pupils make good use of their planners. The good partnership with parents is demonstrated by the many supportive comments made by parents when returning the questionnaires sent to them before the inspection. Most of the concerns are about areas discussed below.

59. Parents believe that the school has high expectations of the pupils, who all like the school, and is helping them to become mature and responsible. They consider that pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and that they would be comfortable in approaching the school with a question or about a problem. Parents would like to see improvements in the information they receive about progress, the amount of homework set, the closeness with which the school works with them and the range of extra-curricular activities provided. These were all considered during the inspection and inspectors consider that these are all answered within the earlier sections of the report or are currently being addressed adequately by the school.

60. Communications with parents are good. The school produces regular newsletters, called *St Edmund's Edit*, supported by letters on specific topics as required. All parents are sent a handbook for the lower and upper parts of the school containing good quality information. The school prospectus is well presented and informative, and fully meets statutory requirements. The governors' annual report to parents also meets requirements. The pupils' annual reports are broadly satisfactory, containing data and individual comments for all subjects other than ICT, although they differ considerably in their content. The format of the reports has been reviewed to ensure a more consistent presentation between subjects: the Year 11 reports recently produced show a marked improvement in presentation and content. Currently, most parents only have one annual report and one formal meeting with teachers each year, although parents can make special arrangements to visit the school if they have concerns. Inspectors consider that parents do not receive enough information about their child's progress on a sufficiently regular basis. As part of the improved assessment policy, and as a response to parents' concerns, the school is to try out a parent/tutor day for Year 7 parents and if this is successful to extend it to all parents.

61. There are good links between parents and the learning support department. Parents contribute to annual reviews for pupils with a statement and targets within individual education plans sometimes include

tasks for the parent and pupil to do at home. There is no translation service available for meetings with parents whose home language is not English and they must rely on a family member to translate.

62. Parents support their children well by ensuring high levels of attendance, encouraging homework, checking their daughters' planners and by supporting events in which their daughters participate. There is a very active and supportive 'Friends' group, although numbers participating are small. Other parents provide direct support as governors or helping in school, for example as mentors or supporting administration areas.

63. Links with parents have improved since the last inspection and parents now feel very welcome in school. Although the information about progress has improved, further development is still required.

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

64. Improving the quality of leadership and management at the highest level, communications and providing a clearer educational direction for the school were identified as key issues in the last inspection report. The appointment of a new headteacher brought new impetus and sharper direction to the work of the school. The current headteacher, who is the second headteacher appointed since the last inspection, is now in her second year.

65. The headteacher leads the school very well. She has a very clear view of how the school should develop and a clear commitment to attaining and maintaining high standards and to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are catered for effectively. There is recognition that all pupils are capable of achieving well. The headteacher's calm, unassuming but determined manner, which allows for a considered and reflective approach to school improvement, is consolidating an ethos within the school in which pupils are valued and given the confidence to do well and to attain high standards. This ensures that pupils try to do their best and is reflected in the standards they attain, very good levels of behaviour, excellent attitudes to work and the extremely positive relationships that they forge with one another. In every respect, the school is a very effective place for pupils to learn and develop.

66. The school's aims and values are well articulated in its mission statement and core objectives, and are widely shared with staff, pupils, governors and parents. The aims, which are comprehensive, place considerable emphasis on pupils' academic and personal development and preparing them for their future lives and careers, including contributing to their local communities. There is a clear commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for pupils to all the learning opportunities the school provides. The ethos of the school positively reflects these important values and aspirations in most of its day-to-day work. Weaknesses in the timetabling arrangements for science and modern foreign languages affect the provision for some groups in these subjects and the standards they attain.

67. The school is a very orderly community and day-to-day management is very good. The headteacher is ably supported in the management of the school by her deputy, together with the two assistant headteachers and the school's business manager, who form the school leadership group. Although some are relatively new in post, they work together well as a team, effectively contributing their own particular skills and expertise to improving school leadership and management. They undertake their roles and responsibilities with a sense of corporate purpose and a clear commitment to improving the quality of provision within the school. As a relatively new team, their impact on improving aspects of the school's work is developing but not yet fully established in all areas. For example, the deputy headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year, is aware of the need to improve the assessment arrangements and has already implemented a number of changes that are leading to greater consistency in the way that target-setting, assessment and reporting to parents are undertaken. These changes are necessary, but other areas such as improving the quality of marking, using assessment data more effectively, involving parents in target-setting, and increasing the amount of information given to parents about their child's progress remain urgent and important issues to be resolved.

68. The effectiveness of staff with leadership responsibilities for subjects varies from very good to satisfactory, and is good overall. Leadership is very good in English, science, physical education and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. In mathematics, art and design, design and technology, geography and music, subject leadership and management are good. They are satisfactory in the remaining subjects, although there are some weaknesses in the overall management of ICT across the curriculum. Through their membership of the school improvement group, middle managers contribute satisfactorily to the

smooth running of the school. The two key stage co-ordinators undertake their responsibilities well. Where leadership and management of subjects are most effective, there is a shared sense of purpose amongst staff and greater co-ordination and consistency of approach in areas such as planning for improvement and in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to raise standards further.

69. The governing body undertakes its role in the governance of the school well and plays an effective part in its strategic management. Governors are strongly committed to the school and are highly supportive of the headteacher, with whom they have forged a very good relationship. Through their committee structures, governors are closely involved in determining the school's priorities and its longer-term direction. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities well, but have not ensured that there is a daily act of collective worship or that all the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 are fully in place. Governors monitor and evaluate aspects of the work of the school, but the focus of their work is not sufficiently related to the school's priorities as shown in the school improvement plan.

70. The leadership and management of the learning support department are very good. There is a very thorough process for identifying pupils with special needs. Day-to-day organisation and staff deployment are very good. The co-ordinator has a strong commitment and clear view of the role of her department. The nominated governor for special educational needs is keen and well-informed. The school provides a good level of support despite a small budget for pupils with a statement.

71. One of the assistant headteachers takes a lead on matters relating to pupils with English as an additional language. There is no governor with a responsibility for this area, nor is there any additional funding coming into the school. The school does not monitor the progress of pupils with English as an additional language sufficiently.

72. There is good delegation to staff with management responsibilities. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the work of the school by senior managers are generally robust, in particular the quality of teaching and learning and the school's performance in external tests and examinations. Senior managers undertake a programme of departmental reviews and there are regular surveys of parents, pupils and staff. Line management systems between senior managers and middle managers are effective, enabling senior staff to monitor the work of subject teams on a regular basis and provide appropriate guidance and support as required. Middle managers vary in their effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating the work in their subject areas, including teaching and learning. Systems are very effective in English, science and physical education. Many subject leaders are better at monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance in tests and examinations than in teaching and learning, through regular classroom observations and the systematic scrutiny of pupils' work. Ensuring a more rigorous and systematic approach is an area for further development in some subjects, such as mathematics, history, art and design, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and religious education.

73. Senior managers and the governors are clear about the school's priorities. These priorities, which are relevant for the school's stage of development, are set out in the school improvement plan, which covers, in outline, a three-year programme. As a management tool, the current plan has some weaknesses. Timescales and success criteria are not sharp enough and there is no indication of how progress in implementing the priorities is to be monitored and evaluated. Also, the costs of implementing the priorities are not included in the plan. However, the school is taking appropriate action to implement its priorities. Departmental improvement plans take account of whole-school priorities and, in general, are much more detailed than the whole-school plan. These plans range from satisfactory to very good. There is a good commitment to improvement and a very good capacity to succeed.

74. Other than in mathematics, staffing across the school is good, with well qualified staff and a good balance of experience and gender. There has been high turnover of temporary teachers during the last two years. In modern foreign languages, this has been considerable, with adverse effects on pupils' learning. In mathematics, frequent staff changes, which parents have commented about, and some lack of specialist qualifications, have hampered attempts to improve teaching methods. In contrast, staffing in science is very good, with well qualified specialist teaching that is a school strength. In the humanities department, staffing for geography is very good but there are too few history specialists. The team of teaching assistants, who are attached to subject departments, are well qualified and effective. Staffing for special educational needs is now adequate to meet requirements of statements. Specialist teaching is provided for Traveller pupils.



75. Appraisal of staff performance and the quality of teaching are comprehensive but findings are not always used well enough to improve practice by effecting change. Roles and responsibilities of staff are now defined by satisfactory generic job descriptions, other than in ICT and religious education where work is underway on models to develop these more fully. The school benefits from links with initial teacher training institutions, including the Universities of Southampton and Bath. Sports College status has funded excellent specialist sports staffing, which has a positive effect across the school. Whole-school development requirements and individual staff needs guide staff training and induction well.

76. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory but there are considerable weaknesses. The school makes good use of its accommodation, but its quality and location have an adverse effect on the curriculum, especially in science, art and design, design and technology, ICT and music. Some of the accommodation in the main building, which includes the administration block, the hall and the dining area, and a three-storey classroom block, is good. The structure of these areas is sound and they are well maintained, although some stairways are showing the effects of age. Additional accommodation, controlled by the school, is housed within the adjacent Wyvern College, comprising mainly science laboratories but also one of the music rooms and the learning resource centre. The Wyvern College area is satisfactory in condition but results in science and music having dispersed accommodation. The science laboratories are in need of renovation and one laboratory is very small and another acts as a corridor. At the rear of the school, a large number of mobile classrooms of varying age and condition are linked by exposed walkways. Within the mobile classrooms, provision varies between poor and good depending on age and suitability. The total accommodation does not provide sufficient suitable space to teach certain aspects, such as food technology and other processes in design and technology, and the two art rooms are separated on different floors. The accommodation for music is poor, with the mobile allocated to music having a floor that is unable to support a piano. The school has several rooms allocated to ICT but none is of adequate size to accommodate a complete class.

77. Many parts of the school do not give access to pupils with physical disabilities although the school is willing and able to timetable lessons on the ground floor if necessary. The school has yet to prepare a plan to conform to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

78. The learning resource centre, which incorporates the library, provides a very effective service to staff and pupils. The full-time manager is well supported by a part-time assistant who has responsibility for the careers section. The main central area, which is very pleasant and welcoming, is well organised with topic areas and author zones and also contains a well-resourced careers library. There are five computers that are used by pupils for research. In a second room, a further 15 computers, with Internet access, are available to pupils outside lesson time and as a whole-class facility for lessons. The one disadvantage of the centre is its distance from the main school.

79. The resource centre is used for many whole-class activities, especially in English, science, geography, history and religious education. The centre is also able to produce sets of books for use by classes in their classrooms. The stock of books is relatively small but adequate; they are relevant, modern and in good condition. There is a selection of suitable software, videos and audiotapes. The centre is well used by pupils outside lessons, due, in part, to an effective initiative called 'The Collective'. This was devised and introduced by the centre manager, in collaboration with the English department, for pupils in Year 7, and has now been extended to Year 8, resulting in a greater use of the facilities. The resource centre has 15 trained pupil librarians, who are used well. A relevant development plan has been produced and has identified issues such as increasing the resources for personal, social and health education as well as further increasing the range of software.

80. Overall, the resources available to departments for teaching are unsatisfactory. There are, however, very good resources for physical education, including a fitness suite, computer facilities and a wide range of sports equipment. The resources are good in mathematics, with sufficient textbooks and visual aids. The resources in ICT are unsatisfactory; there are too few computers, resulting in pupils not being able to work independently in most lessons. The history and geography departments have insufficient computers, lack textbooks for the courses offered, and have to share televisions and video players. Resources for music are unsatisfactory, due, in part, to the fact that instruments need to be shared between two rooms that are in separate buildings, and the department lacks computers. The special education needs department is also insufficiently resourced with again a lack of computers and learning resources. Science and technology are

examples of the other departments that have resources that are just adequate, and would benefit from extra textbooks, software and the replacement of ageing equipment.

81. The school works very efficiently on a day-to-day basis and administrative arrangements are effective in supporting the work of the school. Administrative staff are clear about their responsibilities and carry them out in a positive and helpful manner. The school makes good use of new technologies for administrative purposes, record keeping, financial planning and management, and to support the school's analysis of data and the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment. The school manages its resources well. Financial planning is good, but it is insufficiently linked to the school's priorities in the school improvement plan. The system of allocating resources to subjects and other budget holders is closely linked to their departmental plans and is monitored appropriately. The funding received for pupils with special educational needs and from other funding sources, including the Standards Fund and as a specialist sports college, is used effectively. Financial procedures and controls are clear and carried out efficiently. The minor recommendations made in the recent audit report are being implemented. The governing body, through its finance committee, receives regular financial reports, which it monitors carefully, and maintains a strategic overview of the deployment of resources. The school seeks to obtain best value in its areas of expenditure and compares its performance against a range of local and national criteria. The school provides very good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

82. The school should:

- i. improve the use, accuracy and consistency of assessment in some subjects by:
  - marking pupils' work more diagnostically to help them improve;
  - using it more effectively to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and inform curricular planning;
  - using it rigorously to provide better support for pupils in the early stages of learning English and to ensure that pupils identified as gifted and talented are challenged further;
  - applying assessment criteria more effectively in assessing pupils' work at the end of Year 9 in modern foreign language and art and design; and
  - providing parents with more frequent and detailed reports about the progress their child is making.

*(Paragraphs: 9, 10, 11, 14, 32, 33, 54, 57, 60, 67, 71, 87, 96, 98, 104, 140, 153, 157 and 166)*

- ii. improve the accommodation, especially in science, art and design, design and technology, ICT and music as soon as circumstances permit; and

*(Paragraphs: 76, 107, 114, 128, 135, 150, 158 and 168)*

- iii. extend the range of learning resources, especially for supporting pupils with special educational needs and in geography, history, ICT and music.

*(Paragraphs: 27, 29, 80, 135, 141, 146, 150, 158 and 168)*

Other issues that the school should consider including in the action plan:

- improving the management and assessment of ICT across the school

*(Paragraphs: 33, 57, 68 and 151)*

- fully meeting statutory requirements with regard to:

- a daily act of collective worship;
- the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; and
- the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

*(Paragraphs: 46, 69 and 77)*

- preparing pupils more effectively for life in a multi-cultural society.

*(Paragraph: 49)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

122
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

66
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### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	8	51	40	19	0	1	0
Percentage	7	43	34	16	0	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Teaching was graded in 119 of the 122 lessons observed. The percentages add up to more than 100 per cent because of rounding up.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

Y7 – Y11
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Number of pupils on the school's roll	798
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	67

#### Special educational needs

Y7 – Y11
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Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	92

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils
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Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils
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Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	7.8
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National comparative data	1.2
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	0	157	157

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	131	118	125
	Total	131	118	125
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (94)	75 (83)	80 (83)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	57 (68)	47 (54)	46 (47)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	124	128	137
	Total	124	128	137
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (84)	83 (87)	88 (78)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (46)	57 (53)	60 (54)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	0	143	143

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	89	131	141
	Total	89	131	141
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	62 (55)	92 (88)	99 (92)
	National	50 (48)	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	41.8
	National	39.8

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

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

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

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

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
760	35	1
0	0	0
12	0	0
3	0	0
1	1	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
6	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)	47
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	399

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	23

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002/03
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	2,698,891
Total expenditure	2,729,198
Expenditure per pupil	3,420
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,947
Balance carried forward to next year	65,640



### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	29

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	798
Number of questionnaires returned	181

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	49	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	45	6	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	56	9	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	52	21	4	1
The teaching is good.	25	66	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	51	17	10	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	7	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	39	7	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	16	59	19	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	32	56	3	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	50	6	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	42	10	3	7

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- Standards are well above average and pupils make very good progress during Years 7 to 11.
- Teaching and relationships with pupils are very good.
- The programme of study is rich and varied.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well.

#### Areas for improvement

- Marking does not always give the pupils specific advice on how to improve.
- Limited access to ICT often prevents pupils from enhancing their work.

85. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were well above the national average in 2002, and very high compared with those for similar schools. The same pupils were in line with the national average in the mathematics test and well above average in the science test. Over time, standards have consistently been well above average. Because pupils enter the school with average prior attainment, these results indicate that they achieved very well during Years 7 to 9. Pupils' current work is average on entry into Year 7 but well above average by the end of Year 9, indicating that they make very good progress. The great majority of pupils are very articulate in spoken English and confidently use a range of vocabulary that is above expectation for their ages. They listen increasingly well to the teacher and to each other, and make good use of pair and group discussion when exploring new texts or planning oral presentations. Their responses to literature are frequently sensitive and perceptive, for example when considering the dilemma of an outcast woman in *The Welcome Table*. They confidently handle comparisons between texts from different centuries, such as the travel writing of Daniel Defoe and Bill Bryson. In an excerpt from *Viola's Diary*, the pupils captured the authentic register of Shakespeare's English. Their writing for different purposes and audiences is generally well above average in their ability to choose and sustain an appropriate style. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress with their basic skills, and through differentiated materials they are able to follow the same programme of literary study as the others, including *Macbeth* and a range of challenging poetry. In one Year 9 class in which most pupils had special educational needs, they managed to tease out the meaning of a West Indian poem that had initially seemed incomprehensible. This success resulted from very skilful teaching and their own determination. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language matches that of their peers. Standards of handwriting and presentation are generally very good. Although many pupils are competent in word processing, limited access to computers in lessons means that fewer pieces of work are enhanced with ICT than expected.

86. In 2002, standards in the GCSE examinations were well above the national average in English language and media studies, and very high in English literature. They were very high in all three subjects when compared with similar schools. The same pupils attained above average results in mathematics and science. Over time, pupils have attained similar standards in English language and literature and media studies, and there has been a steady and substantial increase in the proportion taking the literature examination. During the inspection, overall standards by the end of Year 11 were well above average. Higher attaining pupils with a particular talent for spoken English were able to entertain and enthral their fellow pupils throughout a lesson with excellent presentations about education in former years. In their commentaries on poetry and drama, most pupils are able to explore serious issues such as culture clashes and class prejudice with maturity, indicating that English is making a very valuable contribution to their personal development. They are also able to write critical analyses of the mass media, for example different newspapers' treatment of the same events. They achieve a high level of success in their original writing for a range of purposes.

87. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and in the majority of lessons, it was very good or excellent. Teachers are very enthusiastic

about English, and this is infectious. Classes have confidence in their teachers because they know both their subject and their pupils very well. Lessons are very well planned so that pupils can build on previous knowledge and skills. Pupils are keen to do well and make very good progress because teachers have very high expectations. Pupils quickly develop their understanding of unfamiliar and demanding texts through a variety of learning activities. In nearly all lessons, time is well used and pupils work at a very productive pace. Very well focused preparation for tests and examinations enables them to be tackled with confidence and success. Good teamwork with teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special needs are provided with appropriate materials and tasks. Teachers have established a secure climate in which pupils feel able to take risks and develop their independent ideas. Marking is regular, encouraging and usually helpful, although specific advice on how to improve is not always given. Pupils are strongly encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. Homework is invariably an appropriate preparation for or follow-up to lessons.

88. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good in nearly all lessons. They arrive promptly and quickly settle to work. They are very ready to volunteer answers and they are pleased when they succeed. Nearly all pupils work hard and they are reliable in meeting deadlines. They listen with respect to the teacher and to each other. Issues such as crime and sexual conduct are discussed with maturity and increasingly good judgement, showing that English is playing a significant role in their education for citizenship. They are able to see other people's point of view and develop very good understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Cordial and purposeful relationships between pupils and teachers are maintained both in and out of the classroom.

89. English is very well led and managed. The department has wholeheartedly adopted the best features of the National Literacy Strategy, using them throughout the school. Teachers share a common sense of purpose to achieve and maintain very high standards. They are well qualified and keep themselves up to date with appropriate professional development. Clear long-term plans and outlines for each half-term meet National Curriculum requirements. Pupils are given a rich diet of challenging literature from Year 7 onwards, together with a wide range of language study that includes media publications and the moving image. The curriculum is enriched with experiences such as visiting theatre groups, poetry days and the Year 7 Readathon. The quality of teaching and learning is thoroughly and regularly monitored through lesson observation and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Accommodation in specialist rooms is good and very good use is made of display. The school's learning resource centre is used very well to encourage reading for pleasure, as in the Book Week held during the inspection.

90. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Performance has risen further in Year 9 tests, and the entry for the GCSE English literature examination has been greatly increased without a drop in standards. Pupils' progress is now very good and higher attainers are sufficiently challenged. Classes in Years 7 to 9 have been setted to give all pupils appropriate teaching. Attitudes are now very good, and pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility for managing their own learning. Teaching has improved from sound to very good. Specific areas for development that have been effectively dealt with include the review of schemes of work, a wider range of reading materials and the rationalisation of accommodation.

## **Drama**

91. Overall, the provision for drama is good. Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 9. Pupils in Year 7 quickly acquire a range of performance techniques, and some produce characterisations that are of above average standard. Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 work well in pairs and small groups, and by Year 9 most have developed negotiation skills that enable them to experiment and shape performances that are lively and original. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are fully included in lessons and achieve appropriate levels of success. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were above the national average, and well above those for similar schools. Given their earlier attainment, pupils achieve well during Years 10 and 11. During the inspection no practical work was seen in Year 11 as pupils were on study leave, but standards in Year 10 were above average. Pupils are adept at expressing mood and situation through facial expression and body language. They quickly adapt to different challenges, moving convincingly from being spectators in an art gallery to becoming chefs in a busy kitchen. Their mime work is detailed and accurate, with several gifted pupils achieving very high standards of performance. All pupils listen well to the teacher and to each other, and they speak with confidence and clarity. Their written work is well organised and shows above average understanding of stagecraft and

technical vocabulary. Drama makes a useful contribution to pupils' development of literacy skills, particularly reading, speaking and listening.

92. Pupils' response to drama is generally very positive, although there was some reluctance to join in on the part of a minority of pupils in Year 8. The overall level of co-operation is good, and pupils show interest in each other's performances, often spontaneously applauding them. By encouraging pair and group work, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social skills and their sense of responsibility as young citizens. Teaching is good overall and very good in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are well planned and managed so that pupils make good use of the time available and build upon previous knowledge and skills. Teachers know when to intervene in group work and when to keep at a distance so that pupils become increasingly independent. Relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils themselves are very good, and the great majority of pupils enjoy their drama lessons. Feedback is very constructive and well focused, and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work.

93. The subject is well led and managed, with a clear scheme of work that enables pupils to acquire the range of skills they will need to make a success of the GCSE examination course, which is a popular option. The drama studio is a suitable space, although rather small for large classes of older pupils. There is a good programme of extra-curricular performance and theatre visits. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, as both the teaching and standards attained are significantly better.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Pupils make very good progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Much teaching is very well planned, using a wide range of techniques to enhance learning.
- Pupils learn well as the teaching develops their confidence and enthusiasm.
- Teachers are attentive to the development of numeracy skills and the use of mathematically correct terminology.

### Areas for improvement

- Marking is not undertaken consistently.
- Teaching is not sufficiently structured to enable more pupils to achieve the highest levels.
- Pupils affected by discontinuity in teaching need more support.

94. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002 was broadly in line with the national average. A high proportion of pupils achieved Levels 5 and 6 but the proportion gaining Level 7 was half that of all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, pupils did very well overall and at the higher levels. Although there has been a rising trend in overall attainment over the past few years with a peak in 2001, standards are below those in English and science. Current standards in Year 9 generally reflect those in the 2002 tests. Higher attaining pupils have been successfully studying the solution of simultaneous equations, applying trigonometry and using cumulative frequency curves. Very few pupils are working below Level 4. The emphasis on developing pupils' numeracy skills from the time they join the school ensures that where necessary pupils catch up to attain national expectations. Taking into account the well below average standards in mathematics when pupils join the school, they achieve very highly.

95. Standards in the GCSE examinations in 2002 were slightly above the national average. This performance is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Virtually all pupils achieved a GCSE pass with few at the two lowest grades. No pupils gained the highest grade of A\* and a very low proportion attained grade A. Overall, pupils do less well in mathematics than in their other subjects. Current standards of work reflect those of GCSE results in 2002. The requirements for each level of entry in GCSE examinations are covered thoroughly. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, progress well. However, only a few higher attaining pupils have sufficient mastery of the more advanced techniques required for the highest grades. These pupils perform less well in assessment tests than might be expected from the work observed in school.

96. The quality of teaching is good overall. In half of the lessons, teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. In these lessons, planning is thorough, teachers' expectations are high and pupils' previous

knowledge and understanding are extended very well. Numeracy skills and the use of correct mathematical terminology are very carefully emphasised by teachers. For pupils with special educational needs, the knowledgeable teaching assistant plays a particularly effective role in extending learning. In one lesson the learning was poor, as inadequate planning and the lack of clarity in the teacher's exposition resulted in confusion among pupils, who rapidly lost interest. Classes covered by supply teachers work well through appropriate textbook examples, learning satisfactorily in the course of individual lessons. However, the teaching of these classes is unsatisfactory over time, because the teaching lacks variety, work is not marked and homework is not set.

97. Lessons with lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 exemplify the very best teaching techniques, catering for pupils of all capabilities within the class. For example, pupils in Year 7 extended their understanding of inverse operations through discussion and carefully structured questions; in Year 8, pupils learned at pace about transformations, by engaging in an imaginatively planned variety of activities and pupils in Year 9, inspired by considering palindromic numbers, enjoyed developing their numeracy skills. Capable pupils learn through thoughtful consideration of everyday situations that are represented graphically. The most capable pupils in one class spent too long doing repetitive number work when an extension to algebraic expressions could have been developed to advance their learning.

98. In Years 10 and 11, higher attaining pupils learn very well but overall there are significant variations in the quality of support experienced by classes. Stimulating, perceptive teaching promotes excellent response and participation from higher attaining pupils. This was exemplified in one lesson by pupils applying a range of more advanced algebraic techniques to the simplification of complex expressions. This level of attainment and depth of understanding was not observed in a GCSE revision class as pupils were too dependent on prompts from the teacher and their peers. Very little written correction and guidance is given to pupils and examination techniques are not developed well by pupils' independent working on review questions and in test situations. Lower attaining pupils are good at recalling recently acquired knowledge. They make well-reasoned deductions in oral work, especially when it relates to their interests. This was clearly evident in a lesson in which weather data was compared for different climates: however, the same pupils were disinterested in the analysis of data in which they had no interest.

99. Management and leadership of the department are good overall, with areas needing further attention. The head of department provides a very good role model: he is enthusiastic in his leadership and committed to improving standards and addressing the school's priorities. The recommendations of the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy are being appropriately implemented. Target-setting and the termly assessment of pupils' attainment, relative to national standards, for example, are being developed well. Levels of entry and style of GCSE examination better suited to the school's pupils have been analysed, resulting in some changes. For pupils of all ages, learning is supported very well by the use of appropriate texts and overhead projector transparencies and by working in a mathematically stimulating environment. Statutory requirements are met but the systematic use of ICT within lessons is lacking. The study of aspects of citizenship through data handling is planned for all pupils, but is not evident in their work. Similarly, opportunities to consider social and cultural issues are not taken up.

100. In spite of staff changes, the head of department has ensured that the overall quality of teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection. The resulting, very favourable, response to lessons from pupils has contributed to improved standards. In contrast to the very good explanations teachers give orally, marking and guidance in pupils' books are insufficient to support the learning in many classes fully. Higher attaining pupils would benefit from more structured examination preparation throughout their courses to reach the highest grades in the national tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations. Typically, pupils' experience of mathematics is substantial and well planned but more influence is required to ensure that all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils. Teachers do not take advantage of the opportunities available to extend their skills, such as observing other teachers' lessons and sharing ideas. The provision for classes taught by supply teachers has some weaknesses and a more equitable sharing of the best teaching resources is desirable. With continued focus on appropriate aspects of pupils' learning, there is the potential for further improvement, particularly with talented pupils.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Pupils' attainment is well above the nationally expected level by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and they achieve very well.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm ensure that lessons are well planned and incorporate a wide range of teaching approaches.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and there are very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Leadership and management of the department are very good.
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### Areas for development

- The marking of work is not sufficiently supportive in helping pupils improve their work.
- Too many groups in Year 7 are taught by more than one teacher.

101. In the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2002, the results were well above the national average. They were also well above those of similar schools and well above the average for pupils with similar test results at the end of Year 6. When their below average attainment on entry to Year 7 is considered, these results indicate that pupils were achieving very well. The results in science were below those in English and above those in mathematics. Over the last five years, the results have shown an upward trend, well above the national picture. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment is well above the standard expected nationally. In relation to their attainment at the start of Year 7, pupils achieve highly. Standards of work of the lower attaining pupils in Year 7 are close to the expected levels: for example, they are able to describe the function of the ovaries and testes in animal reproduction in a sensible and mature manner. The higher attaining pupils in Year 9 are producing standards of work that are well above the expected levels. For example, they describe the structure and function of the digestive system in detail, making reference to the role of enzymes.

102. All pupils take the double award GCSE examinations in science. In 2002, all pupils in Year 11 attained at least a pass grade. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A\*-C was above the national average. The results in the GCSE examinations show that pupils are achieving well. The school's GCSE results have improved over the past six years at a faster rate than the national picture. Standards of work of pupils currently in Year 11 are widespread but, overall, are well above the expected levels. In relation to their attainment at the start of Year 10, pupils are achieving very well. Lower attaining pupils explain the process of iron extraction accurately, being able to recall the major steps in detail. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 describe the effect of such factors as surface area and temperature on the rate of reactions using their scientific knowledge. Most pupils have complete notes and, overall, a very good standard of presentation. The attainment data held by the department indicate that pupils in Years 7 to 11 are making very good progress and reaching their potential grades. The department is planning to extend the use of these data to analyse the progress of specific groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs.

103. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good overall. The higher attaining pupils have the best attitudes whilst the lower attaining pupils are not as positive. The department is aware of this and is reviewing the science course for lower attaining pupils to increase their interest and motivation. Where the teacher has very high expectations, pupils contribute to lessons very well and there are high levels of co-operation between teachers and pupils, especially with the higher attainers. Pupils of all levels of attainment work in an enthusiastic and safe manner when carrying out the many opportunities for practical work.

104. Overall, teaching and learning are very good; there are many examples of very good teaching and none was unsatisfactory. The review of pupils' books indicates that teaching, over time, is of a similar high standard and is responsible for pupils' very good achievement. The recommendations of the Key Stage 3 National strategy are being implemented appropriately. The best learning occurs when the teachers' expectations are high, there is very effective classroom control and suitable challenging activities are set. One very effective lesson in Year 10, based on the isolation of iron, enabled pupils to approach the issue in various ways, ensuring very good understanding of the chemical reactions involved. With this approach, the teacher was able to engage all the pupils fully, ensuring that they made very good progress. The very high quality of the teaching, and subsequent learning, is a reflection of the very good attitudes of the pupils. In general, the higher attaining pupils have better attitudes in class, enabling teachers to concentrate on the teaching and learning. When set, homework is an integral part of the lesson and is used as an effective means of reinforcing learning. Teachers mark books on a regular basis but only add short narrative comments and grades. There is a need for teachers to give more detailed comments to help pupils improve their work.

105. Marks are recorded and are used very effectively to set individual targets and monitor progress. Pupils are kept informed about their effort and attainment on a regular basis. Pupils with special educational needs receive very effective support and make very good progress overall. Teachers are aware of the needs of these pupils through the use of their individual education plans that incorporate subject-specific targets. The role of the learning assistant is very effective in identifying specific needs of pupils and giving very good support to the class teacher. In most years, the department is able to organise the group sizes so that the lower attaining pupils are in smaller classes. However, this does lead to larger groups for the higher attaining pupils. Some groups, especially in Year 7, are taught by three different teachers, making continuity and building relationships difficult. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged by the teaching and make very good progress.

106. Teaching provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills, through both written work and class discussions. In particular, all pupils are confident and enthusiastic in whole-class discussions. The department has responded well to the school's numeracy policy, enabling pupils to handle data, draw graphs and perform calculations confidently. The use of ICT for whole-class lessons is adequate. There is scope to enhance this teaching approach, especially for the lower attaining pupils who respond in a positive manner when using computers. The department does not identify specific opportunities for the use of data logging clearly enough to ensure all pupils experience this aspect more often. The stock of books in the library is satisfactory but there are insufficient numbers of books available within the department

107. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has clearly identified the areas for development and agreed priorities. The department has worked closely as a team to introduce some new initiatives, based on the school and departmental development plans. The department has identified the problems in Year 7, with pupils coming from a large number of different primary schools. It has introduced an investigative approach to help overcome the wide range of differing experiences of the pupils and to improve the associated skills of performing experiments. The aspects of citizenship that can be covered in science have also been identified but are not, at present, clearly identified to the pupils. The department monitors teaching and learning well. The team of support staff are very efficient, very well organised and ensure the equipment and resources are readily available for lessons from a rather small preparation area. The department has made very good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and the attainment of the pupils has increased greatly. All the other issues, such as the support for special educational needs pupils, have been tackled. Accommodation is just satisfactory but the laboratories are in need of renovation, with one being very small and another forming a corridor. Each of the well-qualified and enthusiastic teachers has their own laboratory but one temporary room is a considerable distance from the other laboratories. Office space is limited and does not form a suitable base to support teachers in their preparation and administration tasks. Other than the provision for textbooks, resources are just adequate.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

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



#### Strengths

- Well-planned schemes of work introduce pupils to a range of materials and to the work of artists.
- Good teaching and management of classes help pupils to learn.
- An emphasis on mixed media and strong decorative work enables all pupils to make good progress.

#### Areas for improvement

- Introduce more drawing and painting from direct observation, including from the figure and the local landscape.
- Further develop art historical and contextual studies.

108. Overall, standards are in line with the national expectation by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Last year, the formal assessments undertaken by teachers of pupils' work at the end of Year 9 put standards above the national average: however, work seen during the inspection does not support this conclusion. Pupils are achieving well for the most part but not always consistently in Years 7 to 9. In some groups, expectations are not high enough and, although their achievement is always satisfactory, the pace is too slow for them to achieve well.

109. From Year 7, pupils are introduced to a range of media and to the work of artists. They look at expressionist portraits and develop an understanding of tone, line, texture and composition. In Year 8, they consider the work of Rousseau and the arts of Africa and develop skills in repeat design work and pattern making. In Year 9, they study Indian art as well as the more modern movements of pop and graffiti art. Although contextual studies are integrated well into the schemes of work, pupils' understanding and knowledge of artists' work are less developed and there is little that illustrates the cultural diversity in Britain today. There is good drawing from direct observation, particularly in Year 7 where pupils have just finished some very sensitive studies of fish and other natural objects. In other years, however, there is an over-reliance on working from secondary sources. Homework supports learning and, although the use of sketchbooks remains insufficiently developed, there has been considerable improvement in this area since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils from minority ethnic heritages, who form a very small proportion of the school population, achieve well. The department has a policy on gifted and talented pupils but no particular differentiation was seen. These pupils would benefit from greater challenge.

110. The GCSE examination results in 2002 and for the past three years have been above the national averages. Pupils' attainment in art and design compares well with their attainment in other subjects. Examination results this year are not expected to be quite as high but standards of pupils' work in Year 11, which are in line with expectations, indicate that they should be at least in line with the results for all maintained schools. The work in Year 10 is above the standard expected of pupils of this age and if these standards are maintained, this could mean a return to higher examination results next year. Standards in GNVQ art and design are above average and have been maintained for the past three years.

111. Pupils achieve well in Years 10 and 11. Pupils experiment with a wide range of materials and a range of scale. Pupils in Year 10 develop good watercolour techniques and are able to translate this skill into painting on silk. Other painting, although lively, tends to be more simplistic. Little use is made of the local landscape for painting. Some good still life drawing was seen, particularly in Year 10 though there is little work on drawing from the figure. Pupils use the work of artists for inspiration but most do not know much about different art movements, nor does their research always build on previous knowledge. In Year 11, pupils work on individual projects and produce exciting and creative work. There is some interesting three-dimensional work, including an ambitious final examination project on families and the homeless. All the projects seen demonstrate sound planning and research skills but some are let down by weak drawing and painting skills. At this stage, pupils are expected to take more responsibility for their work. The open-ended nature of the course means that all pupils are able to make progress. No variation in work from the different groups of pupils was seen. One pupil with special educational needs has completed a very focused project on animals. Some sketchbooks are developed to a high level and are well annotated, a good foundation for future studies in art

112. The overall quality of teaching is good; it is never less than satisfactory and, at times, it is very good and even excellent. In the best lessons, a variety of teaching methods and activities keeps pupils interested and helps them to learn and develop skills. In these lessons, objectives are shared with the pupils and there are good plenary sessions and some evaluation at the end, although little oral evaluation by pupils was

seen. Pace is good and expectations high. In some lessons, however, there is too much teacher talk, tasks are insufficiently demanding and more information could be drawn from pupils. Not enough emphasis is placed on art history and contextual studies. Homework is marked regularly, although not always with a comment that tells pupils how to improve their work.

113. Teachers provide appropriate support for literacy through contextual studies, annotated notebooks and an emphasis on key words, but this is not consistent throughout the department. Some of the curriculum is based on the art of other cultures and supports spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning in the school. The very good group work makes a strong contribution to citizenship, which is now included in the planning. There is some contribution to numeracy, through repeat pattern making and tessellations. ICT is starting to be included in the learning process. In a very good lesson with a class of lower attaining pupils in Year 7, two pupils recorded everyone's 'wool' drawings using the digital camera. Other work on portraits in the same year shows that pupils have learnt how to manipulate images on the computer. The curriculum meets National Curriculum requirements in Years 7 to 9 and course requirements in Years 10 and 11. In all years, behaviour is very good. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work, listen well to each other and to the teacher and are keen to talk about what they are doing. The learning support assistant plays a full part in the lessons helping lower attaining pupils and makes a valuable contribution to their learning.

114. The department is well led and managed. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, and although the art rooms are of reasonable size, they are on different floors. This makes it more difficult to share resources, to monitor to ensure consistency of provision and expectation, and to develop a whole school ethos for art. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Teaching is strong. The balanced timetable in Years 7 to 9 has helped to improve progress in these years. The GCSE examination results have improved considerably and the GNVQ course has maintained a good standard. Homework is set regularly but drawing and painting remain an area for improvement.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

### Strengths

- The school's encouragement and ethos enable pupils to take part responsibly in both school and community-based activities.
- The thoroughness of the identification of the contribution subjects can make to developing citizenship.
- The Citizenship Cabinet is effective in helping pupils to plan their responses to tackling a wide range of school and community issues.
- The co-ordinator's enthusiasm for the subject and his awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the current arrangements for teaching citizenship.

### Areas for improvement

- The contribution individual subjects make to developing citizenship is not identified clearly enough in planning.
- The assessment of pupils' progress and achievements in citizenship is insufficiently developed.
- Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are insufficiently robust.

115. The school has made satisfactory progress in implementing the statutory requirement to teach citizenship to all pupils in Years 7 - 11, but there are inconsistencies in the provision. Some elements of the provision are very good. Through its ethos and concern for individuals, the school strongly encourages all pupils to help establish and take part responsibly in both school and community-based activities. This approach is reinforced by the school's status as a specialist Sports College and its responsibility to be involved in the wider community. Citizenship is taught throughout the school through subjects of the curriculum and through the programme of personal, social and health education.

116. No specific teaching of citizenship occurred during the inspection and there is very little recorded work in pupils' books that is clearly identified as citizenship. Therefore, it is not possible to make clear judgements about overall standards and the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, discussions with pupils and the range of school and community activities in which they are involved indicate that they are making good

progress in their understanding of citizenship and the important role they can play in taking responsible action both in the school and in the wider community. The outcomes, in terms of pupils' very positive attitudes and response, their active involvement in the daily life of the school and the excellent quality of the relationships, indicate that their learning is at least satisfactory and possibly better. What is less clear is the extent of the impact it has on extending pupils' knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens and developing their skills of enquiry and communication, two important elements of the programme of study. This is because many teachers are not identifying specifically in their planning the aspects of citizenship that they are covering in particular lessons, even though they occur and are identified in the schemes of work in most subjects. As a result, it makes it very difficult to track the topics that pupils are doing at any one time and ensure that the citizenship curriculum is broad and balanced for all pupils.

117. An extremely detailed audit has been carried out to identify the contributions subjects can make to the programme of study for citizenship throughout Years 7 - 11. The audit includes specific topics for individual year groups and the time of year when they will be undertaken. In some subjects, aspects of the programme of study are continuous through the year. The extent of the detail makes it difficult to identify which subject has the primary or key role in developing a particular aspect of citizenship at any one time, and makes the recording of pupils' progress and achievement difficult to manage effectively.

118. In spite of this, there is clear evidence that individual subjects are contributing to the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding about issues relating to citizenship. For example, discussions on aspects such as crime and sexual conduct take place in English and are undertaken in a mature way, with pupils exercising increasingly good judgement. Pupils develop their skills of enquiry and communication in history in topics such as the political, moral and social implications of the policy of appeasement and in issues relating to public health. In ICT, pupils consider the impact of some of their work on themselves as individuals and on society. In other subjects, for example mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education, aspects of citizenship are included in schemes of work but they are not clearly identified to pupils or always evident in their work.

119. The real strength of the school's provision for citizenship is the way in which it fosters pupils' sense of responsibility and care for the community, both in the local area and more widely. This is very evident in some of the ways pupils have responded to particular circumstances. For example, following the tragedy of 11 September 2001 in America, pupils raised a considerable amount of money during a non-uniform day, which they sent to a school in New York for distribution to different funds. Through the school, they also sent a large number of very moving letters, including poems, to the families of those affected, and to the rescuers, expressing their thoughts and feelings about the tragedy. This has led to the development of close links with the school. They have also provided equipment for a newly re-opened school for girls in Afghanistan. After initial consideration of more direct protest action as a response to the Iraq war, pupils decided to sell 'peace ribbons' for charity, with the proceeds going to children in Iraq. They are now planning the development of a 'peace garden' which will allow a space for reflection all the year round. These examples and the many others evident in the school prepare pupils very well for becoming active and informed citizens.

120. On a more local level, the range of activities that pupils are engaged in is impressive. For example, pupils in different year groups are undertaking projects such as an eco-recycling project in the school. Pupils have undertaken workshops and drama events with pupils in Years 3 and 4 in a local primary school on drugs, alcohol and crime awareness. Plans are in hand for a community service volunteer day for all Year 7 pupils, and Year 11 pupils, following the Junior Sport Leader Award, work with primary age pupils and pupils from a local special school. The Citizenship Cabinet, consisting of pupils across the whole ability range, is playing a positive role in setting up and organising these initiatives and is having a developing role in influencing the citizenship curriculum. Members of the Cabinet report back to their tutor groups the ideas and plans that are being considered, thus ensuring their full involvement.

121. The overall leadership and management of citizenship are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has undertaken a comprehensive audit of the contribution made by individual subjects and is clear about its strengths and weaknesses. The audit now needs to be refined and sharpened so that all subjects are clear about the specific part they play, as opposed to the part they think they could play, in teaching aspects of citizenship. Subjects need to plan this contribution more explicitly than at present so that pupils' progress and achievements can be recorded and assessed more effectively. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the impact of this subject contribution are insufficiently rigorous to enable the school to be sure that it is covering adequately all elements of the programme of study.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 9 and well above average by the end of Year 11.
- The GCSE examination results are improving steadily and were well above average in 2002.
- The good quality of teaching and the range of teaching strategies used ensure that pupils achieve well.
- Assessment is used effectively to monitor progress and attainment.

### Areas for improvement

- Placing more emphasis on the use of technical words, particularly with lower attaining pupils.
- Increasing the range of experiences to include food technology and working with metals when accommodation improves.

122. Pupils enter the school with low levels of competency in practical skills but by the end of Year 9, they use hand tools and measuring implements accurately and well. In recent years, teachers' formal assessments for this subject at the end of Year 9 have indicated that the attainment of almost all pupils is well above average; about half of the pupils attained the higher Level 6. By the end of Year 9, pupils' attainment overall is above the standard expected nationally. Higher attaining pupils produce work that is good in all aspects of the subject. Most pupils in Years 7 - 9 make good progress and achieve well in practical tasks in all areas of activity: one reason being that pupils enjoy their work. The best design standards are achieved in textiles. In a Year 7 class with many pupils with special educational needs, pupils demonstrated their competency using electric sewing machines. Pupils in a Year 7 lesson were also quick learners when using a hot dye technique to infuse colours into calico material as the preliminary to the making of a cushion incorporating African Ashanti Akinkra designs. Year 8 pupils produce a range of well-constructed Victorian style automaton models and mobile dolls, incorporating a multiplicity of materials, cams and movements.

123. In the GCSE examination in 2002, the results in graphics were significantly above the national averages, with the proportion of pupils attaining the highest grades of A\* and A in line with the national figure. These results were a further improvement on the high levels achieved in 2001. The provision has now been extended to include textiles and around two-thirds of pupils are now choosing to take this option. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is well above national standards. The folders of higher attaining pupils show good levels of presentation and handwriting, and they frequently use ICT techniques to best advantage to illustrate their design portfolios; lower attainers are weaker in these areas. Some less capable pupils and pupils with special educational needs avail themselves of additional staff support at lunchtimes and after school; as a result, the presentation and content of their work are of a higher standard. Overall, the use of computers is very good throughout the department. In both graphics and textiles, pupils' regular and competent use of digital cameras brings clear images to their design folios. These photographs are often complementing the good freehand sketching skills of many pupils. The appropriate use of spreadsheets to generate graphs and pie charts is a feature of many of the design briefs.

124. Pupils gain knowledge from bringing together facts and opinions from a variety of sources, including textbooks, information sheets prepared by the department, listening to their teachers, overhead transparencies, displays, PowerPoint projection sequences, the Internet and visits and outside speakers. Pupils are good users of the school's learning resource centre. Pupils' work is generously and appropriately annotated, labelled and illustrated. Most pupils take great care of their portfolios and evidence of refining and improvement is a feature of the good practice that the department nurtures.

125. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are never less than good, usually very good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils are attentive listeners, both when their teachers are talking and when their class colleagues are answering questions. They readily and sensibly build on the answers given by their classmates.

126. Teaching is good overall, and in about a third of lessons it is very good. The best teaching is characterised by learning methods that fully engage pupils, encourage reflection on experiences and

incorporate a range of contrasting tasks and inputs. Teachers are well qualified, have good subject knowledge and understanding, and have appropriate command of the skills they are conveying to their pupils. Staff regularly undertake professional development and this leads to new skills being offered to their pupils in areas such as computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CAD/CAM). Although some rooms have appropriate displays of key words, these are insufficiently emphasised through stressing their explanations and spellings. Some pupils use dictionaries well to develop and sharpen the analyses and descriptions of their design briefs. Numeracy skills were developed in only two lessons; less than normally seen during an inspection. The need for accurate measurement was ably demonstrated in a lesson on picture frame design and assembly.

127. The quality of leadership and management is good. There is a very good team spirit. The department is effectively supported by a dedicated part-time technician who doubles as the department's learning assistant for the rest of the week. Displays in the textile rooms are striking, providing an excellent stimulus for the pupils' design work. There are comprehensive and detailed schemes of work that include planned inputs and approaches covering literacy, numeracy, ICT and citizenship. Pupils are set targets for improvement. Good assessment and tracking systems are in place, with appropriate end of module packages providing a regular check on progress. These arrangements are effective and over time should lead to further improvements in standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

128. Statutory requirements are met, although there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' experiences in food preparation and associated nutritional matters. Pupils have experiences of working with a range of resistant and other materials but have limited experiences of working with and joining metals. An extensive range of small-scale bench machinery and lightweight computerised cutting equipment has been built up over a number of years. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory, due to the small spaces restricting the movement of pupils and the narrow range of specialist facilities. The small number of electric sewing machines sometimes leads to queues, although the pupils work co-operatively to overcome this potential bottleneck. Pupils are proficient on the department's one computerised embroidery machine. There has been careful consideration of the types of materials used with regard to cost, safety and ease of shaping and working. Opportunities are offered for pupils to attend an after-school model racing car club, leading to participation in a national competition at Silverstone Race Track. There is an annual excursion for pupils in Year 10 to The Clothes Show that they refer to long after the experience.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- Standards in the GCSE examination are well above average.
- The very good quality of the teaching ensures very good learning in all years.
- High expectations and challenging work ensure high standards.

### Areas for improvement

- Provision for use of new technologies, including ICT, is insufficient and limits both teaching and learning.
- Textbook provision has improved but still lacks breadth and limits work.

129. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were significantly better than those found nationally. All but one pupil entered gained a pass grade and a very high proportion gained the higher grades. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Girls do slightly less well in geography than in their other subjects, which is similar to the picture nationally. Their achievement in the GCSE examinations is higher than the predictions based on their attainment on entry to the school, and represents very good progress.

130. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well above the national expectation and much better than at the time of the last inspection. On entry in Year 7, pupils' skill and knowledge base is average. Knowledge of place is unusually weak, such that pupils cannot name continents. Pupils are quickly introduced to higher level geographical concepts, thinking and terminology. Strong early focus on these aspects makes the quality of geographical learning very good. Pupils begin to understand, and confidently attempt explanations of, why less economically developed countries have high birth rates. A good feature of introductory work is annotated field sketching of Laverstock Down. The very good learning that occurs in their first terms in the

school results in above average attainment by the end of the year. Levels of verbal responses are very high. Those with special educational needs also make very good progress.

131. By Year 9, standards are well above those found nationally. This represents very good learning during Key Stage 3. Pupils advance and test their own hypotheses for relationship between earthquake deaths and Richter Scale intensity, seeking to establish a pattern of causal factors. They display good numeracy in discussion of the suitability of scatter graphs, line graphs and split bar charts to illustrate relationships of data. Lower attaining pupils are well supported by displays of key vocabulary and by provision of writing frames to structure written tasks. They learn well because teaching is very well matched to their needs, with a combination of varied, interesting and demanding short-term tasks and skilful use of appropriate language and suitable texts. Gifted and talented pupils are extended well by high expectations, by additional challenging tasks and by extra lunchtime classes.

132. By the end of Year 11, pupils' attainment is well above the standard expected nationally. Year 11 classes were not observed, as pupils were on study leave. Samples of work show hard work throughout the course from higher to lower attaining pupils. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils have well organised and presented work, with high literacy standards. Numeracy skills are used well to interrogate, interpret and record statistics. Understanding and the ability to apply knowledge to related questions are very good. GCSE coursework on land use change in Salisbury is of a very high standard. The work draws very well on related geographical theory, including Hoyt and Burgess models of urban development. Pupils identify relevant geographical questions very well and show initiative in selecting data. They show thorough understanding of geographical ideas. A wide range of cartographical and graphical forms is employed appropriately.

133. In Year 10, pupils preparing for GCSE work hard and make very good progress in response to challenging teaching and varied lessons. They demonstrate good study skills, for example in one lesson selectively noting main points from a video explaining monsoon effects in India and Bangladesh. They take responsibility for their own learning well when researching river flooding in developing countries from atlas, text and other sources.

134. Teaching is very good. Pace, rigour and a strong focus on literacy and on examination and assessment priorities are raising standards. Pupils are very well motivated to work hard and expectations are very high. Pupils' work shows much care and effort. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use questions skilfully to check and extend understanding, and give very clear explanations of new concepts. Relationships and behaviour are very good and activities within lessons are varied. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their peers, teachers and teaching assistants. Support for pupils in the early stages of learning English is satisfactory. Care is routinely taken to ensure all pupils learn, understand and practice high levels of subject language in their spoken and written work: this leads to good and inclusive learning. Pupils have very satisfactory moral, social and cultural experiences and there are good spiritual moments in lessons although they are not identified in teachers' planning. Homework is relevant and used effectively to extend learning. Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning and to raise standards further; teachers need to incorporate routinely the use of new technologies in all lessons.

135. Assessment and monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work and progress are sound. The analysis of pupils' achievement in examinations is good and is used well to plan future action. Better resources, including a wider range of textbooks and up to date levels of provision of audio-visual and computer equipment, are needed to sustain and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Current teaching rooms are unsatisfactory for using modern technologies to develop teaching and learning. Opportunities to teach aspects of citizenship are not sufficiently identified in schemes of work. Leadership and management are good. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The new department head has a good plan for development that supports whole school aims and is raising the quality of provision.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11 and most pupils achieve well.

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Teaching is good: lessons are well planned and organised, and the questioning of pupils is perceptive and inclusive.

#### Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient textbooks and specialist history teachers for pupils in Years 7 - 9.
- The use of assessment for curriculum planning and meeting individual pupils' needs, and the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough.

136. Standards are above average by the end of Year 9 and Year 11. The assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicated that standards were above the national average. This is similar to the standards currently attained by pupils by the end of Year 9, which are above national expectations. Most pupils are achieving well. By the age of 14, pupils develop an historical framework in learning about significant events and individuals. In their work on the First World War, pupils analyse the impact of the war upon British society, judge its importance and assess the changes over time. Most pupils exhibit a good knowledge of the work studied previously and are able to recall selectively their knowledge, both verbally and in their writing. In a Year 8 lesson on life in pre-revolutionary France, pupils showed the ability to select information from different sources and offer a personal point of view. Most pupils have good literacy skills, enabling them to express clearly their understanding and contribute their ideas. Higher attaining pupils are more critical in their use of sources. In their study of the policy of appeasement prior to the Second World War, pupils in Year 9 could explain the strengths and weaknesses of the different interpretations. By the end of Year 9, most pupils are consistently able to organise information into well-structured responses. Higher attaining pupils are able to organise information more effectively in their written work. All pupils use historical terms correctly.

137. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were close to the national average, although fewer pupils than average gained the higher grades of A\* and A. However, some pupils did not achieve as well in history as in other subjects because preparation for one examination paper had been insecure. In the previous two years, the results have been well above the national average. A small number of pupils are successfully entered for a Certificate of Achievement. Since the last inspection, standards have improved by the end of Year 11 and are now above average. Pupils recall, select and organise their historical knowledge with increased confidence and accuracy. Pupils' writing is more extended, as in their study of 'Medicine through Time', and shows an understanding of causation and change, as well as the features of the periods and people studied. In discussing the impact of the Second World War on the development of medicine, they make judgements from the evidence that are coherent, well reasoned and personal. A well-structured example of personal writing examined the role and influence of Florence Nightingale, critically illustrating the way her work is interpreted and represented. Pupils' skills of analysis and evaluation have improved since the last inspection. The writing of lower attaining pupils is less fluent and extensive. However, in writing about Northern Ireland, they exhibit secure historical skills, recognising that contemporary understanding requires knowledge of the past, and the interpretation of sources, to reach informed judgements.

138. Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and their commitment. Their attitudes towards the subject are very good, and contribute significantly to the good standards being achieved. They are interested in the subject, listen carefully and sustain their concentration well. They respond positively to the teacher and, by asking questions, actively seek help to understand the work and make progress. Writing becomes more extended and varied. By the end of Year 9, their chronological skills have developed, as have their historical knowledge and understanding. A personal investigation into aspects of the First World War by a Year 9 pupil shows a growing interpretation and evaluation of sources, leading to a sustained and logical conclusion. In Years 10 and 11, writing shows intellectual and creative effort in a variety of literary styles and formats. In their nineteenth century study, pupils demonstrate an increased understanding of causation and change. They understand the features of the period and are able to evaluate the influence of Edwin Chadwick on the development of public health. Pupils with special educational needs progress well with the close support of the teaching assistant, and contribute orally in lessons. Most pupils take pride in the appearance of their work, and many use ICT to enhance its presentation. Good independent learning skills, using ICT, are evident in a Year 7 pupil's PowerPoint presentation on the development of castles, and a Year 11 pupil's narrative of the Cabinet War Rooms.

139. Teaching is good and consistently promotes effective learning. Teachers' classroom management and organisation skills are strong features; lessons are suitably planned, and learning objectives are always

made clear. There is a range of activity in each lesson, some of which is particularly creative and stimulating. For example, pupils in Year 9 were encouraged to question 'Neville Chamberlain' (played by the teacher) about his policy of appeasement. Teachers are actively engaging with pupils throughout each lesson, and relationships are good. The questioning of pupils is perceptive and inclusive, encouraging pupils to develop an understanding and to form a personal judgement. Teaching is particularly good when the questioning of pupils is challenging, and the teacher's subject knowledge enriches the pupils' experience.

140. Teachers encourage independent learning and work closely with the teaching assistant for the benefit of pupils with special educational needs. They contribute to the development of pupils' key skills and to their personal development. Pupils are aided in their learning about becoming informed citizens through topics in the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 9 analyse information about the political, moral and social implications of the policy of appeasement; in Year 10, their awareness is raised in issues of public health. Pupils are encouraged through the teaching to develop skills of enquiry and communication. Teaching is less effective when planning is insufficiently detailed to meet the needs of individual pupils or when pupils are not fully challenged. Homework is regularly set and develops the work undertaken in class. Pupils' work is marked, but there is little comment to enable pupils to know how they might improve. There are appropriate procedures to assess pupils' work regularly. However, assessment is not used rigorously enough to influence planning to meet the needs of the pupils or of the curriculum.

141. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is clear direction for the subject and satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Teachers are experienced, work well together and share a commitment to high standards. The curriculum meets requirements, and is enriched by the additional opportunities available to pupils, such as visits and the multiple intelligences approach to learning. The teachers are suitably deployed, but non-specialist teaching in Years 7 - 9 limits the historical experience of pupils. The scheme of work does not provide sufficient guidance to teachers. Whilst the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning occurs, it is not undertaken systematically or rigorously enough. There are insufficient textbooks, which impedes pupils' learning. Overall, accommodation is adequate, although some rooms are of poor quality.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Standards in finding out and sharing information are well above average throughout the school.
- Pupils' ability to use ICT independently in Years 10 and 11, especially in technology, is good.
- Good curriculum planning develops basic skills well in ICT lessons from Years 7 to 9.
- The teaching in ICT lessons in Years 7 to 9 is good and results in good achievement.

### Areas for improvement

- Responsibility for the management of ICT is unclear and the overview of some aspects such as assessment and reporting is unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation in ICT rooms and levels of equipment across the school hamper learning in ICT lessons and in other subjects, for example science, technology and music.
- Pupils' experience of ICT in subjects in Years 10 and 11 is not monitored or assessed well enough.

142. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards were in line with the national average, a decline on the above average assessments of the previous two years. The assessments in 2002 were based on newly designed records of completed procedures and so are more thorough than previous assessments. Although they do not evaluate the level of thinking and planning involved in the tasks, pupils' attainment, as recorded in 2002, is borne out by work seen during the inspection, in which overall standards by the end of Year 9 are in line with the national expectation. Pupils' work is above expectation in exchanging and sharing information, but below expectation in the analysis of data using spreadsheets and databases, and also in controlling physical events.

143. There are no GCSE or GNVQ examination results for 2002. All pupils taking examinations in vocational courses and Key Skills information technology attained the qualifications for which they were entered. The school has no records of experience or assessment of standards in ICT for the majority of pupils who are not entered for such courses. From the evidence of its use throughout the school, the



standard of ICT by the end of Year 11 is above the national expectation. Pupils who are given opportunities to use ICT do so at above expected levels of independent thinking and application.

144. Pupils achieve well between entry to the school and the end of Year 9. There is wide variation in the performance and previous experience of pupils entering Year 7, but the attainment of the majority is as expected for their age group. Almost all have had experience of word-processing, multimedia presentations and Internet searches, but their techniques are often inefficient and they write to please themselves rather than to meet the purpose of the publication. They have limited experience of data handling or modelling using spreadsheets and almost no experience of the use of database to test hypotheses. By the end of Year 9, overall standards are in line with the expected levels, although their work in some areas is above the national expectation. Almost all pupils have enough knowledge and skills to carry out simple activities across the range of processes in the National Curriculum programmes of study. For example, they select appropriate software to produce a range of documents for different purposes, to design questionnaires and to analyse results using graphs. In addition, they are beginning to evaluate their work and to improve it as a result. However, they are still not clear about the development of criteria for judging its quality. Their attainment remains below expectation in the use of spreadsheets to model situations, where they use only simple formulae, and in controlling physical events.

145. Where ICT is developed in other subjects, pupils' understanding is broadened and reinforced, as for example when pupils use emails in French to communicate on the intranet or when they write in English in a range of styles using appropriate document design. However, this is not consistent, either across subjects or through different teachers in the same subject. This was seen in a mixed ability class of Year 9 pupils with little prior experience of computer control. When exploring a burglar alarm simulation, they followed written instructions but could not explain the principles involved. The highest attainers use ICT independently in a range of subjects to help their learning and to present their work well, but there are few planned opportunities to challenge them to raise their standards. The majority of pupils are aware of a wide range of techniques and use them with some guidance. Pupils with special educational needs have sufficient basic skills to benefit well in most subjects from the use of ICT. As a result of the teachers' use of contexts for work that are of interest to pupils from ethnic minority heritages, they are able to attain standards in ICT that match those of other pupils.

146. By the end of Year 11, standards in most areas of ICT are above expectation in that pupils are confident and independent users of communications and graphics software when given the opportunity. This is seen especially in art and design and design and technology. Their achievement is, therefore, good. Their experience, however, is varied according to their subject options or particular teachers and their attainment varies according to the area of ICT. With the exception of a few following vocational training courses in computer skills, pupils have no separate ICT lessons. They learn ICT within their other subjects. For example, in both technology and art they show good flair when they manipulate digitised images for particular effects. Pupils studying music compose well using specialist software, although they would write and play back their compositions more efficiently and clearly if the department had enough appropriate equipment linked to the computers. Those studying textiles use computer-controlled embroidery machines well to design and make embroidered bags. Those studying graphics do not have as many opportunities. They use specialist equipment to design and cut shapes. Although they can design three-dimensional models, the school has limited equipment to allow them to make them. Few pupils feel confident modelling situations using spreadsheets or investigating problems using databases, because subjects such as mathematics, geography and science use such processes only at lower levels than usually seen at this age. In Years 10 and 11, some mathematics teachers do not use them at all, so that pupils work at levels below those expected of the age group. In science, the use of computers to measure and analyse physical change meets the requirement of the National Curriculum but pupils' experience is limited by the low level of equipment throughout the school. They use monitors, however, to measure the impact of exercise on their heartbeat in physical education.

147. Pupils of all ages use ICT voluntarily in most subjects, with wide-ranging impact on their learning and good achievement in terms of independent use of computers. Often this is simple word-processing used to help the appearance and accuracy of their work rather than as a planning tool for extended writing, but the quality of desktop publishing seen in technology projects is well above average. Few pupils use spreadsheets to model situations or databases for the organisation or analysis of information, and then only at simple levels.

148. The separate ICT course in Years 7 to 9 is well planned to cope with the wide range of attainment on entry to the school, and is well taught. Teachers give pupils clear written guidelines within lessons that stress the significance of the processes that they are learning. As a result, pupils learn well enough to transfer their knowledge to new contexts later in a unit. Such lessons make a good contribution to pupils' literacy. For example, a teacher explored the nature of information in a presentation, asking pupils to consider whether their statements were factual, opinion, or whether the selection of information presented a biased point of view. Pupils not only learn the meaning of terms but have to apply them in their explanations of procedures. The teachers' challenging questioning, coupled with encouragement to pupils to raise issues of concern to them, gives pupils the incentive to think about not only the basic skills in their work but also about its impact on them, on the audience and on society. They find such discussion interesting and enjoyable. This teaching, therefore, makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and to their citizenship education. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because the carefully structured support sheets help them to obtain pleasing results that encourage them to work hard. They do not all have enough access to ICT in other contexts to build on this advantage in their general learning.

149. Where ICT is taught in other subjects in Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching is good. In spite of this, teaching is satisfactory overall because it varies both within and across subjects, depending on the extent to which teachers feel competent to develop it. The best teaching occurs in art, music, and design and technology, where pupils use ICT to develop their learning and to improve the presentation of their work. In doing so, they learn new skills, such as computer assisted embroidery and musical composition.

150. Issues related to accommodation and resources slow the pace of learning and limit its scope. The level and reliability of equipment in the school have improved since the last inspection, but the school is still below the national average in its provision of computers. Coupled with the small size of computer rooms, this means that it is impossible for all pupils in a class to work at computers at any one time, unless half of them move to another room. Teachers cope well by providing written tasks for half of a class or by moving pupils to an adjacent room, if it is free and there is a person available to supervise them. Nevertheless, this situation slows the pace of learning. In music, science and technology there is not enough equipment to give full opportunities to all pupils. The school is addressing the issues by purchasing computers, so that departments such as modern foreign languages now have their own computer suites. The school has improved its range of specialist equipment such as data projectors, digital still cameras, scanners and specialist printers, with a digital video camera for analysis of techniques in physical education. However, there is still not enough high quality equipment to allow all pupils to experience measurement of physical variables in science or geography.

151. Leadership and management of ICT across the school are satisfactory overall, although there are temporary difficulties with management in that it is not the responsibility of any one person. Some issues have, therefore, not been addressed. No-one is making sure that all Year 10 and 11 pupils continue to develop their ICT knowledge and skills in other subjects. Technology courses cover most of the National Curriculum requirements and the remainder are used in science, but there are inefficiencies in learning because pupils' experience is not tracked outside the ICT course. Subject teachers are not required or trained to assess ICT capability, so that knowledge of standards cannot be used to help planning in other subjects. There are also inefficiencies in the use of ICT during Years 7 to 9. Throughout the school, ICT across the curriculum is not linked to the development of skills in the taught ICT course, so that pupils are taught some processes twice, first in the subject and then later in ICT.

152. In spite of these issues, leadership in the discrete teaching of ICT is good, with the present situation being addressed well and the leadership team, including the headteacher, having a very good vision for the development of ICT in the future. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in the increase in equipment, training of teachers and planning for the use of ICT in the schemes of work of all subjects. The development of ICT is, therefore, on course, with realistic plans for the immediate future coupled to very good forward planning.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- Good teaching and learning and pupils' very positive attitudes result in above average standards.

- A rich foreign languages curriculum ensures that pupils achieve very well.

Areas for improvement

- Implementing consistent assessment procedures and using the information gained to inform pupils of their progress.
- Ensuring better continuity and progression in pupils' learning by allocating one teacher per group.

153. Standards are above average overall. By the end of Year 9, standards are above national expectations in French and in line with expectations in German. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 French use previously learnt language spontaneously and communicate with the teacher in French when requesting textbooks or page numbers. In German, higher attainers recall previously learnt language on daily routines well and use past, present and future tenses with support. The results of the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were in line with the national average, which is lower than current standards. This is because the assessments were too harsh and did not fully recognise the high standards being achieved.

154. By the end of Year 11, from scrutiny of pupils' books, standards in French are well above expectations and in German they are above. Higher attaining pupils studying French manipulate tenses well and produce AS level work when writing about health and life choices. In German, they produce interesting descriptions of holidays, drawing on a variety of tenses. In 2002, the results in the GCSE examinations in French were well above the national average and the average for girls nationally. They were above the national average in German and in line with the figures for girls nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades of A\* and A was much higher in French than in German. There has been steady improvement in both languages over the past four years.

155. Pupils' good achievement in both languages is enhanced by their very good attitudes and behaviour. Their progress in French is particularly good in Year 11 where they acquire an enormous amount of knowledge and skills during their last year of learning the language. Across the school they develop their skills of listening and writing very well but their reading and speaking skills are not as consistently well developed because they do not always use the language being taught and do not have enough opportunities to read for pleasure or to use dictionaries. Pupils with special educational needs, those identified as gifted and talented and pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

156. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan their work very well and use French and German to teach their lessons. The best lessons start with effective register routines that require pupils to produce previously learnt material and this is used as a basis for future work. Teachers deal with situations flexibly and take time to go over work when pupils are unsure. They know their pupils well. Marking on a day-to-day basis is effective and pupils are given very good advice as to how to gain the higher GCSE grades. In response to this good teaching, pupils learn well. They take notes assiduously to help with their work, work well in groups and pairs, and refer to support material regularly. Literacy skills are well developed; numeracy skills and skills in using ICT are satisfactorily developed. Pupils' social and moral development are very good and their cultural development is good. Pupils take part in trips abroad and visit the French market in Salisbury. No evidence was seen during the inspection of citizenship being overtly developed within the modern foreign languages curriculum.

157. There is a very strong curriculum on offer in modern foreign languages and statutory requirements are fully met. Almost every pupil studies a language for five years and enters for a GCSE accreditation. A second foreign language is made available to the top two-thirds of the cohort in Year 8 and a third language, Spanish, is available in Years 10 and 11. Timetabling issues this year have exacerbated problems with staffing and resulted in a number of pupils being taught French by more than one teacher. This has had a detrimental effect upon the progress, learning and standards of these pupils. The department takes good care of its pupils. Teachers know their pupils well and track them well informally. Formal assessment is more haphazard. Teachers are not consistent in assessing pupils' work or in reporting their findings to pupils to enable them to improve.

158. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The head of department, appointed in April 2003, has made a good start and successfully raised the morale of the department, which had undergone significant turbulence in recent months. All staff are committed to improving standards in languages and have the capacity to do so. Schemes of work are in the process of development and some monitoring of teaching has been done. Resources and accommodation are adequate although the department is split

between two mobile blocks, which makes communication difficult, and there are not enough reading books in the learning resources centre.

159. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Attainment is now above average overall and progress is good. Teaching and learning are good and no unsatisfactory behaviour was seen. Still not enough is being done to develop pupils' independent reading skills; they are not speaking enough or regularly using French and German to communicate with the teacher. Issues remain regarding National Curriculum assessment.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Standards are above average in Years 7 - 9 and well above average in Years 10 and 11.
- The good teaching overall enables pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons: they behave well, work enthusiastically and contribute a great deal to the success of many lessons.
- The provision for, and involvement in, instrumental teaching and extra-curricular activities is very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Accommodation adversely affects the curriculum and slows pupils' progress in some areas of study.
- There are insufficient resources to develop pupils' skills in music technology and more instruments and books are needed in both music rooms.

160. Pupils' attainments are broadly in line with national levels on entry to the school although previous musical experience varies widely. By the end of Year 9, standards are above the expected level in those areas of the curriculum that the department is able to cover fully. Standards are lower in practical small group work where accommodation adversely affects progress. Limited resources do not allow pupils' skills in music technology to be developed satisfactorily. Gifted and talented pupils achieve very high standards and take part in county and national groups.

161. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well across Years 7 - 9. In performing, pupils play chords and melodies and most use appropriate finger techniques in keyboard work. Most perform confidently when singing or playing and a few can improvise short motifs. Some ensemble performances are not well co-ordinated and a few lower attainers have difficulty maintaining their part accurately. Pupils show imagination in their choice of melodic and rhythmic ideas in their compositions and they use simple harmony appropriately. Structure is understood and pupils compose in different styles. Pupils who are achieving just below the expected level produce shorter, less well-structured work but melody, harmony and rhythm are used appropriately. Their listening and understanding skills are good. Pupils identify musical elements and describe them accurately using musical terminology. They appraise their own work and the work of others and are able to suggest improvements.

162. By the end of Year 11, standards are well above the national expectation. Pupils achieve very well across the key stage. The results in recent GCSE examinations have been considerably better than national averages and were above average in 2002. The size of groups taking music at GCSE is broadly similar to national average group sizes.

163. Standards are particularly good in the practical work. In performance, many pupils play beyond the difficulty level expected for the examination and they perform accurately and with good technical control and musical understanding. Performances are in a variety of musical styles and several different instruments and voice are offered. Most performances are delivered confidently. Ensemble performances are usually neatly co-ordinated as pupils listen carefully to each other, but there are a few performances with some errors and hesitations. In their compositions, most pupils maintain their chosen styles very well and make good use of extended harmony and complex rhythms. They understand different techniques and the overall structures are usually convincing, although this is a weakness in some of the work that is just below national standards. Standards in listening and understanding in Year 11 were not observed as pupils were on study leave but Year 10 pupils have a good understanding of various musical styles. They recognise them aurally and use musical terminology appropriately to describe the various elements.

164. Standards in the instrumental lessons are good and pupils entering for examinations achieve a 100 per cent pass rate. Many are also successful in the local music festival.

165. Teaching is always at least good and there are several examples of very good and excellent teaching. Lessons are very well planned with a variety of tasks that sustain pupils' interest and help them to consolidate and extend their knowledge. Tasks are timed, which helps to maintain a good pace in the lessons and they are suitably challenging to encourage pupils to work hard. Teachers have very good subject skills and their very clear explanations ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment understand their tasks. Good musical examples and work sheets support the pupils and teachers are hard working and patient. Questions are well directed to check knowledge and understanding and all are included. Pupils are keen to offer answers and opinions and all their efforts are valued, which helps to develop their self-confidence. Relationships are very good and there is a very good and very pleasant learning atmosphere in music lessons. Teaching is lively, expectations are high and pupils respond enthusiastically. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils' needs. Classroom management is good despite the restrictions imposed by limited accommodation and resources.

166. Leadership and management are good. The new subject leader has a clear sense of direction for the subject and has identified the areas for development. Schemes of work and assessment have been reviewed and are being modified appropriately. There is a need for further development in assessment but teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs. Key skills are addressed appropriately and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

167. The curriculum time has been much improved since the last inspection but the banding arrangements do not always match pupils' performance skills. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs. These include bands, orchestra and choirs and the range of styles is being expanded with a Year 8 rock band. The peripatetic teachers help with the organisation of some of these groups and approximately one quarter of the pupils learn an instrument. This is well above the level usually found in schools and the school supports some of these pupils in their studies. Several concerts and performances in assembly are arranged and the department contributed to the school production of *Grease*. Many pupils also take part in the local music festival.

168. Accommodation is unsatisfactory. The lack of separate small spaces adversely affects pupils' progress and standards in small ensemble work as they cannot hear their work clearly. In the mobile classroom that is used for music, not all curriculum activities can take place and the floor will not support the weight of a piano. The two music rooms are too far apart to share resources and there is a shortage of books and instruments in both rooms. There are insufficient computers, linked to musical keyboards, for pupils in Years 7 - 9 to enable them to develop skills in music technology. The department makes good use of the learning resource centre but opportunities to develop skills in this strand of the curriculum are very limited. Despite the difficulties in accommodation, improvement since the last inspection has been good with good development in the curriculum, rising standards in Years 7 - 9 and very good standards maintained in Years 10 and 11.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The GCSE examination results are well above average.
- Leadership and management are very good, with effective development of the subject.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and respond well to the high expectations demanded of them.
- Physical education makes a significant contribution to the moral and social development of all pupils.
- Extra-curricular provision is excellent and there are high levels of participation.
- The sporting ethos within the school and the quality of the provision have been recognised with a Sportsmark Gold Award.

### Areas for improvement

- The programme of activities in Years 7 to 9 is insufficiently balanced.
- Further developing baseline assessment in Year 7.

169. Overall standards are above average. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9 is above average and matches assessments undertaken by teachers at the end of the key stage in 2002. By the end of Year 11, attainment in the core programme is above average. The GCSE examination results have been well above average for the last few years and have been maintained since the last inspection.

170. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry and make good progress as they move through the school from Years 7 to 11. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in the curriculum and make good progress. Lessons were observed in athletics and games during the inspection. By the end of Year 9, pupils become more expert in their skills and techniques. In the triathlon event in athletics, pupils in Year 8 performed with increasing control and efficiency, showing a good ability to carry out and evaluate their personal performance. In a Year 9 lesson on relay, pupils performed the baton changeover with increasing technical proficiency. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of games play and are able to send, receive and travel with a ball with increasing control and recognise the importance of rules.

171. By the end of Year 11 in the core programme, pupils select and combine more advanced skills and perform consistently with control and accuracy. They observe, analyse and comment on aspects of performance well, suggesting ways to improve, and take on a variety of roles as performer, coach, leader and official. High standards in the GCSE course have been maintained since the last inspection. In athletics, pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding in a variety of track and field events. A GCSE course in dance has been introduced, with the first group taking the examination this academic year. Standards in dance are higher in Year 10, where pupils use their imagination well in developing their composition, performance and appreciation skills, than in Year 11.

172. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall with some excellent lessons observed in Year 9 and Year 10. The specialist team of teachers are knowledgeable and highly skilled in a range of activities, are very good role models and are committed to raising standards. Demonstrations of high quality motivate and improve pupils' performance and very good questioning consolidates and extends pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils and are supported by a range of effective learning resources.

173. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They respond well to the high expectations demanded of them and behaviour and participation are very good. Pupils are well turned out and look smart, indicating that they take a pride in their work. They develop very good social and co-operative skills in partner and group work and the department makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral and social development. In competitive play, they demonstrate fair play, honest competition and very good sporting behaviour. This was particularly noticeable when they were successful in winning the National Basketball competition and in the inter-form tennis competitions. Pupils undertaking the Junior Sports Leader Award course show excellent management and organisational skills and respond well to the responsibilities they are given.

174. Leadership and management are very good. The department works well together as a team and staff are consistent in their approach in ensuring that all pupils have a positive and enjoyable experience. The department handbook is very good. Schemes and units of work have been rewritten. They clearly show the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, key skills and in the use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning. Assessment arrangements are good, although more could be done to extend the use of baseline assessment in Year 7. As a result of the school achieving Sports College status in 2000, it benefits from a Director of Physical Education and Community Sport, a sports technician and an extensive number of coaches. Development planning clearly identifies targets for improvement both within the school and out in the community, with significant results. In recognition of the quality of its provision, the school has received the Sportsmark Gold Award and the Healthy Schools Award. There is now a successful School Sports Co-ordinator programme and the school participates in a number of local and national initiatives. Primary schools speak highly of the support they receive.

175. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils benefit from a range of activities. However, a significant amount of time is allocated to games in Years 7 to 9, which results in an unbalanced programme. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is very good, with all pupils having the opportunity to follow examination and accredited vocational qualifications. The provision for extra-curricular recreational and competitive sport is excellent, and includes inter-form competitions in a wide range of activities throughout the year and an extensive fixture list enabling pupils to play competitive sport for the school. There are high levels of participation. The school is highly successful in sporting competitions, with opportunities for pupils to compete locally, regionally and nationally. Excellent visual displays within the department and around the school are both informative and highlight pupils' achievements. They include contemporary issues, articles and photographic evidence of work. The department lacks an appropriately sized and equipped office, an area that has not kept up with the developments of physical education and sport in the school.

176. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved significantly as a result of a strengthened physical education team and a well planned professional development programme. Standards in Years 7 to 9 have improved in acquiring, developing and applying skills in different activities. Schemes and units of work have been reviewed and procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress are now in place.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Standards have improved in all years.
- The very good and occasionally excellent teaching and their very good attitudes enable all pupils to achieve well.
- The teachers' very good management of pupils contributes to a good climate for learning.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the very good opportunities provided for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Areas for improvement

- Assessing pupils' work and setting targets more systematically and sharing these with both pupils and parents.
- Monitoring pupils' work more effectively.
- Developing further the use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

177. Standards by the end of Year 9 are above average in relation to the Wiltshire LEA Agreed syllabus. They are also above average by the end of Year 11. In the GCSE short course examination in 2002, the results were also above average. When pupils' attainment on entry is taken into account, they achieved well.

178. The work in Years 7 to 9 is above the expected levels. There are many examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. In Year 7, pupils understand the importance of developing moral attitudes towards stewardship of the environment. As a result of a very well prepared research lesson, pupils developed very good skills of investigation and

application. In Year 8, pupils have a good understanding of Buddhist expressions of worship. As a result of the teacher's excellent knowledge, they understand how Buddhists use mantras, both in worship and in their daily life. They understand the difference between religious and moral issues. In Year 9, pupils understand the principle of 'cause' as applied to ideas about the existence of God. The variety of approaches used by the teacher enables pupils to discuss the cosmological argument and develop good skills of interpretation and investigation. Pupils are able to provide useful links with everyday experiences. All pupils make good progress and achieve well. The use of key words, technical language and good discussion work are very useful aids to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. Additional opportunities for pupils to reflect on the information they gain in lessons require further development. Overall, learning is very good.

179. It was not possible to see any lessons in Years 10 and 11 during the inspection. However, the work in pupils' books shows that their attainment is above the national expectation by the end of Year 11 and that they are achieving as expected. Pupils recognise the importance of producing well-balanced arguments. Their skills of analysis, investigation and interpretation are well developed. In Year 10, pupils following the GCSE examination course are achieving well. They show a clear understanding of the difference between religious and moral issues. The range of styles and approaches used by the teacher enables pupils to make very good links between Christian principles and their own experiences. They make clear judgements and develop very good attitudes. Overall, learning in Years 10 and 11 is good.

180. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils of different ethnic background. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as most other pupils, owing to the teachers' attention to individual needs. Pupils who are gifted or talented make very good progress, especially in Years 7 - 9.

181. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They behave very well, are well motivated and apply themselves to the work. They collaborate very well with each other and work at a productive pace. The relationship between teachers and pupils is excellent, and teachers support individuals both academically and personally. The quality of pupils' behaviour makes a very good contribution to their progress and achievement.

182. The teaching is very good, has some excellent features and has a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Planning is very good, and this assists pupils to focus on information learnt in previous lessons. Lesson aims are shared well with pupils in all cases. Teachers make good use of questioning to consolidate current learning and to review previous work. Teachers use a suitable range of teaching approaches, enabling pupils to *learn from* as well as *learn about* religion. This assists pupils to maintain their interest and develop their understanding of religious principles and concepts. Resources are used well, especially video and worksheets, enabling pupils with different needs to learn well. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well, which contributes to a very good climate for learning. Extension work and homework are used to good effect as they allow pupils to reflect on the information they have gained in class. Teachers have very clear expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed, and these features are effective in contributing to pupils' achievement.

183. The assessment of pupils' work is generally unsatisfactory. The current procedures do not provide a sound basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. The department sets levels of attainment, but these are far too general and do not relate to specific targets. It is difficult for pupils to know where they are and what they need to do to improve. This is clearly recognised as an area for improvement. The provision for ICT is under-developed, although plans are in place to create additional facilities for the humanities faculty in September 2003.

184. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, so providing opportunities for pupils to explore issues of justice, relationships and personal beliefs. In lessons, the teaching encourages pupils to explore their personal views about religious and moral issues, and work on the major world religions necessitates discussion about the cultures that support them, so preparing pupils very well for life in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society.

185. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The subject teacher has been in post for two years. He has approached the task with enthusiasm and commitment, receiving excellent support from other departmental staff. Although there is still some way to go, good progress has been made and there is now



a clear sense of purpose and direction; leadership ensures that pupils make good progress. Pupils are provided with a rich diet of religious education in all years. The monitoring of the work of the department, through observing teachers, is in place but needs further development to focus more clearly on raising standards. Regular scrutiny of pupils' work is not done at present and, as a consequence, it is difficult to know how well the department is doing in raising pupils' achievement. The quality of display is generally satisfactory.

186. Since the last inspection, statutory requirements have been met. In addition, standards, the quality of teaching, the subject's contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, assessment procedures and the development of the curriculum have all improved. The use of assessment remains an area for development. Overall, improvements have made a good contribution to improving pupils' attainment and progress.