

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBAYFIELD SCHOOL

Chippenham

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 131969

Headteacher: Mrs P A Shubrook

Reporting inspector: Mr P Cosway
2734

Dates of inspection: 02 – 05 December 2002

Inspection number: 249269

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stanley Lane Chippenham Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN15 3XB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Sage
Date of previous inspection:	This is the first inspection of this school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2734	Paul Cosway	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> <p>The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils</p>
1709	Sandra Tweddell	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Educational inclusion</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Geography	
19866	Peter Austin	Team Inspector	Art & design	
30911	John Barton	Team Inspector	<p>Modern foreign languages</p> <p>Citizenship</p>	
23308	John Morrell	Team inspector	Music	
19015	Gordon Peacock	Team inspector	Science	
19528	Roland Portsmouth	Team inspector	Mathematics	
15971	Michael Pye	Team inspector	<p>History</p> <p>Physical education</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

8682	Martin Trevor	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design & technology	
1845	Robert Tweed	Team Inspector	Religious education Citizenship Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbeyfield School is a new comprehensive school, built to educate girls and boys from the age of 11 to 16. It was established in 2000, only moving to its new buildings, on a spacious, attractive site, in September 2001. It has been built as part of a Private Funding Initiative (PFI) bid. At the time of the inspection, the number on roll was smaller than average, with 332 pupils aged from 11 to 14. There are slightly more boys (173) than girls (159). It will be average in size when it has its full complement of pupils. It serves the town of Chippenham, and outlying areas. It is a relatively advantaged area and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, around 6 per cent, is below the national average. Almost all the pupils are white, which reflects the ethnic composition of the local area, although there is a small number, below the national average, of pupils who represent the rich variety of cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom, including pupils whose family origin is the Indian sub-continent. None of these is at an early stage of acquiring English.

Just over 25 per cent of the pupils have special educational needs. This is slightly above the national average. Of these, six have full statements – an average proportion. Most pupils on the higher stages of the special educational needs register have learning or behavioural difficulties. On entry to the school, the overall attainment of pupils is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is making excellent progress. Already a very effective school, it has the capacity to improve even further. The personal values it engenders in pupils - of courtesy, good manners and a love of learning - are those that are characteristic of much older schools, with a long tradition of an excellent ethos and high standards. These characteristics combine with the best modern approaches to education, preparing pupils for life-long learning in a technological society. As a result of this, and the very good teaching, pupils achieve well. By Year 9, standards are above national averages in English, science and mathematics. The school prides itself on its inclusiveness, valuing all its pupils equally. It seeks to get the best from all of its pupils and staff, and generally succeeds. Very good leadership and management have established policies and procedures that are contributing strongly to the school's success. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Both boys and girls make good progress and achieve well.
- Teaching is very good overall, with examples of excellent teaching.
- Pupils develop excellent attitudes to school and their work. Behaviour is very good across the school.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent, leading to excellent relationships between pupils and between adults and children. Pupils like school and their attendance is very good. These extremely positive attitudes help their learning.
- The provision for the social, moral and spiritual development of pupils is very good, encouraging them to grow into sociable, independent and confident young people.
- Very good leadership and management, with excellent leadership from the headteacher, are providing a clear direction for the development of the school, concentrating on raising the attainment of pupils and developing their self-confidence and learning skills.

What could be improved

- This school is still at an early stage of its development. It has already come a long way, and much more is planned. The next stage in its development is to enhance the curriculum further for Years 7 to 9, by improving the provision for drama and design and technology, and to present a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils moving into Year 10 next year. Also, some policies, such as those for gifted and talented pupils and assessment, need to be embedded more firmly.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a new school. This is the first time that it has been inspected.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

There are no test or examination results for this school. Pupils currently in Year 9 will take the national tests for 14 year olds for the first time in 2003.

The pupils currently in Year 9 entered the school with attainment close to the national average. Almost all, including those with special educational needs, have achieved well, despite the disruptions that have been caused by changing sites and changes of teachers. The gifted and talented pupils have made satisfactory progress: good progress in some subjects, such as information and communication technology. Their attainment is above that expected for their age in English and mathematics and science. Over the rest of the curriculum, they have also achieved well. Standards are above expectations in art, design and technology, physical education, religious education, well above the expected level for their age in modern foreign languages and information and communication technology (ICT) and in line with expectations in geography and history. Composition in music is above expectations, but other aspects are below.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent: the pupils respond very well indeed to the school, are very proud of it and value the opportunities it gives them to learn and attain well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is very good. All are very well behaved and considerate around the school and in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent. Pupils' personal development is also excellent. They develop the skills they need to work together as members of a group and take responsibility for their learning.
Attendance	Very good: attendance is well above average compared with other secondary schools, reflecting the pupils' and parents' very positive attitudes towards their schooling. Pupils learn better because they attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Not applicable

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 is very good, overall. Examples of excellent teaching were observed and not a single unsatisfactory lesson was seen. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, with much that is very good and some excellent. Numeracy is taught well, literacy very well across the school. Science teaching is very good. Teachers' high expectations, good knowledge of their subjects and the excellent relationships they have with their pupils are key strengths. Pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations of them. They are hard working, good listeners, know what to do to improve and make good progress. Although more consistent provision needs to be made for the gifted and talented pupils, teaching meets the needs of almost all pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: the curriculum is broad and balanced for Years 7 to 9. It is still developing and better coverage of some areas, such as drama and aspects of design and technology, is planned for next year. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support assistants work hard to meet individual learning needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils at an early stage of acquiring English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall: social and moral development is excellent. The provision for cultural development is good overall. The provision for spiritual development is very good. There is not an act of collective worship for all every day, but the ones that are held are of a very good quality.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The provision for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare is very good. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and attendance. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development is good. Some learning areas, such as science and mathematics, use assessment information very well and the best practice needs to be shared more widely.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, supported by a very effective team of senior managers, provides excellent leadership. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The vision and direction they give are key factors in the success of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well, helping senior managers to plan for the strategic development of the school as well as monitoring its effectiveness. They have been closely involved in the development of the school since its inception.
The school's evaluation of	Monitoring and assessment data are used very effectively to evaluate the

its performance	school's performance and to plan future development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of the resources at its disposal for the educational benefit of its pupils. Appropriate funding is carried forward to cover the gradual reduction in the school's 'start-up' grant year by year. The school is satisfactorily staffed – the level of staffing improving as it grows. Resources and accommodation are of good quality.

The senior managers have a very clear vision of the kind of school that they want to run and the skills to make that vision a reality. They know the school well and know where to concentrate their efforts to improve it still further. Middle managers are giving very effective leadership to their departments or pastoral areas and they monitor work well. The school applies the principles of best value well. Financial planning is very good. The school works well with parents to help them to support their children's learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded, more than 90 per cent agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, the school expects them to work hard and they are making good progress; • the teaching is good and children are well behaved; • the school works closely with parents and keeps them well informed about their child's progress; • the school is helping their children to grow into responsible adults; • the school is led well; • there is an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. 	<p>Of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 per cent are not satisfied with the provision for homework.

Those parents concerned about homework provision believe that not enough is set for the older pupils. The inspectors were satisfied with the quantity of homework that is being set. The tasks that are set are appropriate and extend pupils' learning.

The proportion of parents who are pleased with their school is high. Many parents decided to send their children to this school on the basis of their feelings that what the school would offer would be interesting and valuable. There were no test results to compare with those from neighbouring schools – for many of them not even a school building to look round. They have not been disappointed and many now consider themselves fortunate. These positive attitudes from parents transfer to pupils and contribute to the school's success. Many parents work hard to support their children's learning. The inspection team's findings support the positive views of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

Pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry is average. Attainment in the national tests for 11 year olds (Year 6 SATs) of the pupils who entered the school in 2002 was close to the national average in mathematics, science and English. Standardised tests at the age of 11 show that the proportion of pupils reaching average standards is higher than would normally be found, but relatively few have scores below or above average. It is not possible to compare the test and examination results at this school with those nationally or in similar schools, because at the time of the inspection no year group had yet reached the stage at which they would take statutory tests in their secondary school.
2. The inspection found that pupils are, overall, attaining above the expected levels for their ages and that almost all are achieving well. Numeracy and literacy skills are good. The pupils are confident and articulate speakers and good listeners. Almost all can read accurately and with good understanding for their age. The pupils currently in Year 9 write accurately, after redrafting, and they are competent at adapting their writing style to a range of purposes – such as report writing or expressive writing.
3. Standards are above those expected for pupils in their first term in Year 9 in science and pupils achieve well. Boys and girls have comparable results, with attainment levels higher than in English and mathematics. Some pupils are currently working above Level 7. Good monitoring and data usage ensure that all pupils know how they are progressing, and teachers can focus on individual targets. This system is well developed and supports improved standards for individual pupils.
4. There are two subjects in which pupils achieve particularly well – the result of particularly good provision and teaching. Attainment is well above expectations in Year 9 in ICT. Their progress throughout the three years is very good. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils in Year 9 are sometimes operating at a level that is at least similar to the national average, normally much higher, and that some show exceptional talent in the subject. There is similarly high achievement and attainment in modern foreign languages. In Year 9, standards of work seen are well above average and pupils make very good progress. Oral skills are well above average. All pupils speak fluently accurately and with confidence. High attainers can speak at length with a very good level of accuracy.
5. In most other subjects, standards are above those expected for pupils in their first term of Year 9. In art, pupils in Year 9 are above the expected level for their age. They use sketchbooks well in order to investigate ideas and draw from observation accurately and expressively. In design and technology, Year 9 pupils are working at levels better than those expected nationally and have mastered basic skills and processes very well. Standards in physical education are, overall, above those expected for pupils in their first term in Year 9. Pupils enter the school just below average in their knowledge and skill levels. However, Year 9 standards are good for most pupils. This constitutes very good progress for the majority of pupils, and is the result of high quality teaching and coaching. Pupils achieve well in religious education. Based on the work seen and discussion with pupils, their attainments in religious education are above the expectations outlined in the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils compare Christian and Sikh initiation rituals perceptively. They develop a good insight into religious symbolism through work on the meanings of Holy Communion for different groups of Christians. In Year 9, pupils understand the significance of Hindu stories such as the Ramayana, as part of their study of sacred texts.
6. In other subjects, pupils are achieving well currently, and their attainment is at least in line with expectations, but staffing problems in the past mean that the older pupils have not made the progress they could. In geography, the standard of work seen in Year 9 is in line with expectations while that in Year 8 is above. All year groups are now making good progress

because of the good teaching and support they receive. In history, Year 9 pupils' knowledge and understanding is in line with expectations of children of their age. Their understanding of change over time is developed well by some good analysis of what changed in Britain between 1750 and 1900. However, low and, on occasions, average attainers are still inclined to describe rather than analyse why the changes took place. In music, pupils who have been in the school longest achieve less well than those in Years 7. Pupils in the current Year 7 are making good progress because of the very good standard of teaching and quality of music making. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have experienced inconsistency in music teaching due to long-term staff sickness. Consequently, standards are below average.

7. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are achieving well in working towards the targets specified in their individual education plans, particularly in reading and spelling. Their achievement in most subjects of the curriculum is good, and in science, art and information and communication technology (ICT) it is very good. In history and geography, pupils with SEN make satisfactory progress. This is consistent with the achievements of pupils generally across the school. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well in those subjects that make particular provision for them, such as science and modern foreign languages. In some other subjects, such as drama and resistant materials, where specialist teachers have not yet been appointed or have not been long in post, the provision is not yet in place.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The school is successful in achieving its aim of providing a happy, caring community, where pupils are valued and where learning is fun. The school ethos encourages a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect, in which everyone's contribution is valued. Pupils are happy to come to school, are enthusiastic learners and have a real interest in their education. They are very proud of their new school and have an excellent working relationship with teachers and other pupils.
9. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are very positive; keen to fulfil their role in the school community. In lessons they are confident to express opinions and work hard, following instructions in a polite and sensible manner.
10. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. The high quality of behaviour allows lessons to be taught in an industrious and positive atmosphere. Teachers are consistent in the use of the school's rewards and sanctions. This, together with very good teaching, helps to motivate and inspire pupils to work to their best ability. Relationships across the school are excellent: pupils have a genuine respect for their teachers, which is reciprocated. This creates an environment of care and security where work and learning can progress. There has only been one permanent exclusion since the school began and the total number of exclusions is low, despite the difficult circumstances of its early years.
11. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually to school: this allows the school day to begin on time in a calm atmosphere that prepares pupils well for the day ahead.
12. Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop personal skills through their life in the school. There are many examples of pupils developing responsibility for their own learning and supporting the efforts of others. All tutor groups have two Student Council representatives. Pupils' overriding aim as Councillors is to care for their school and support the pupils. Year 8 pupils give time and effort to act as 'buddies' to younger pupils. Pupils display good levels of maturity and social awareness in the way they exercise their responsibility and show pride in explaining how all pupils are working together to achieve a successful school.
13. The school provides a learning support area for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils attending it work purposefully and with sustained effort, both individually and in small groups. It enables pupils to develop both their skills and their confidence. In subject lessons, these pupils work very well, showing very good ability to concentrate. They take a pride in their work and it is very neatly presented. Pupils with special educational needs are polite and courteous to staff and visitors, and to each other. They show very good concentration and effort when being supported

by teaching assistants. They accept this help gratefully, without any embarrassment or resentment. Relationships between pupils with special educational needs and their peers are very good and pupils generally are very supportive towards one another.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In the lessons observed, teaching was judged to be good in two fifths of lessons, with almost half being very good or excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of numeracy is generally good across the school and as a result it is rare for pupils to have problems with numeracy that affect their ability to achieve well in the subjects they study. Literacy is taught very well in English and in many other subjects teachers show a very good awareness of the need to reinforce and develop literacy skills, including the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary.
15. The school has worked hard on developing an effective teaching style across all subjects and the amount of good and very good teaching is proof that this has been effective. The principles of good practice that the school has identified and shared are evident in all lessons that feature good and better teaching. In almost all of the lessons observed, it was apparent that teachers are using the techniques that have been discussed in order to motivate pupils and ensure that they get the maximum possible benefit from the lesson.
16. The approaches set out in the national literacy and numeracy strategies have influenced the development of teaching and learning styles within the school. From the beginning of the school's existence, members of staff have been encouraged to learn from the principles of lesson planning and lesson structures that these major strategies have promoted. The results are very positive.
17. In all lessons, teachers explain what the objectives are, so that the pupils understand what they are going to do and what they are expected to learn. There is a good variety and balance of activities so that pupils are interested and supported from one learning activity to the next. An excellent example of this was in an English lesson, in which Year 8 pupils were writing a short conversation that they imagined might have occurred between Mrs Cratchit and Scrooge. It was a development of their ongoing work on *A Christmas Carol*. The teacher used the literacy strategy very well indeed. She gave a clear introduction, involving the pupils through skilful questioning, so that they understood what she expected of them. She then introduced a 'starter' activity, which led on to and supported the main activity of the lesson. She showed them an example of dialogue in a playscript form and the same dialogue set out as direct speech. The pupils analysed the different styles, taking particular note of the different ways in which the two extracts were punctuated. This helped them to succeed in their own writing. She presented information very clearly and in easy steps, so that the pupils, all of whom had special educational needs, could make steady progress towards mastering the skills they needed. Information was repeated as necessary, to reinforce their learning. She had very good knowledge of her subject and, just as important, very good knowledge of her pupils. She knew exactly what they could already do and how to help them to the next stage in their understanding. Her use of resources was excellent. The sheets she had prepared for them were well presented and their design helped the pupils to achieve, providing them with a framework for their writing. Because of her excellent teaching and the high quality of her relationships with them, the pupils made excellent progress, concentrated, worked hard and behaved impeccably.
18. Good preparation and organisation are key strengths. The pupils told the inspectors that one thing they value about their teachers is how well organised they are, and how confident they are in their knowledge and expertise. There were many examples during the inspection to justify their faith. A science lesson for Year 7, for example, where the teaching was judged to be very good, demonstrated these qualities. It was a practical lesson, involving dissolving solids in liquids. The pupils were reminded of previous learning by skilful questioning on work covered in their last lesson. Good learning skills had already been instilled into them, even though they had been at the school less than a term. They were able to organise themselves, use the equipment that was prepared for them well, measure accurately and record their results clearly. The teacher timed

every activity so that the pace of the lesson was brisk and much was achieved. It was a very successful lesson because of the teacher's high expectations, based on his very good knowledge of the pupils; his excellent organisation and management of the class; his very good subject knowledge (that was passed on to the class) and very good preparation.

19. The pupils reported that they like their teachers and that the teachers know them well. These characteristics were apparent in every lesson observed. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Teachers use praise very well to motivate their pupils. They plan lessons to interest and motivate them, so that learning is enjoyable. As a result, pupils work hard, show considerable interest in the lessons and want to succeed. Teachers' plans take account of the different needs and abilities of the pupils, those with special educational needs are identified in the planning and account is taken of the extra support or different work they may require. In an excellent art lesson for Year 7 pupils, the teacher's enthusiasm for book illustration and her excellent use of examples made the pupils eager and interested to design their own. She knew the pupils so well that she was able to set them individual targets and give excellent and specific advice to help them to raise their attainment. Some departments, but not yet all, have identified the gifted and talented amongst their pupils and provide additional challenge for them. In these learning areas, these exceptional pupils make good progress. The final session of the day, Period 7, is an opportunity for pupils and teachers to extend the range of activities. This is very successful. The range of activities available, including additional sports such as indoor cricket, German, a pets club, rock school, self-defence, homework club and pop dance, is very wide. These are compulsory sessions, praised by parents and their children as exceptionally enjoyable and interesting. Most are taught by members of staff, but some, such as the self-defence classes, are taught well by outside specialists and parents.
20. The few lessons that are satisfactory have many of the characteristics of the better lessons. The control of pupils is always good and relationships are strong throughout the school, for example. The preparation and the challenge are not as high, however. In a history lesson, in which pupils were asked to interview their peers who were posing as candidates for the post of king, the pupils had not enough knowledge of the roles of kings in the eleventh century to ask meaningful questions of the 'candidates'. What was planned to be an interesting and exciting lesson got off to a halting start. The homework task, to write a newspaper advertisement for a king, was not challenging enough in terms of historical skills. Elsewhere, homework is used well to enhance the learning done in class. It is set regularly in all subjects.

Teaching in the learning areas

21. Teaching in English is good and many lessons are very good or excellent. Teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour. In mathematics, all teaching seen was good or better and in two lessons it was excellent. It is this good teaching that develops high standards. In science, teaching is very good with teachers using a variety of approaches over the three years. There is good lesson planning, with material developed to support the needs of individual pupils. Excellent teaching in art provides high levels of challenge for all pupils. Teaching is good overall in design and technology. In the best lessons there is good pace and the management of pupils in the classrooms is excellent. The quality of teaching is good overall in geography, with some very good and excellent lessons observed. All lessons seen during the inspection were good or better. Each lesson is thoroughly planned so that the learning objectives are clear and achievable. Teaching of history is never less than satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan and prepare the lessons well. Good learning environments are established and very good pupil management skills ensure lessons progress without interruption. The non-specialist teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subject.
22. A high proportion of teaching that pupils receive in information and communication technology in specific information and communication technology lessons is very good or excellent. The level of teaching expertise shown in these lessons is very high. Teaching and learning are very good overall in modern foreign languages. Some teaching is excellent. The teachers use French, German and Spanish extensively in lessons to communicate with pupils. Lesson planning is a strength. Lessons are very well structured so that pupils are able to build and extend their

spoken and written responses. In music, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is often very good. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and experience of how good learning takes place make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The quality of teaching overall is very good in physical education, and excellent in one in five lessons. In the best lessons teachers use very good levels of subject knowledge to design varied activities, give coaching advice, and continually assess pupils' needs, so as to be able to deliver challenge that enables pupils to progress their learning. The quality of teaching of religious education is also

very good. Lessons are very well planned and teaching activities carefully matched to pupils' aptitudes and abilities. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of what pupils will achieve. The brisk pace of teaching, with well-focused activities, helps to keep pupils on task.

23. The learning support area provides very good tuition for pupils with special educational needs. Special computer programs help pupils towards the literacy skills that they need. This work is supported by the ready access that they have to computers. Teaching assistants, two of whom are also qualified teachers, show confidence and expertise in their relationships with pupils. They provide encouragement and support, whilst challenging pupils to achieve well. In lessons, teaching of pupils with special needs is good. Teachers work well with teaching assistants who, in English particularly, are very clear about the purpose of lessons. Teachers show sensitivity in the way they manage pupils with special educational needs in the classroom. Teaching arrangements and methods, such as the use of worksheets, are usually well matched or adapted to pupils' different aptitudes and abilities. Setting arrangements allow support to be targeted at pupils with learning difficulties, but the linking of subjects for setting purposes does not always ensure the most accurate match of pupils to sets.

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

24. In the special circumstances of a new school, the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. The school has successfully overcome a number of problems that it faced when it began, with fewer than 70 pupils. It has gone a considerable way towards meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum, despite staffing restrictions and the small number of pupils in Year 9. At the time of the inspection, considerable planning was being done for the introduction of a curriculum for Years 10 and 11, where the school faces considerable challenges in providing a broad range of courses in GCSE subjects for, initially, fewer than 70 pupils.
25. The school curriculum is generally broad and balanced. It is relevant to most pupils' needs and enhanced by an additional compulsory timetabled period (Period Seven) that offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular experiences. The school is aware of areas where provision (although it just meets the requirements of the National Curriculum) needs further development, such as drama, resistant materials in design technology and the use of computers in music.
26. All subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education, are taught, along with a very good personal, social education, and citizenship programme. Sex and drug education policies are in place, and there is satisfactory provision made for their delivery through personal and health education classes, and in some other curricular areas such as science. In Years 7 to 9, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, except for the arrangements for the delivery of collective worship. The assemblies that are held are of very good quality, but they are only held twice weekly.
27. The current curricular provision is constantly monitored through fortnightly review meetings and appropriate action is taken to improve its effectiveness. A good example is where pupils of low attainment have been offered the opportunity to study Spanish instead of French, in order to motivate them by giving them a new start. The school has also identified pupils in Year 8 with literacy and numeracy problems and they now benefit from targeted support.

28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with teaching staff aware of the needs of these pupils. Support staff know the needs of their pupils and adopt a pro-active approach in lessons. The school has identified those pupils who are gifted and talented, although further work is needed to maximise what the school can provide for such pupils. Pupils with special educational needs take advantage fully of the school's curriculum, apart from a very small group who are disapplied from modern foreign languages and have a life skills course instead. This provision is fully supported by their parents, who appreciate the practical relevance of the course. They benefit from additional work done in the special needs support area, particularly in literacy, numeracy and personal development. The special needs department encourages the development of their information and communication technology skills through word-processing and data recording. Most of their teaching, apart from short periods of individual support, takes place alongside their peers.
29. As a new school, it has been able to build in current educational initiatives from the start. Hence the strategies for numeracy and literacy have been incorporated into all schemes of work as they have been written. As a result, the very good strategy for the teaching of literacy across the curriculum is well delivered, and effective. Numeracy provision is good. In some subjects, such as physical education and history (where specialist teachers have only recently been appointed) schemes of work are not yet completed. However, teachers are developing schemes of work as the subjects progress through the year and the education of pupils does not suffer.
30. The school has a very effective programme for developing citizenship. Provision is mainly through the very good personal, social and health education programme but each learning area has to set out its contribution to the development of citizenship in its schemes of work. A senior member of staff monitors the teaching of the programme. However, the school has not yet implemented a system for assessing pupils' progress. The development of citizenship skills is further enhanced by the emphasis the school places on personal responsibility and the opportunities that pupils have to take responsibility in the school. In achieving this, the Student Council is particularly effective. It is a truly democratic system, involving all pupils.
31. Arrangements for the introduction of the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 are under review, and highlight the difficulties that the school is facing as it grows. The small numbers in Year 9 limit the range of options that the school can deliver. Various option models have already been reviewed and pupils consulted about their preferred options. A special options evening for parents and pupils has been arranged. It is estimated that eight out of ten pupils will be able to follow their chosen top two choices. The school is also in contact with local organisations that will be able to provide work-related experience. To ensure more time for the study of option subjects, the school is preparing to introduce a rolling programme of tutorials (tutor periods). This will give more flexibility to the timetable.
32. In Years 7 to 9, various strategies are used to block or set pupils by ability. The constraints of the timetable and staffing result in some subjects being timetabled against each other. For example, there exists a good degree of flexibility in being able to arrange pupils by their ability in mathematics. However, science arrangements help to decide class formation in another timetable block and this limits the freedom to arrange the year group by ability in humanities.
33. The very good range and organisation of extra-curricular activities the school provides enriches pupils' learning. Extra-curricular activities are included as part of the normal timetable at the end of each school day, and give all pupils the opportunity to participate in activities chosen from a wide range of options. The options fall into three categories:
- (1) extension of work covered in lessons, such as in mathematics, science mentoring, and German and the homework cubs;
 - (2) activities which extend beyond the normal curriculum: Spanish club, ICT open-door, and web page design;
 - (3) a broad range of musical and sport activities.
34. Pupils are able to choose from a minimum of thirteen activities each day and they can change their activities five times in every academic year if they wish. Musical activities include keyboards,

the Abbeyfield band, a woodwind ensemble and drums. The sporting activities cater for both sexes, with soccer, netball, trampolining, indoor cricket, football, basketball, rugby and martial arts. Additionally pupils are able to participate in competitive games with other schools and between forms. Pupils also enjoy classes in subjects such as wildlife, self-defence, music, pottery, web page design, and drama. There is a daily homework club and an "open-door" ICT club. As part of the school's determination to develop business and enterprise skills, it offers pupils the opportunity to participate in a recycling company. Visits to theatres and musical events together with trips to places like Normandy also reinforce the wider cultural experiences of pupils.

35. Pupils' attitudes to the activities are monitored by way of evaluation forms completed by both the pupils and the staff. The school is currently evaluating some interactive software to enable pupils to complete their evaluations on the school's intranet. Results can be then collated digitally and in a shorter time than the present manual system.
36. Links with the community are good, even though they are at an early stage of development. There are good contacts with local organisations, such as the heritage centre and the wildlife trust, as well as local churches. Young Enterprise links are developing, and the school is establishing links with the local college. Developing links with local primary schools are a priority and already primary pupils make good use of the school's ICT and science facilities.
37. Currently, the satisfactory provision for careers education consists of work related to option choices in Year 10 and the school is aware of the need for further development to meet the needs of pupils as they move into Years 10 and 11. Already the school is working well with the local careers service. The library has a selection of careers information leaflets, and there exists an e-mail facility for pupils to contact the local careers service.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. Pupils' spiritual development is very good and well planned by the school. Through assemblies and the curriculum, the school makes effective use of opportunities to teach the principles of how to distinguish right from wrong and how life can be improved by respect and harmony. Work in English inspires pupils to understand human feelings and emotion: one pupil writes in a personal response to the tragedy of September the eleventh: *'Innocently stood the twin towers, people crowding in and around, no one knew what would happen in a couple of hours..'* There are many other examples of expressive writing in work that extends across all years. Although there is not an act of collective worship for all every day, the ones that are held are of a very high quality. In a Year 9 assembly, a local vicar who works closely with the school invited the pupils to reflect on their place in the Universe and compared the birth of Christ with the constant search for extra-terrestrial life. The pupils responded very well indeed, thoughtfully and reflectively. Along with carol singing and prayers, it was a truly spiritual occasion.
39. The school's provision for promoting moral development is excellent. Pupils work and learn in an environment where mutual responsibility and care are the norm. The clear codes of conduct provided by teacher role models are transmitted to pupils in lessons and generally in the life of the school. All members of the school community treat pupils with respect and care is taken during lessons to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. The school environment encourages pupils to make responsible and reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas: they are able to put concepts of right and wrong into a social context and are aware of the impact of their actions on others.
40. The social development of the pupils is excellent and is an intrinsic part of the learning environment. Through an extensive framework for engaging in the democratic process, pupils are given a good range of opportunities to develop their sense of being members of a society in which they have responsibilities. Pupils are keen to become Student Councillors and Year 8 'buddies', supporting and mentoring younger pupils. Their individual successes are celebrated and rewarded by the school and they show a willingness to celebrate the success of others, as seen in an assembly for Years 8 and 9, when pupils spontaneously applauded the success of others.

41. The provision for cultural development is good overall. It is developed very well in relation to pupils' knowledge of their own culture, but the development of pupils' awareness and appreciation of other world cultures is satisfactory. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions. There is a good range of activities to allow participation in literature, drama, music art and craft. Good use is made of the local and wider community with visits to museums, churches and Newbury Rainforest. Through the religious education curriculum, pupils learn of the beliefs and customs of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school cares well for the health, safety, and personal welfare of all pupils. Appropriate emphasis is given by teachers and all the staff to ensure that pupils' personal development is a priority and is supported by a healthy and safe environment. Pastoral care is provided by the class teacher and supported by the headteacher and the senior management team. Pupils are well known to all staff as individuals and are confident they will be given help and support if they need it.
43. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The school's code of conduct is understood by all and is used effectively and consistently by teachers. As a result, pupils understand the expectations for good behaviour and this helps to create an environment in which lessons can progress with the minimum of interruption. The school has very good procedures in place to eliminate bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour. These are reinforced well in personal, social and health education lessons and elsewhere across the curriculum.
44. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good and well known to staff. Registers are correctly and systematically marked and monitored for absence and punctuality. As a result, attendance is well above the national average.
45. Child protection procedures are very good. The school has an agreed policy that is well known to the staff. The designated officer has good working relationships with all relevant support agencies and overall this provides good protection for all pupils.
46. Overall the provision and procedures for the health and safety of the building and pupils' personal safety are very good. The school's health and safety policy is clear, meets statutory requirements and is effectively used; it is monitored by the health and safety officer daily and by the governing body termly. During the inspection no new health and safety concerns were noted to be a danger to pupils. There are clear notices to support procedures for fire evacuation; fire drills are taken regularly and logged. First aid provision is good; training is up to date, current first aid certificates are held by a designated officer and other staff. Pupils understand who will help them and how this will happen.
47. The school provides very well for the personal welfare of its pupils. There are two members of the administrative staff who have responsibilities for student welfare. They are the student receptionists. They are the first point of contact for children on their arrival at the school, and with parents. They deal with routine matters connected with outside agencies. They care for children who are sick or injured and are qualified first-aiders. Tutors provide good pastoral care, supported by staff in the learning support area and a school Councillor. The extensive, well-planned induction programme for Year 7 pupils ensures they enter the school with much confidence and are well informed of procedures. The personal, social and health education programme is very well planned to raise issues that contribute to pupils' moral and social education.

Assessment

48. There is a whole-school policy on assessment that gives clear details of the roles and responsibilities of all parties in the assessment process. The main responsibility is placed upon

learning co-ordinators to develop a coherent policy that is relevant to their subject area. This has resulted in each subject area having a policy that is relevant to its needs. There is a wealth of information available for departments for them to base their work on. The assessment and reporting timetable for the school year is detailed and published in advance with interim assessments for parents if there is not a full report. This enables tutors to maintain an overview of the performance of pupils in their tutor group. These assessments also give pupils a good indication of their level of working throughout the year. The senior managers mentor pupils who give a cause for concern. Overall, the monitoring of subject performance is good, but not consistent between learning areas. There are some excellent features evident in science and mathematics, with good practice in information and communication technology. These approaches could be profitably shared amongst other areas of the curriculum.

49. The procedures for assessing attainment and progress are very good overall and the results of assessments are well used and analysed so that future teaching is modified to secure improvements. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' achievements in mark books and

these are used to set targets for pupils. Although assessment is a developing feature of the school it is already used well to chart progress and to provide a sound basis for the continual improvement in the high academic standards the school is striving to achieve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school believes partnership with parents is essential to its success. This is shared with parents, who in turn respond positively to the school's efforts. Parents have a high opinion of the school; they feel encouraged to play an active part in school life and, for its part, the school works hard to be available to parents for advice and support.
51. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are very good. Through a range of methods, including the parents' handbooks, school policies, parents' evenings, newsletters and full end-of-year reports, there is clear communication between home and school. All prospective parents receive good information prior to their children's entry: this helps pupils to settle quickly into the next stage of their education.
52. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the school's work are good. All teachers are encouraged to make personal contact with parents, who agree the school is very responsive. Tutors also phone to 'chat' informally with parents about their child's progress. All teachers have their own voicemail and respond immediately to parents' calls.
53. The school appreciates the positive support parents provide for the school. A number of parents come into school to work in Period Seven to help in a range of activities including self-defence and health and beauty. The Abbeyfield School Association works hard to raise school funds and has already provided commemorative medals for pupils to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. The association also provides social events for parents, teachers and pupils that are much appreciated, especially the pupils' disco.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership of the school by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and the senior and middle managers, is excellent. Management is very good. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Effective action has been taken to improve the work of the school and the school is very well placed to improve in future. Resources are deployed well to improve the quality of education for the benefit of pupils and the school succeeds in getting the best value from its use of its funds and resources. Levels of staffing are satisfactory. The teachers of pupils with special educational needs and the learning support assistants are very well deployed and are

very effective in supporting pupils' learning. The accommodation is new and attractive. Levels of resourcing are good.

55. The headteacher, along with the other senior managers, gives very strong direction for the work of the school. She has provided a clear vision, shared with the entire teaching staff and the governors. She has sought, successfully, to combine the best of traditional approaches to education with the best of the new, seeking to prepare pupils for life beyond school and life-long learning as well as helping them to achieve highly.
56. There are high expectations of both teachers and pupils. There is a strong focus on gaining high test and examination results, while not losing sight of the importance of other aspects of school life, such as pupils' personal development. The key to the success of the school is the way in which the overarching aim, of creating a highly successful learning community, is promoted by senior managers equally effectively on many different, but related, fronts.
57. The school is seen as a place that is preparing pupils for adult life. It seeks to provide the qualifications, interests, personal qualities and social skills that will enable its young people to become successful citizens of the twenty-first century. The school ethos is one that parents, pupils and new teachers have to accept before they come to the school. It is apparent in outward signs, such as smart dress and respectful behaviour. These codes apply equally to adults and children. There is a strict dress code for staff and a clear expectation that they work hard and treat their pupils with liking and respect. In return, pupils are expected to show respect for adults, to listen attentively, have good manners, to stand when adults come into the room and to give their best. The vision is made real by these policies, combined with a number of other approaches that have been led by the headteacher and her senior team.
58. Teaching and learning are intended to be enjoyable. Pupils are learning because they enjoy and therefore are interested in their lessons. In their appointment of staff, the headteacher and governors are careful to ensure that they recruit new teachers who are able to enthuse pupils and provide a stimulating education. Candidates teach lessons on their interview days, and the views of the pupils are sought and taken into account when appointments are made. The teaching and learning styles that are the focus of professional development in the school concentrate on the development of teaching styles that are relevant to pupils' needs, stimulating and effective.
59. A culture has been created in which to do well at school is something to be proud of and to aim for. This is made real through the praise that teachers are encouraged to bestow and the many reward systems. Pupils were adamant that they were never felt to be different by other pupils if they achieved particularly well at school and gained many credits. It is made clear that learning is not only something that children do. When adults in the school achieve additional qualifications, from first aid certificates to higher degrees, this is celebrated in assembly in just the same way that pupils' achievements are rewarded. It is 'cool' to succeed and give of your best – and learning is a life-long activity. This is just one of many ways that the policies and vision ensure that the staff acts as excellent role models for the pupils. All of this helps to create the very positive attitudes to teaching and learning that are so prevalent. The pupils look to the teachers to help them to learn and attain their targets. The teachers have become skilled in providing the help and individual support the pupils need and have high expectations of the progress that their pupils are capable of making.
60. The process of management is very effective. The senior management team monitors and reviews the work of departments and teachers particularly effectively and uses the outcomes in a very positive and helpful way to support teachers in their work. It is open and consultative and leads to a very strong, shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. All major decisions, including the setting of the school improvement plan, are done through a widespread and open process of consultation. All major policy decisions are driven by the principle of doing what will be the most effective for the good of the pupils. Governors are fully involved in helping to shape the direction of the school. Parents are consulted regularly and their views taken into account. It was a group of parents and governors who debated and decided the name of the school. Almost

all parents believe that the school welcomes them and responds very well to their views and concerns. This high level of involvement leads to a shared understanding of the policies and the aspirations of the school. As a result, the aims and values of the school are reflected very well in all of its work. Because of the open and communicative systems of management and decision-making, there is a consistent approach throughout the school to ensuring that all behave courteously, take responsibility for their learning and value the educational opportunities that the school provides.

61. All those with delegated responsibilities, for a subject or for pupils' welfare, carry out their roles very effectively. Time is allocated creatively to enable teachers to perform their duties. For example, all subject teams have been given an additional non-contact period a week to give them the time to properly research and prepare a high quality curriculum for Years 10 and 11, to begin in the next academic year. The implementation of the national strategies for the teaching of English, mathematics and science has been managed very well. The learning co-ordinators have shown excellent leadership in the way that they have introduced the strategies into their departments and involved all teachers very well in their implementation. It has been managed very well. The best features of the strategies have been adopted, the underlying principle being that what works with the pupils they will use and develop, what does not, they will leave.

62. The provision for special educational needs pupils is well co-ordinated. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that teachers follow the correct procedures and provides good support to pupils, parents and staff. Statutory requirements are fully met. There is a named

governor, who has oversight of all pupils with special educational needs. Specific grants are used well to support the education of special educational needs pupils and additional funds are made available by the school, resulting in a good level of resourcing, overall.

63. The governing body is deeply involved in the development of the school. Many of them have been governors since the school's inception. They appointed the headteacher and worked with her in the very early days to create the vision, decide what kind of school Abbeyfield was to be, and then work out how to make the vision a reality. They have, over the past three years, helped in the appointment of all the staff and been consulted on school policies. They have an unusually close knowledge of the school, what it stands for, its strengths and its areas for development. As a result of this close involvement, it carries out its responsibilities very well. It is very well organised. Many of its members are well qualified in their own professions and bring good management experience to their roles as governors. They are well informed, thorough in their monitoring of many aspects of the work of the school, including the budget, and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are aware that the statutory requirement for an act of collective worship for all every day is not being met. Particularly effective are the Governor Days, when groups of governors visit lessons and meet pupils and teachers, and the link roles that each governor has with a particular learning area. This rolling programme of close involvement in the working of the school is, over time, developing the governors' knowledge and understanding of the school and its work.

Equal Opportunities

64. The school treats all its pupils equally and is developing a range of approaches to ensure that this continues. A register of gifted and talented pupils has been drawn up, using criteria that are clearly understood by all staff. The next stage is for learning areas to develop teaching approaches to ensure that these pupils achieve as highly as possible. Most departments are already doing this, for example, English and science, but they recognise the need to document what they are doing to support new staff in an expanding school. Similarly, learning areas are developing approaches to meet the different learning styles of girls and boys. A racial incidents policy has been written and is supported by a record of any incidents. Any that occur are dealt with firmly. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are fluent speakers of English, so currently, no extra provision is needed for them.

Efficiency

65. The school manages its own budget very effectively. A five-year budget plan is reviewed each term. Priorities on the school development plan are carefully costed and the source of the funding is carefully documented. Ensuring good value for money is a high priority. Before agreeing a contract for the provision of ICT, the expertise of staff from in and outside the school was sought in drawing up the bid. Administrative staff looked at the costs involved to find the best value. Members of staff are currently negotiating with book suppliers, seeking the best value. A recent audit was satisfactory, raising only minor issues that have been or are being resolved. The school has to work with the private firms that own the building, grounds and many of the learning resources. This created many problems initially, but, with tact, understanding and management skill on both sides, these are being overcome.
66. The cost per pupil is very high as the school is so new, but despite this, taking account of the progress that pupils make academically and in their personal development, the school gives good value for money.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

67. The school has been through a difficult period, in which it had to rely on staff from other schools to teach some courses as it expanded to the point where it could appoint teachers of its own in all subject areas. Very good interview and recruitment processes have ensured that a full complement of well-qualified and often experienced teachers is in post, helping to ensure appropriate planning and curriculum development. There are still one area where the school is seeking to recruit additional staff expertise – design and technology (resistant materials). The

teaching and non-teaching staffs are of high quality, working hard and very effectively to ensure high standards in all aspects of the work of the school, and so staffing overall is satisfactory despite some weaknesses.

68. There is a well-planned programme of professional development for staff, which relates to whole-school targets. Under performance management arrangements, every teacher has had an annual review meeting and has set objectives. Individual teachers' objectives relate to the departments' development plans as well as to their own professional development. Classroom observation is firmly established. There is an appropriate level of support staffing, which helps teachers to use their time efficiently. The teaching assistants are often involved in lesson planning and make a very good contribution to the education of those pupils they support. There are effective arrangements to extend the knowledge and skills of teachers, and other staff where appropriate, and appraisal arrangements provide a realistic picture of their work and support their professional development.
69. The school is situated on the edge of town in new buildings surrounded by extensive grounds with good parking facilities. The new buildings are attractive and provide good space for movement, with wide, carpeted corridors. There is good use of display material to support learning. Classrooms are generally adequate for current pupil numbers and to support the coverage of the curriculum. There is very good provision in modern foreign languages, design and technology; good provision in science, religious education, geography, and history; and adequate provision in mathematics, English, music and physical education. There is good provision for disabled access, with ramping and a lift between the two floors. The learning support area provides good accommodation for small group tuition. It is very well resourced with books and other educational materials. The provision of computers is very good, and is generally used effectively. The quality of resources and accommodation, and the quantity in relation to the number of pupils at present in the school, make a good contribution to the standards that pupils achieve, both academically and in their personal development. They learn, for example, to take pride in their environment and the equipment they use and to care for it.
70. Future expansion of the school with greater numbers and a more extensive curriculum will require careful management in terms of accommodation. One advantage of the current organisation of the

school is the proximity of most areas so that pupils do not have to move far between classes. As the school grows, greater congestion within these limited areas will need consideration.

71. The buildings are well maintained and there is good provision for a learning centre/library, an information and communication centre, a drama studio, sports hall and canteen. Future developments in the curriculum and expanding numbers will put increased pressure on the one indoor space for physical education. The same factors will need to be taken into account in terms of class size in English, mathematics and science, where classrooms are limited in size and do not provide flexibility for future use.
72. Resource levels are generally good. The establishment of the new school facilitated new resources into most areas and this has provided a firm foundation for future developments. Deficiencies exist in design and technology, where there is no graphics equipment and little provision for hand tools in resistant materials. This has an adverse effect on standards. Resources in information and communication technology meet current curriculum demands within departments. There is generally a limited availability of textbooks for pupils to use out of school. The learning centre/library is well resourced, including a suite of computers which pupils can use for completion of homework.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. This school is still at an early stage of its development. It has already come far, and much more is planned. There are no major areas of weakness. In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment even further, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, should, as already planned:

- further enhance the curriculum for Years 7 to 9, by improving the provision for drama and design and technology;
- put in place a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils moving into Year 10 next year;
- increase the information and communication technology provision in music;
- ensure that the provision for gifted and talented pupils is consistent across all subjects;
- share the best practice that exists in the school across subjects in order to make assessment and recording more coherent and even more useful than it is at present.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	15	23	34	11	0	0	0
Percentage	18	28	41	13	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	332
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.2

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)

Not applicable to this school.
No pupils have yet reached this stage in their education.

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

Not applicable to this school.
No pupils have yet reached this stage in their education.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	286	22	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	34	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)	21.43
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	212

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.3
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	N/a
Key Stage 3	21.2
Key Stage 4	N/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	982,785
Total expenditure	823,265
Expenditure per pupil	4,235
Balance brought forward from previous year	141,270
Balance carried forward to next year	300,790

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.43
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15.85

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	332
Number of questionnaires returned	107

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	47	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	43	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	51	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	58	13	1	2
The teaching is good.	45	51	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	49	5	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	38	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	50	7	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	50	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	38	3	1	2

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

- The achievement of pupils
- Inspirational leadership by the learning co-ordinator
- A cohesive team of teachers
- Teaching that is good and much that is very good and excellent
- Marking that is responsive to pupils and gives good advice as to how work can be improved
- The attitudes of the pupils towards their work

Areas for improvement

- Using data from assessment to track progress
- Technical accuracy in writing

74. Skilled and thoughtful leadership and management alongside the excellent subject knowledge of all teachers in the learning area and a hard working and cohesive team of teachers is resulting in good progress for all pupils. Attainment is above what would be expected at this stage of their learning in Year 9. Boys do as well as girls because they are motivated by the teaching and have excellent role models. Higher attaining pupils are challenged by their work, either through questions or activities. Lower attaining pupils are taught well; lessons are planned to take account of how they learn and a range of activities and plenty of reinforcement ensures that they make good progress.
75. The many opportunities that are given for discussion in pairs and as a class, are a reason for above average attainment in speaking and listening. Many pupils are eloquent speakers who put forward a point of view clearly. Many are sensitive to their audience; in discussion, they listen carefully to their friends and take on board their views in their response. Higher attaining pupils use technical language well, which gives precision to their opinions and they respond in depth. Sometimes, lower attaining pupils use non-Standard English inappropriately, but they usually are able to make their meaning clear.
76. Most pupils enjoy reading and respond well to the encouragement to read widely. The department has published lists of books with some information about them to help pupils choose books of interest to them. A further list suggests more advanced books to support higher attaining pupils. As a result, boys and girls are reading fiction such as *Animal Farm* or *The Time Machine*. Pupils are eager to talk about books that they have read and they are developing good skills in analysing characters. Lower attaining pupils are less skilled in reading beyond the literal meaning but they enjoy reading and are able to discuss books that they have read.
77. Skills in writing are well developed. Pupils write in a wide range of styles and many have a good sense of the audience for whom they write. Higher attaining pupils manipulate language well to express their ideas. A strong emphasis is put onto poetry and the school has been successful in local and national events, such as writing poetry for National Poetry Day and the Young Writers' Odyssey. A pupil in Year 9 wrote the following poem, *The Mood of the Clouds*.

*The dark mood gathered until the sky was ready to burst,
Then he groaned deeply and threw down his spears of electricity,
His breath vexed anything that got in its way,
And tore down huge iron pylons.
He took out his anger on the helpless structures,
Spitefully destroying the bricks and concrete.*

*Then a burst of light came slicing through the angry storm.
The dark mood was forced away by the golden sun
And was replaced with wispy clouds and a blue sky
The colour of the Mediterranean sea.*

A boy began his poem about the moon;

*Eerie silent hanging, a puppet with no strings
Gliding over the sky on invisible train tracks
Cold cruel unyielding.*

78. The creative writing club run by staff in the department gives pupils further opportunities to develop their skills. Many pupils have a wide range of vocabulary that they have the confidence to use in their writing, but sometimes find that they are uncertain of how to spell the words, which leads to technical inaccuracies in their writing. Lower attainers sometimes struggle to express their ideas, and write briefly, although there good examples of extensive pieces of writing by these pupils. Most pupils present their work neatly, taking pride in its appearance.
79. Many pupils enjoy English and have very positive attitudes towards the subject as they are highly motivated by the teaching. Relationships are very good, so that pupils are confident to try out ideas and take risks which helps them to learn. Pupils collaborate well when working in groups or pairs. Texts are chosen that appeal to boys as well as girls. In one lesson, Year 7 pupils came to the end of the novel *Skellig*. They closed their books with a satisfied sigh, indicating their pleasure at the finish of a good novel. Many were eager to discuss the novel and whether they thought the ending was satisfying. Sometimes, pupils are not given sufficient time to develop their own ideas or methods of approaching tasks, which limits their thinking skills and independence. Pupils respond very well to the demand for good behaviour from their teachers and behaviour in most lessons is excellent. A small number of younger boys with poor skills of concentration and listening are still settling into school and require firm control. They sometimes take time to settle, but the teachers' skilful handling of them and well chosen activities ensure that they usually settle down to work and sustain it well. The learning area contributes very well to pupils' personal development.
80. Teaching is good and many lessons are very good or excellent. In addition to the points above, teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour so the learning environment of the classrooms is of a very high quality. Lessons are very well planned, taking the best features of the Key Stage 3 strategy for English, for example, all lessons have a clear aim that is shared with the pupils so they know exactly what they are expected to achieve. Planning takes account of pupils of different abilities, either by setting different activities or by the teacher expecting a range of responses. As a result, progress is uniformly good. The range of abilities in the middle attaining group is very wide, although teachers are quick to spot if a pupil finishes earlier or is struggling. Teachers are aware that this situation needs monitoring to ensure that work is appropriately challenging for all pupils in these groups.
81. Resources are used well, particularly ICT. Teachers have good expertise in information and communication technology, which they use well in their lessons and they encourage pupils to use and develop their skills. Much writing is word-processed and pupils are regular users of the internet, using it to find out information or to download images which they use in their work. One example was two classes that were taken into the ICT suite to learn about the type of language that is used for e-mails to friends. The skilled teaching alongside sensitive support from learning support assistants led to good learning and the production of e-mails that were sometimes extensive and used language appropriately.
82. Above all, all the teachers in this learning area have a love of the subject and an enthusiasm that inspires pupils. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were studying how the media tries to manipulate opinion. The teacher's love of the subject, expertise and very high expectations, created an atmosphere in which all the pupils felt valued and were eager to take part. The lesson was challenging and all the pupils rose to the occasion, vying with one another to contribute either in

small groups or to the whole class. The lesson was exceptionally well planned and the resources well prepared. Deadlines were used successfully, so the pace of the lesson was brisk. In four minutes, most pupils managed to produce a positive and negative headline about a person they had selected, some quite amusing and showing that pupils understand how to use language for effect! One boy was so taken aback by two papers' accounts of the same incident, that he asked if the person involved had a twin. As they left the room, many were talking excitedly about what they had learned.

83. In other subjects, teachers encourage pupils to develop their skills of literacy very well. Discussion is a feature of many lessons, for example geography and science, to help pupils to develop their ideas. In French, there is a strong emphasis on written accuracy and pupils are given suggestions as to how to spell accurately and remember difficult words. In art, pupils are encouraged to write critically about artists and in mathematics, written prompts help pupils to structure their work when investigating problems. In science, pupils are encouraged to write in a range of styles. All learning areas put appropriate emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand and use the specific language of the subject. As a result, pupils' skills of literacy are good.
84. The subject leadership is excellent and the subject is managed very well. Staff work exceptionally well as a team; one example is the way in which lesson plans are being developed, all contributing to building up subject guidance of a high quality. This also ensures that expertise is shared across all staff. Information from tests has been collected and has been used to group classes and to offer support to Year 8 pupils who begin to struggle. Members of staff in the learning area have different levels of expertise in how to use the information. It has not yet been used to track the progress of pupils, although this is planned when all the information is together. As the school is still growing, some classes have to be split between teachers, however, the joint planning by teachers and their individual expertise lessens the impact on pupils. There are very good links with primary schools. There is work in pupils' notebooks which has been started in the primary school and continued when the pupils join this school.
85. The Key Stage 3 strategy for English has been managed thoughtfully, reflecting the needs of the pupils and the current state of the school's development. Although the training for all the staff took place last year, it has also been fitted into the induction programme for the many new teachers who have been and will be appointed as the school grows. The learning co-ordinator plans to review the progress of the strategy later this academic year. Its impact can already be seen upon the teaching and learning of both English and the other departments.
86. This is a highly successful learning area that contributes much to the whole school.

Literacy

87. The literacy strategy has been implemented very well and is having a very positive effect on pupils' attainment. The impact of the literacy strategy is seen in English, when pupils show confidence in analysing how authors use language and syntax to convey their meaning. Through plentiful opportunities for discussion, pupils develop their understanding of literature which they then use in their own writing. In other subjects, teachers focus pupils' attention on key words, which pupils then use with confidence in discussion and in their writing. Pupils are able to discuss topics, which helps them to learn, and in science, great emphasis is put on developing skills of listening. Of note, is the teaching of writing by subject specialists. In mathematics, pupils are using prompt frames to help them to organise their ideas when investigating problem. In geography, pupils are encouraged to write in a range of styles, such as persuasively, and they respond well to this. In art, pupils write at length about artists they have studied.

MATHEMATICS

The overall provision for mathematics in the school is **very good**.

Strengths

- Planning, preparation and delivery of lessons
- The very good relationship between teachers and pupils that establishes a positive working atmosphere and encourages success

Areas for improvement

- The quantity of computers in the department to extend teaching and learning further

88. In the current Year 9, standards in lessons and of work seen range from below expectations to above. Overall, the standards appear slightly above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. When compared to the attainment of this group of pupils when they entered the school, this represents good progress and good achievement. Higher attaining pupils use Pythagoras' Theorem to solve problems in right-angled triangles. This is at Level 7 of the National Curriculum and above national expectations. This level of working is supported by work seen in these pupils' exercise books. Average attaining pupils handle data, calculate and use the three different measures of average, selecting the most appropriate for any situation. This is at Levels 5 and 6 of the National Curriculum and above national expectations for the first term of Year 9. The lowest attaining pupils reinforce their number skills and use these confidently in practical situations. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of the use of spreadsheets as a calculating tool are very good. This enables teachers to concentrate on mathematics rather than teaching pupils how to use the computer. Standards in Year 8 indicate good progress from Year 7. The pupils in Year 7 have only been in the school a short time. Their attainment is average overall and they are developing good learning skills.
89. Teaching is good overall. All teaching seen was good or better and in two lessons it was excellent. It is this good teaching that develops these high standards. All teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this to plan and prepare lessons well. All lessons start well - the register is taken and the responses between teachers and pupils foster a calm and ordered atmosphere. Lessons proceed at a good pace and contain material that is stimulating and challenging for all pupils. Planning is based upon the National Numeracy Strategy and the three-part lesson (starting activity, main activity, plenary/summing up) is used to good effect. Teachers adapt the planning very well, when necessary, to ensure that it is suited to the task. On some occasions the short starting activity is not used, because it would be inappropriate for the lesson content. On other occasions, the review session is very brief, because the work is to continue and a detailed review and summary is planned for the conclusion of the next lesson
90. In the very best lessons seen, a range of work was used that best matched the different ability of pupils within the set. In one lesson, for very low attaining pupils, the class was in two groups and a classroom assistant supported one group in their work whilst the other was working with the teacher. This was very effective and pupils made good progress. In another lesson, where a class used spreadsheets to calculate the mean from data, the work was progressively more difficult so that the higher attaining pupils were given greater challenge.
91. Teachers use a range of teaching methods with classes. Direct teaching is often coupled with group or paired work, to stimulate discussion and to promote reasoning amongst pupils. This was very evident in probability lessons, where a range of activities encouraged heated discussions between pupils on the fairness of the activity being investigated. Teachers encourage pupils by marking books well. Their comments are supportive and help to encourage, support or develop learning. Homework is used well to reinforce and extend learning. It is marked promptly and pupils are given a good indication of their standard.
92. The response of pupils to good teaching is very positive. Pupils arrive at lessons promptly and are ready to work hard. They are very polite in response to their teachers, settle quickly and are keen to contribute. There were many occasions where pupils worked examples on the board in

front of the class. The class response to this was always positive and supportive. Exercise books are neat and well kept. This positive attitude helps pupils to learn well. Although they do not have a textbook to refer to at home, they make good notes during lessons so that homework can be successfully attempted and handed in at the correct time. Pupils ask for help when they encounter difficulties and often see teachers during lunchtimes if they do not fully understand a particular topic. When asked to issue or collect equipment, pupils do so effectively and with minimal fuss. When asked to work in pairs or small groups, pupils co-operate well and support each other when suggesting solutions to problems.

93. The leadership and management of the department are very good, with some excellent features. The teachers form a well-qualified, mutually supportive and strong team, with a common desire for continual improvement. The learning co-ordinator has written a very comprehensive scheme of work to support and guide teaching and learning. It is a dynamic document and is subject to continual refinement. The scheme of work is referenced to the National Numeracy Strategy and the National Curriculum, giving indications of lesson times needed for each topic. These timings are being adjusted in the light of experience and as a result of assessment of pupils' work and progress. There is some guidance for teachers, but this too is being developed and extended over time. There are opportunities for informal and formal assessment built into the programme. After formal assessments, results are analysed to identify areas for future improvement. There is excellent use of data to set targets for both the department and pupils. These targets are based upon all available information and the internal assessments are compared to National Curriculum levels to ensure consistency. Practical and group work are hampered by the lack of space in classrooms. In a large class, the teacher cannot easily circulate to help pupils when needed. The resources to support learning are adequate. The department's computer suite is not yet equipped and at present the use of computers in mathematics lessons is dependent upon the school facilities being available. This does put limitations on practical and investigational work in lessons and has a slight adverse effect on standards. There are very good links with primary schools. There is work in pupils' notebooks which has been started in the primary school and continued when the pupils join this school.
94. This is a strong department with much potential. Teaching is good and with equally good relationships with pupils there is a positive ethos in which progress can be made to fulfil the potential of all pupils.

Numeracy

95. There is a whole-school policy on numeracy and there has been whole-school training on the integration of numerical skills into all areas of the curriculum. The policy is a comprehensive document that offers suggestions to curriculum areas on how and where number skills can be integrated into each subject area. Most departments have a policy for numeracy within their departmental policies. Pupils' number skills are sufficient for them to confidently access all areas of the curriculum. These skills, which include the use of calculators, are reinforced during mathematics lessons. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place and there has been an audit of skills across the curriculum. Spatial development and awareness is well used in art. In science, geography and information and communication technology, the skills of using and interpreting charts, graphs and diagrams are well developed and show good progression. Information and communication technology teaches a range of number skills and these are applied across the curriculum. In science, for example, pupils use computers to generate graphs. They understand which is the most appropriate graph for the particular application. Data handling is good in geography, where pupils correctly calculate and use percentages in population studies.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Pupils learn very well
- Leadership of the learning area
- Liaison with feeder schools
- Good data monitoring system
- Good ICT applications used in context.

Areas for improvement

- Industry links development
- Liaison with other subject areas to share good practice

96. There is very good teaching and learning in science. As a result, pupils achieve well and will have moved from average attainment on entry to above average by the end of Year 9 according to current evidence, with some groups of pupils making very good progress.
97. Attainment is above what would be expected at this stage of their learning in Year 9. Boys and girls have comparable results, with attainment levels higher than in English and mathematics. Some pupils are currently working above Level 7 in Year 9, with the expectation they will improve on this level by the end of the year. Levels of attainment in both Year 7 and 8 improve on entry levels, and close monitoring of test data and comparable performance levels indicate that good progress is made across the science area. Good monitoring and data usage ensures that all pupils know how they are progressing, and teachers can focus on individual pupils' targets. This system is well developed and is helping to raise standards.
98. Teaching is very good, with teachers using a variety of approaches over the three years. There are good schemes of work, with material developed to support the needs of individual pupils. This material is well designed and provides a good resource for teachers to use with pupils at different levels of attainment. A system has been developed to assess what pupils know when they join the school. This is used to aid efficient progression in science, so that topics are not repeated unnecessarily and other topics are reinforced. Pupils identified with specific skills can be given extension exercises to stretch them. Examples of good use of this type of approach include work on reactions of metals and balancing symbol equations; and in work on solutions in Year 7, where pupils could interpret conclusions from graphical results obtained through using computer programs. There is a consistent marking scheme applied and rewards are used to motivate pupils successfully. Moral and cultural issues are addressed in appropriate contexts in science at the right levels to engage all pupils.
99. Teachers' expectations are high and are securely based on information gained from the close monitoring of pupil data. This leads to pupils being challenged at appropriate levels, with realistic but challenging targets set for progression. Pupils respond well to this stimulation and feel confident in their own capabilities. Teachers are well qualified and show a genuine interest in their pupils. They have used the new national strategy effectively to reinforce their teaching approaches. Members of the learning support staff (teaching assistants) share in lesson planning and support some pupils in a small number of lessons. Pupils respond positively to this and are making very good progress as a result. A good example of improved learning is seen in Year 8, where a small group of pupils has been identified for extra help in one class. These pupils respond well to individual support and make good progress, gaining confidence and new skills.
100. Pupils' learning is very good. Practical skills are well developed through the three years. Pupils have particular strengths in forming conclusions from their own practical evidence. Many pupils are able to see patterns of behaviour from a set of evidence from a number of sources, and can express these views comprehensively. As in mathematics and English, the three-part lesson and creative starter activities have helped to pupils to make rapid progress and gain new skills. This is a direct result of the successful implementation of the national strategy.

101. Pupil attitudes are particularly positive, showing great enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils make good progress and this is supported by extensive mentoring activities, especially in Year 8 and Year 9. This is closely monitored using the excellent data system in place throughout the three years. Pupils are aware of what is expected of them, working hard and successfully to meet or exceed their targets. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 9 have made considerable progress in the last few months and this builds a strong foundation for good results by the end of the year.
102. Numeracy skills are well developed in science and pupils are competent at drawing graphs (sometimes using information and communication technology applications to do so), measuring accurately (including masses, volumes, and dimensions) and applying appropriate calculation methods to provide a numerical result from raw practical data. These skills help Year 9 pupils to reach high levels of attainment, particularly in balancing symbol equations.
103. Literacy skills are well developed in all areas through the consistent use of key words. Writing of specific types is produced in pupil notebooks, where there is a good balance of free writing, report writing and completion of missing words in paragraphs. Listening skills are being developed in science to support discussions about forming conclusions from practical evidence.
104. Information and communication skills have been developed well in science, using data logging, graphical representations, independent learning resources, and self-assessment exercises. The computer suite housed in one science laboratory has been used very effectively to support this work. Computers are used very efficiently and effectively to provide accurate graphs, for example of results from an exercise to dissolve particles of sugar of differing sizes in water. The pupils understood that they could produce better results more accurately and quickly using computers.
105. Pupils develop good practical skills through scientific enquiry. There is a good proportion of practical work used throughout the three years, giving opportunities for developing a good range of different skills. Pupils are skilled at making predictions of the outcomes of practical work before they begin their experiments.
106. The lesson planning that has been introduced through the national strategy for science for Years 7 to 9 has helped to promote positive attitudes amongst pupils as well as good achievement. It has proved very effective in focusing pupils' minds on the relevant factors in a scientific activity. Teachers use the three part lesson well, and the starter session, which is often a thinking activity, stimulates interest and facilitates the development of reasoning skills. Some pupils are able to extend their thinking and complete extension exercises designed to stretch their creativity. A small number of pupils have been identified as gifted and talented and they are supported well through an additional programme of activities. In addition, Period 7 activities complement the curricular provision and offer pupils opportunities to develop interests in science-related topics, as well as extension activities and homework clubs.
107. The science learning area is well led and managed, with excellent schemes of work that provide a rich resource for teachers to use. A good system of links between modules has been developed and this is used effectively to reinforce learning and progression. The science curriculum meets statutory requirements and all health and safety requirements are met satisfactorily. Very good contacts are made with feeder schools and one primary school is using the science facilities on a regular weekly basis to complete practical work. There is work in pupils' notebooks which has been started in the primary school and continued when the pupils join this school. This is a strong feature of the science learning area.
108. There is a well-qualified and experienced technician who provides very good support to all teachers. Accommodation is good, enabling ICT to be provided specifically in the science area. The science laboratories are well-resourced and modern with flexible arrangements of desks. These laboratories are only adequate in meeting the minimum size requirements. The provision is adequate to meet current curriculum demands but with developing numbers both in classes and sizes of classes will be stretched to be fully effective and efficient.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Excellent teaching provides high levels of challenge for all pupils.
- Excellent leadership and management create a sense of purpose and direction and contribute to the high standards overall.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities and resources for pupils to work with a wider range of materials need to be extended.

109. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 9 were attaining standards above the expected level for their age. These pupils use sketchbooks well in order to investigate ideas. They can draw from observation accurately and expressively and they are able to select from the information that they have gathered in order to produce carefully completed drawings, paintings and clay work. They also make appropriate use of the subject vocabulary when writing about and evaluating their own work, and when commenting on styles in art from different periods and cultures.
110. Pupils' achievement overall is very good. When they enter the school in Year 7, they have widely differing experiences in art and design. Throughout Years 7, 8 and 9, pupils make rapid progress in lessons. The sketchbooks and class work of pupils at an early stage of the course in Year 7 indicate that many are already at above average standards for their age. Their ability to use materials such as charcoal, pastels and paint and their understanding of formal elements such as line, colour and pattern are well developed. An attractively framed display of Year 7 pastel studies of natural forms confirms that pupils already have a sophisticated control of media. All pupils have access to computers and are able to use information and communication technology to design and manipulate images, as well as to research information from the internet.
111. The quality of teaching is excellent and has a significant impact on pupils' learning and achievement. This is because the teacher sets high levels of challenge. For example, all pupils are required to make good use of correct subject terminology when they evaluate their own work and that of others. Planning and the use of varied teaching methods are carefully matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted or talented. The teacher's enthusiasm for the subject and the individual support that is provided ensure that pupils respond to tasks with positive attitudes. Expectations for responsible and appropriate behaviour are clear, lead to the high standards that pupils demonstrate in their lessons and art lessons contribute very well to their moral and social development.
112. Use of assessment is very good, because it helps to ensure that tasks are always relevant to needs. It also provides pupils with clear information about how well they are doing and, combined with the particularly effective use of individual target-setting, tells them what they need to do in order to improve. This helps to motivate pupils and has a significant impact on standards.
113. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent. The teacher responsible for the subject has a very clear vision for its development. Priorities have been identified and there is strong support from senior staff. Opportunities and resources for pupils to work with a wider range of materials are adequate, but could usefully be extended further. Accommodation is currently appropriate for the number of pupils who are taught and the area has a welcoming and inspiring appearance as a result of the care with which it is treated and the work that is displayed.
114. The teacher has taken pupils to the Tate Gallery and an exhibition of pupils' work has been held in a local hospital. These features of the subject's provision, and work based on contemporary African and Japanese art, make a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in this subject is **good**.

Strengths

- The attitude and behaviour of pupils towards their work are very good.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The overall standard of teaching is very good.
- The good progress made by pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress.

64. The school has a very effective programme for developing citizenship. Provision is mainly through the very good personal, social and health education programme, alongside separate lessons in citizenship for all year groups.
65. Pupils make good progress. All, including the pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented, achieve well. Because of the excellent ethos for learning in the school, boys and girls respond equally well to the opportunities offered for discussion and debate in citizenship lessons and this helps to raise standards. In Year 9, almost all are at least at the expected level for the subject and almost half exceed this. They understand their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society, both through direct teaching and through the many opportunities the school offers them to make choices about their leisure and learning. They can justify their opinions on a wide range of social issues, both orally and in writing. Partly because of the strong emphasis on the development of good literacy skills in this and all other learning areas, they are able to write persuasively and well, addressing issues in a way that demonstrates their maturity of thought and their knowledge and perception. The development of citizenship skills is further enhanced by the emphasis the school places on personal responsibility and the opportunities that pupils have to take responsibility in the school. In achieving this, the Student Council is particularly effective. It is a truly democratic system, involving all pupils. They challenge stereotyping and racial prejudice. All pupils seem to realise the importance of this challenge and regard it as an injustice that must be countered.
66. Teaching is very good overall, in personal and social education lessons and through other subject areas. Teachers develop excellent relationships with their pupils. This helps to create a climate in which meaningful discussion can take place on challenging issues. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that there is a good and interesting range of work and pupils respond well, always showing interest and entering into discussion enthusiastically. Challenging questioning ensures that the pupils' thinking and understanding are extended, helping them to make good progress in mastering, sometimes difficult concepts. Teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that they are able to make the work relevant to the present and future lives of the pupils, which in turn helps to motivate the pupils to concentrate and learn. All pupils show very good attitudes to the subject, enjoying the many chances they get to discuss issues that will help them to become more informed about the world around them. They are eager to take on responsibilities, such as representing the views of their peers, organising charity events or having roles in school – such as giving out hymn sheets in assembly or helping in the school library. They learn to respect the views of others and listen to them carefully.
67. A senior member of staff monitors the teaching of the programme and it is led and managed well. Teachers are given good support and the scheme of work is clear and helpful. Resources are of good quality and support teaching and learning. The co-ordination of work across a number of learning areas is effective and specialist accommodation, such as ICT rooms and the school library, is available to support teaching and learning when required. The school has not yet implemented a system for assessing pupils' progress, although this is being planned. The subject makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in this subject is **good**.

Strengths

- The attitude and behaviour of pupils towards their work.
- The leadership and management of the faculty are good.
- The overall standard of teaching.
- The progress made by pupils in Years Y7 –Y9.
- The rooms where design and technology is taught.

Areas for improvement

- Ensuring all aspects of the statutory curriculum are taught to similar depth.
- The quality of presentation of written work, especially of boys.
- Increasing the use of the specialist equipment made available in the resistant materials and systems and control rooms.

115. Pupils coming into the school in Year 7 have below average design and technology skills. Their progress throughout the three years is good, overall. Evidence from the inspection shows that, in Year 9, pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age and the school's monitoring of results confirms this position. Basic skills and processes in practical work are taught effectively and this contributes positively to the good progress being made. The quality of writing and printing in design folders from pupils in Years 7 and 8 needs some improvement: this is particularly true of the work produced by the boys.
116. Teaching is good overall. In the best lessons seen, there was good pace, the teacher had very good subject knowledge and instilled confidence in the pupils. In these lessons the management of pupils in the classrooms was excellent. These conditions prompted the pupils to give of their best and produce interesting ideas.
117. Teachers maintain very good control, leading to very good behaviour at all times. This leads to pupils learning well, working at a brisk pace and enjoying their lessons. Teachers generally challenge pupils' imaginations and, in one markedly good case, developed a stimulating discussion, including moral issues, on vegetarianism. Good support is offered to pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are well supported by the class teachers and help in the form of additional support is targeted suitably and effectively.
118. The attitude of pupils towards learning is very good, because of the good teaching. Pupils wish to engage fully in the activities being offered and seem prepared to take advantage of the opportunities made available to them in this new school. The pace of learning is frequently very good as new ideas and concepts are regularly introduced. Progress was best in lessons where pupils understood the challenge being set to them and had good tools and equipment available to them. Pupils make progress in all lessons, because they have a clear understanding of the level at which they are working and are given helpful indications of what they need to do in order to achieve work at a higher level.
119. The rooms that form the design and technology learning area are of generous size and are well proportioned. The equipment is of good quality and meets health and safety requirements. Rooms that serve food technology and textiles are in full commission, but those for resistant materials and systems and control have some way to go before being fully operational and this is affecting standards in this aspect of the subject.
120. The learning area is managed well. The good leadership ensures clear educational vision and there is a shared commitment to improve by all involved. Strategic planning is clear. There is planning in place to cover areas such as resistant materials in Years 7 to 9 in greater depth, following further staff appointments. The head of area has a very positive approach to the work in hand and through good inter-personal relationships, positive messages are given to all involved.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Excellent attitudes and enthusiasm of the pupils for the subject.
- Excellent relationship between pupils and with staff.
- Very good shared commitment to improvement of the subject and the capacity to succeed.
- Good progress towards high standards.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for fieldwork.
- The use of computers to enhance teaching and learning.
- Focus on gifted and talented pupils through differentiated work.

121. There are no test or examination results for the school as this is the first year when pupils will reach the end of Year 9. The standard of work seen in Year 9 is in line with expectations while that in Year 8 is above. All year groups make good progress because of the good teaching and support they receive.
122. Pupils in Year 7 enter the school with a wide range of prior attainment but soon acquire the basic skills of mapwork. They know the main symbols used on maps, understand scale and the representation of relief using contour lines and give six figure grid references accurately. They study a variety of places including Kenya and Brazil and have a clear understanding of how various human activities affect the environment. Year 8 pupils evaluate the advantages of different sources of energy and argue the case for rationalising fossil fuel consumption. By the end of Year 9, pupils show adequate knowledge and understanding of a number of places such as Bangladesh, Japan and Majorca. They examine the relationships between physical phenomena and human response, conflicting demands of tourism and ways in which sustainable development might be achieved.
123. The pupils have a very positive attitude to their work. They enjoy their lessons, are keen to make contributions and show respect for the opinions of others. Their politeness, courtesy and willingness to share are a strength of the school. They show maturity and confidence in communicating with adults and their enquiring minds contribute to their good personal development.
124. The quality of teaching is good overall. Some very good and excellent lessons were observed. All lessons seen during the inspection were good or better. Each lesson is thoroughly planned, so that the learning objectives are clear and achievable. The pupils know what they should learn during the session and this is evaluated at the end of the lesson. A common, very successful, strategy observed during the inspection is to proceed in 'bite size' activities and so maintain the interest, concentration and enthusiasm of the pupils. Very good use is made of time and resources including appropriate video clips to illustrate key ideas encountered in the text. They are encouraged to engage in discussion and this develops their confidence, thinking skills and the ability to communicate. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues - for example, on the fairness of trade for the cocoa farmers of Ghana. This contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The very good relationships that teachers have with the pupils create an excellent environment for learning. There is, however, a need to focus on gifted and talented pupils through differentiated work.
125. The management of the department is good. The co-ordinator has achieved a great deal in a relatively short space of time since his appointment in September. With good support from his department staff, new schemes of work have been introduced which offer a broad and balanced curriculum. The work of the department is exceptionally well documented and systems are in place for all aspects of the work. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good and the results of regular tests are used to tailor the curriculum to the needs of the pupils and to set individual targets. The use of computers to enhance teaching and learning

needs to be extended further. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject and plans are in place to meet these aims. The curriculum is enhanced by the establishment of environmental and wildlife clubs in association with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

HISTORY

Overall provision in this subject is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Positive pupil attitudes to their work
- Good assessment procedures
- Support for literacy
- A shared staff commitment to improve standards

Areas for development

- The further development of schemes of work
- The development of work in lessons for pupils of all abilities
- The use of a variety of IT approaches in history

126. The subject has set realistic targets for Year 9, and pupils in that year are working at the level expected, nationally, for pupils in their first term of Year 9. Year 7 pupils enter the school with, overall, average attainment, although there is a significant minority who have only a basic understanding of history skills. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The subject has identified where it can contribute to supporting literacy, and numerous, good examples exist of the use of different aids to help pupils to write well, such as writing frames and key words. In one lesson, pupils developed their speaking and listening skills as they interviewed candidates for the role of king in 1066. Pupils develop poetry based on the experiences of the poor in Tudor times. Numeracy is satisfactorily supported through such things as time lines.
127. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. In Year 7, pupils learn about the basic skills of history, through examining the use of time lines and primary and secondary sources. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to make use of quotations to support their views about why the Mary Rose sank. Further attention to more demanding history skills is required if pupils are to develop such skills as raising historical questions and considering different interpretations of events and historical figures. Most pupils make satisfactory progress when they study the causes and consequences of the Norman invasion. Lower attaining pupils tend to describe, rather than evaluate sources about how difficult England was to invade in 1066. Year 8 pupils satisfactorily add to their historical knowledge through their work on Tudor England, and they develop a more detailed understanding about how the poor lived in Tudor times. In Year 9, pupils' knowledge and understanding of change over time is further developed by some good analysis of what changed in Britain between 1750 and 1900. Lower, and on occasions, average attainers are still inclined to describe rather than analyse why the changes took place, and what were the results. Consequently the life of Josiah Wedgwood is described, but his influence on the wider world, such as canal development, is insufficiently explored. High attainers are able to compare conditions before and after the Industrial Revolution, but are not given sufficient opportunity to explore different opinions.
128. Teaching across the school is never less than satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan and prepare the lessons well. Good learning environments are established and very good pupil management skills ensure lessons progress without interruption. In the most effective lessons, teachers present small units of work, regularly reinforced by referring to lesson objectives, and end with effective, imaginative summary and review sessions. The non-specialist teachers have satisfactory knowledge of the subject but would benefit from further, specialist guidance. This would enable them to plan their lessons with appropriately challenging work for pupils of all abilities. Homework enhances the work covered in lessons. Marking, although supportive, does not identify sufficient short-term targets for pupils and needs to identify grammatical errors more clearly.

129. The curriculum is satisfactory. The learning co-ordinator has developed a number of schemes of work that guide teaching and is reviewing them so as to aid further development. More guidance on the different levels of expected work would help teachers to set appropriate work for pupils of all abilities, and consequently avoid setting work that is insufficiently challenging for most pupils. The subject has developed very good assessment procedures, with assessment opportunities identified, that enable teachers and pupils to identify progress and set targets. The use of such information, together with the data on results, could be further developed to inform teaching and future curriculum developments and to extend those pupils with particular talents in the subject.
130. Overall the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural provision for pupils. They learn about Islamic, British, and European cultures, and teachers strongly emphasise the need for respect and understanding of other societies and beliefs. There is a good range of visits, including contact with the local heritage centre and an annual Year 7 trip to Chepstow Castle.
131. The humanities faculty has achieved much, in the absence of a specialist historian. There are very good levels of commitment to improvement, and monitoring arrangements are in place using lesson observations, work sampling and the tracking of teachers' planning. The school is aware of the need for, and has taken action to appoint, a subject specialist who can carry out the necessary further development. Resources are good, although further development of the use of computers and an artefact collection would be of benefit.
132. The staff has laid solid foundations on which the subject can build. It is assured of the support of the pupils, who demonstrate very positive, and often excellent attitudes to their learning. They are polite, co-operative and willingly participate in class activities and show respect for the opinions of others.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The leadership and management of the learning area are excellent.
- The overall standard of teaching is high.
- There is a very good ratio of computers to pupils, allowing pupils easy access to computers.
- The quality and use of ongoing assessment.

Areas for improvement

- Increasing the opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects

133. Pupils coming into the school in Year 7 have below average skills in information and communication technology (ICT). They achieve very well, including those pupils with a particular talent for the subject and those with special educational needs. Their progress throughout the three years is very good and attainment is well above what would be expected at this stage in Year 9. Evidence from the inspection shows that these pupils are operating at a level that is at least similar to the national average and normally much higher, with some showing exceptional talent in the subject. Almost all pupils are adept at using information and communication technology to produce high quality documents, to construct graphs, to measure and record data to construct web pages and for designing/modelling. The school has a policy that enables all pupils to be taught ICT in all years. The time allocation awarded for the subject is generous and the results show that this investment of time helps in rewarding pupils with high progress and attainment. Boys and girls attain equally well.
134. Teaching is very good overall. A high proportion of the teaching that pupils receive in ICT lessons is very good or excellent. The teachers' expertise is high. Use of the interactive whiteboards, along with projection facilities, is highly beneficial. Pupils are able to see details very clearly so that pupils are able to go and use the techniques for themselves. The level of challenge presented

by teachers within lessons is high. Pupils respond to this challenge very well indeed. The assessment procedures developed and used by the learning area are very good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well; they have tasks and challenges that are suitable for their needs. Pupils have a good attitude to their learning and the pupils were totally attentive on the teacher in almost all of the lessons observed. Because of the teaching skills of the teachers and their excellent relationships they have with their pupils, the behaviour

of pupils is very good. Period 7, where pupils can opt for additional subjects, is put to good use and pupils are able to choose topics that interest them, such as development of their personal web-site.

135. The school has developed two central suites that have excellent resources. The computers are of high quality, all equipped for multi-media working. The suites have thirty workstations so that every pupil has a machine to work at. The development plans show a progressive purchasing of equipment to enable individual subject areas to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum effectively. Some areas, especially mathematics, music and design and technology, need additional facilities in order to cover their schemes of work effectively.
136. This learning area is managed excellently. The learning co-ordinator is extremely competent and he has developed a highly-regarded programme of opportunities, in and out of lessons, for the pupils. Daily and longer-term management are very effective and the leadership shows clear educational direction.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in modern foreign languages is **very good**.

Strengths

- Well above average attainment in speaking.
- Very good achievement by all pupils.
- Very good teaching.
- Excellent leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Develop reading skills further.
- Increase time allocation for Year 7, as already planned.

137. In Year 9, attainment is well above what would be expected at this stage of their learning. Pupils make very good progress, achieving very well indeed. Oral skills are well above average. All pupils speak fluently accurately and with confidence. Pupils in French in Year 9 have a very good understanding of the perfect tense and use it accurately in speech. Higher attainers can speak at length with a very good level of accuracy. In one Year 9 class, for example, higher attainers were able to describe a journey they had undertaken in the past using only visual prompts. They were able to use different forms of the verb and made few mistakes. A representative sample of Year 8 pupils was able to talk at length and with good pronunciation about their school. Once again pupils spoke from memory, using only visual prompts. The difference in performance between higher and lower attainers was one of accuracy, but all performed at a level that was above average. Pupils develop very good listening skills because teachers use the foreign language effectively in lessons. Lower attaining pupils, who have been learning Spanish since the start of the school year, are developing good listening skills. Standards of writing are above average. All pupils in Year 9 are able to write using the perfect tense with a good level of accuracy. Higher attaining pupils are developing the skills of using language for independent writing. They use verbs with confidence, for example, and can vary the form of the present and perfect tenses with few mistakes. Year 8 pupils write at length from memory with a level of accuracy that is above average. Pupils in Year 8 have some opportunity to develop reading skills but, overall, this aspect of learning is given less emphasis than the other skills. Pupils with special needs achieve very

well overall. Progress in developing oral skills is particularly good. Pupils have the confidence to participate in oral work because teachers are very supportive. Most can write accurately. They frequently write from memory and are successful in communicating meaning effectively.

138. Pupils have very good attitudes. They clearly enjoy their language lessons and all contribute well and with enthusiasm. They are reliable and mature. They work effectively in situations where they are given independence (when carrying out surveys using the foreign language, for example). They listen well to the teacher and to each other. They have developed the capacity to be self-critical.
139. Pupils develop very good listening skills because teachers have a very good command of the languages they teach. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Some teaching is excellent. The teachers use French, German and Spanish extensively in lessons to communicate with pupils. Lesson planning is a strength. Lessons are very well structured so that pupils are able to build and extend their spoken and written responses. New vocabulary is thoroughly practised. Teachers use a variety of methods to ensure maximum involvement by pupils in this key part of the lesson, so that they memorise new words and structures effectively and develop very good pronunciation. Excellent visual support material, produced by teachers, is a further stimulus to concentration. All lessons plan to develop speaking and writing skills to a very high standard, but there is less emphasis on reading. All lessons have objectives, which are always shared with pupils. In the best lessons, these are stated explicitly in terms of what pupils are expected to achieve and learning is reviewed at the end. Learning is further enhanced by very good teaching methods. All teachers know their pupils well. They use questioning very effectively so higher attainers are challenged and low attainers experience success and maintain a high level of motivation. Most lessons have a variety of approaches that further stimulate pupils' interest and their enjoyment of the lesson. For example, presentation of new material often involves games; higher attaining pupils frequently take over the teacher's role; activities, like surveys, designed to ensure maximum student involvement are a feature of many lessons.
140. In general, teachers maintain a good balance between teacher- and student-centred activities. Occasionally there is too much emphasis on whole-class teaching and this affects pupils' concentration. Most pupils achieve very well because, in most lessons, teachers have very high expectations. There is a strong emphasis in lessons on accuracy of oral and written expression so that all pupils think carefully about what they say and write. Lower attainers in Year 8, for example, were able to use complex grammar points without making mistakes. Pupils have confidence to express themselves because all teachers are keen to praise pupils' efforts. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. This creates a very good working atmosphere in which pupils are happy to contribute without fear of failure. As a result, pupils not only respond accurately, but have the confidence to speak and write at length. Most lessons are conducted at a very brisk pace. Teaching assistants are very effective. Marking of pupils' work is thorough and teachers use comments very well to point out to pupils the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Pupils work is thoroughly assessed and careful records are kept. Care is taken to involve pupils in the process so that all pupils know the level at which they are working. The learning area makes a very good contribution to numeracy and literacy and, in particular, to the development of pupils' ICT skills. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
141. Leadership and management in the learning area are excellent. There is a very clear vision based on achieving high standards and ensuring that pupils enjoy language learning. This principle led to the decision to give low attainers in Year 9 a fresh start and learn Spanish. The development plan is realistic and sets clear priorities. The learning area has a detailed, but manageable, system for tracking pupils' progress, which it uses to evaluate performance. Systems for performance management are effective and the support for newly qualified teachers is excellent. Weekly meetings in the learning area, with a clear focus on improving learning and teaching, ensure that the work of the department is effectively monitored. Documentation is exceptionally detailed and helpful. Learning resources, particularly those produced by the teachers themselves, are very good. The very good working environment is enhanced by excellent displays.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The leadership of the new learning co-ordinator.
- The standard of teaching and learning.
- The growing number of extra-curricular activities and the increasing numbers of pupils involved.
- The school's commitment to the department's development plan.

Areas for improvement

- Provision for ICT in the department, which is restricting the full delivery of the National Curriculum.
- Insufficient multi-cultural instruments.

142. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 7 are in line with national averages. Although pupils arrive in Year 7 with a variety of musical experiences, pupils in the current Year 7 are making good progress because of the very good standard of teaching and quality of music making. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have experienced inconsistency in music teaching due to long-term staff sickness. This has necessitated the use of supply teachers who are not music specialists. Consequently, standards in Years 8 and 9 are, currently, below those expected nationally for pupils of these ages. There is evidence that much improved teaching is now leading to better achievement. Standards in composition, for example, are now above expectations. Pupils in Year 8 are generally making good progress under the guidance of the new learning co-ordinator. Recorded performances of pupils' compositions from all year groups were heard and they support the evidence seen in class of good progress by Year 8 and 9 pupils being made in a short time.
143. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with much that is very good. Pupils' attitudes are good, a result of the practical nature of the lessons and the interesting content. This enables them to enjoy their music making - particularly in group work, where they concentrate well on the task in hand and collaborate well with the other pupils. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and experience make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are given the freedom to explore musical expression, in lessons that are well planned, cater for the needs of all pupils, relate to previous learning, and have high expectations. They are also motivated by the teacher's enthusiasm and her ability to create opportunities that allow pupils to achieve beyond their own expectations. The length of lessons, fifty minutes, is preventing pupils from making better progress with their compositions as it limits the time available for performance and evaluation.
144. All the lessons observed made a good contribution to developing the pupils' literary skills by the use of key words and musical vocabulary. Pupils put instruments away in a responsible manner and show respect for the teacher and their peers. Homework is set every fortnight and is used to reinforce or extend previous learning, or to prepare for a new topic. It is generally well done and thoroughly marked with positive comments giving pupils good advice on how to make improvements.
145. Leadership and management under the new learning co-ordinator are very good. Her focused direction and practical approach have already established music as a worthwhile subject, and a growing number of pupils are making the most of the opportunity to practise in the department at break or lunchtime. Sixty pupils are receiving instrumental tuition at school from visiting teachers, mostly in Period 7, and the number of ensemble activities held at this time is also growing in range and in the numbers of pupils involved.
146. The newly-written documentation is very good. A more practically based curriculum has been devised which will address the ICT needs of pupils in Years 7-9. Assessment records are impeccable and have been designed to give clear indications of pupils who are underachieving. Accommodation is satisfactory. The size of the teaching rooms meets the minimum requirements, but does not allow for large classes or for ensemble work of any size. Resources

are good, but those in the recording studio are incorrectly set up and require specialist assistance to put them into working order. The drive to raise standards and provide pupils with their full musical entitlement is impeded by a shortage of computers available in the learning area (better provision is planned) and of instruments from other cultures, which would enhance pupils' experiences in these areas and cover more effectively the full requirements of the National Curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Very good standards of teaching.
- Very good achievement.
- Very good pupil attitudes.
- Extra-curricular provision including enhancement provision.

Areas for improvement

- The need for planning that indicates more clearly the expected levels of progression across the years to aid assessment.
- Further development of the pupils' ability to analyse in more detail their own and each other's performances.

147. Pupils enter the school just below average in their knowledge and skill levels. However, Year 9 pupils are attaining standards above those expected nationally for pupils at this stage. This constitutes very good progress for the majority of pupils, and is the result of high levels of teaching, very positive pupil attitudes, a well-organised department and a commitment to high standards. Evidence exists of above average individual performances reflected in the representative honours in areas such as football and swimming. Pupils with special educational needs are known by teachers, coached accordingly and make progress in lessons in line with other pupils.
148. Pupils' knowledge of the importance of exercise and its effects on the human body is good. They understand the need for, and lead, effective warm-up sessions and can identify the different exercises required for different sporting activities. Across the years, pupils acquire and develop good skills. In Year 7 gymnastics, excellent learning takes place, as all pupils identify different moves - such as star jumps - and then gradually develop their own sequence. A very good level of self-analysis is in evidence, as pupils think carefully and discuss the best way to develop their performance. Year 8 pupils have satisfactory skill levels in basketball. High attainers show good levels of control and positioning when shooting, dribbling and passing. All pupils make satisfactory progress when adapting their learning to small games situations, with higher attainers demonstrating their ability to adapt to the changing circumstances of a game. In the small Year 9 classes, pupils respond very well to the very good coaching of teachers and are increasing their awareness of space and movement in basketball. The majority of pupils makes very good progress, shown in the way they adopt the correct body positioning when shadowing an attacker. Knowledge of the appropriate technique to deliver jump and lay-up shots is secure and higher attainers show a consistently high level of ball control and positioning. Less secure is the ability of pupils to take the initiative consistently, rather than be encouraged by staff, in the analysis of their own and each other's work. While higher attainers talk in some detail about what they need to do to improve, other pupils are insufficiently specific.
149. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good and often excellent. They work hard in lessons, and show enjoyment and commitment to work. In lessons, they show a willingness to get involved, to offer their views and are keen to show their skills to others. The quality of relationships and respect for others is obvious, with spontaneous applause given for demonstrations by other pupils. All pupils dress smartly and appropriately for their lessons.

150. The quality of teaching overall is very good, and excellent in one in five lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use very good levels of subject knowledge to design varied activities, to give coaching advice, and to assess pupils' needs, so as to be able to deliver challenge that enables pupils to make very good progress. Short, sharp activities are designed that allow pupils to practise and improve their performances. Lessons begin with clear statements about what the pupils will be expected to learn and finish with a review that reinforces the main learning points of the lesson. Very good use is made of pupils' whiteboards to identify what the pupils feel they wish to learn and practise during the lesson. Time is allocated during the lesson for pupils to think about and review their performance. In some lessons, however, there is a need for more questioning by teachers to further test pupils' understanding.
151. The curriculum is good and enhancement opportunities are built into the timetable, including golf and volleyball. Appropriately written schemes of work are being developed, although there is a need for further planning to indicate more clearly the expected levels of progression across the years. This clearer guidance as to the levels of work required of pupils will enable progression to be more clearly identified. Such a review will also allow for a more consistent delivery of aspects of information and communication technology, numeracy and literacy in lessons.
152. The subject makes a good overall contribution to the school's social, cultural and moral provision, with a programme of competitive games being developed with other schools.
153. The co-ordination of the learning area is good. There is a very good, shared commitment to high standards within the subject and to improvement. The arrangements for the induction of, and support for new teachers are very good and include weekly review meetings. High quality subject documentation exists that guides teachers well, and realistic development plans are in place. Standards within the department are monitored effectively through lesson observations, reviews of teachers' planning, and departmental meetings. Pupils' progress is being monitored. The emphasis is increasingly upon pupil self-assessment that works alongside more formal teacher assessments. The use of such assessment data is developing.
154. Accommodation is good overall for the number of pupils on roll at present, with a sports hall and good changing areas and facilities for the disabled available. There are no health and fitness related facilities and pressure on the one indoor sports area will increase as the school grows in size. The standard of décor and displays reinforces the high standards set by the subject staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the provision for religious education is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well in religious education.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good.
- Pupils show respect for each other's religious beliefs.
- They take a pride in their written work.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities to develop research skills, for instance through the use of information technology.

155. Pupils achieve well in religious education. Based on the work seen and discussion with pupils, their attainments in religious education are above the expectations outlined in the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils learn about religion in a range of contexts. For instance, in Year 7 they compare Christian and Sikh initiation rituals. In Year 8, they develop a good insight into religious symbolism through work on the meanings of Holy Communion for different groups of Christians. In Year 9, pupils learn the significance of Hindu stories such as the Ramayana, as part of their study of sacred texts. Pupils also achieve well in learning from religion and human experience. In Year 7, for instance, they explore they explore the concept of what it means to belong to a faith

community by thinking of different groups in society to which they belong. Their work on sacred texts in Year 9 is supported by consideration of the books that they regard as special to themselves. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls, and pupils with special needs make good progress along with their peers.

156. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are very well planned and teaching activities carefully matched to pupils' aptitudes and abilities. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of what pupils will achieve. The brisk pace of teaching, with well-focused activities, as in a lesson on the significance of Holy Communion, helps to keep pupils on task. Lessons are well timed, ensuring good opportunities for teachers to assess and summarise what pupils have learnt from the lesson. A lesson on Hindu sacred texts in Year 9 was particularly effective in this respect. Pupils' written work is carefully assessed, and homework is used imaginatively to extend pupils' learning. A Year 7 lesson on interpretations of the book of Genesis' account of the Creation encouraged pupils' independent learning skills very well. Opportunities to develop research skills, for instance through the use of information technology, are not yet fully deployed.
157. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good. They work with sustained effort and concentration and combine well to share ideas in pairs and small groups. They show good respect for each other's contributions and religious beliefs. They take a pride in their written work, which is exceptionally neat and well presented. Many pupils enjoy their lessons in religious education. Almost all pupils, including those for whom religious education is not their most popular subject, see a value and purpose in what they study. Pupils behave very well, and are very responsive and polite to adults.
158. The school's curriculum for religious education is good. Schemes of work are at an early stage of development, but are being planned to match the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus, and build up pupils' knowledge and experience of the subject progressively as they get older. The use of information and communication technology to broaden pupils' knowledge in the subject is at an early stage of development. The school is exploring ways of combining with neighbouring schools to organise joint visits to places of worship, which will give greater breadth and depth to pupils' experiences. The school recognises the need to supplement these opportunities further through the use of video and artefacts. Attractively-presented displays in the corridor enhance the curriculum. Appropriate plans are in place to enhance pupils' literacy, numeracy and information technology skills through their work in religious education.
159. The school plans very appropriately to introduce the short course GCSE for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. This will meet the statutory requirement in a way which adds value to pupils' studies and provides a firm basis for motivation and achievement.
160. Arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are good. Teachers frequently check pupils' understanding in the course of their teaching. Pupils' work is regularly marked and annotated, and pupils get good feedback, which helps them to tackle areas that need development. The school's arrangements for reporting to parents are satisfactory.
161. Although the school does not have a full-time specialist teacher, the subject is very well led within the humanities faculty. The part-time specialist teacher's knowledge and skills have been used very effectively to develop schemes of work, which the non-specialist teachers deliver with commitment and enthusiasm. The realisation of the school's curriculum plans for religious education should enable pupils to take full advantage of the very good teaching they receive.