

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OAK LODGE SCHOOL**

Dibden Purlieu, Southampton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116637

Headteacher: Beverley Hawker

Reporting inspector: Mike Kell  
13101

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2003

Inspection number: 249366

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (Moderate Learning Difficulties)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Roman Road  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R. Moseley

Date of previous inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> June 1997

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13101	Mike Kell	Registered inspector		Information about the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught What should the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
1405	Mike McDowell	Team inspector	English Music Personal, social and health education	
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Humanities Modern Foreign languages Special educational needs	
21501	Judith Charlesworth	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2480	Christine Gilder	Team inspector	Information and communication technology. Religious education Citizenship	
30243	Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Equal opportunities	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Oak Lodge is a mixed community special school for pupils aged between eleven and sixteen years with moderate learning difficulties, although many have more complex learning needs. There are 107 boys and girls on roll, which is bigger than average for a school of this type, but only half are classed as having moderate learning difficulties. The remaining pupils display a range of special educational needs including emotional and behavioural difficulties, autism, severe learning difficulties, visual impairment, and speech and communication difficulties. Therefore, pupils' levels of attainment on entry are well below the national average. The school's catchment area is wide and predominantly rural in the south west of Hampshire and so the majority of pupils travel on organised transport. Most pupils enter the school from the local primary special school although some do transfer from mainstream schools. There are 40 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals and this is high. One pupil is from an ethnic minority. Almost a quarter of the pupils have a Travelling background but they are now settled in the area. No pupils have English as an additional language.

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

Oak Lodge is a good and effective school. Pupils are taught well. Therefore they achieve well and their standards of social and personal development are very good. Leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress because they are taught well. Very effective monitoring of the school's performance has raised the overall standard of teaching.
- The academic, social and communication needs of pupils with more complex difficulties are addressed very well.
- All pupils make very good progress in their social and personal development because of very good relationships between all members of the school community and very effective procedures for promoting good behaviour.
- Pupils have a very positive attitude towards the school. They are very enthusiastic and extremely keen to be involved in all activities the school has to offer. Therefore attendance is very good.
- The careers and vocational education programme, including work experience opportunities, prepares pupils very well for transition to post-16 education or into work placements.
- Very effective use is made of the local community and the links with other schools and colleges.

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

- The arrangements for planning the curriculum.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements and the use of assessment information.
- The subject knowledge of all those who teach subjects with which they are not fully familiar.
- The breadth of individual education plans.
- The teaching of numeracy across the curriculum and the programme for teaching citizenship.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

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

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in June 1997 and has addressed effectively most of the key issues. Taught time has increased in line with recommendations for pupils of this age and the time allocated to different subjects has been improved. There have been marked improvements in the provision for music and the progress made by pupils in mathematics. Pupils' behaviour has improved and there has been substantial improvement in attendance. In addition to the key issues, there has been

good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Very good leadership and management by the headteacher has enabled these improvements to take place even though there are now many more pupils with more complex needs. Also, pupils with communication and language needs are now integrated into the main school rather than being based in a separate resource area. Only two teachers remain since the last inspection and severe recruitment problems have been addressed by employing unqualified teachers and giving some learning support assistants a teaching role. This has generally proved successful. However, two significant issues identified in 1997 have not been resolved. These relate to the level of challenge for all pupils and the use of effective assessment systems.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 14	by age 16	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	B	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Overall, all pupils in relation to their prior attainment, achieve well. This is due to the overall good quality teaching and adult support that is available across the school. This is further enhanced when pupils go out into the community to learn as the school uses local resources and facilities very effectively. Pupils make good progress in all subjects except information and communication technology and religious education, where they achieve satisfactorily, but in some circumstances higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently well. Pupils achieve particularly well in all aspects of personal, social and health education except citizenship, which is under developed. Pupils make good progress against targets set in individual education plans, but these are limited in scope containing only personal targets associated with communication, social interaction and behaviour. This arrangement does not meet the needs of all pupils as literacy and numeracy targets are not identified in working documents so there is no secure system for monitoring pupils' gains in these areas.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like coming to school and are very enthusiastic to take part in all activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and good respect for the feelings and views of peers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. High quality relationships exist between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the rate for similar schools nationally.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good and generally meets the needs of all pupils, although on occasions the highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently well challenged. Very little teaching is unsatisfactory and none is poor. There are no significant differences between the quality of lessons taught by qualified teachers and those taught by unqualified teachers and learning support assistants, and the same strengths of teaching and areas for development were identified in lessons taught by the two groups. English, mathematics and science are taught well. There is also good teaching overall in physical education, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, and French (taught only to years 7 to 9) and personal, social and health education. Music is very well taught. The teaching of information and communication technology and religious education are satisfactory. All staff maintain a good focus on developing pupils' communication skills. There is a good strategy for promoting pupils' literacy skills and numeracy is promoted satisfactorily. The development of skills associated with using new technology to support and extend learning is restricted by the limited amount of consolidation of knowledge and understanding in other subjects. There is not yet an appropriate balance between developing information and communication technology skills in discrete subject lessons and practising and extending them elsewhere in the curriculum.

All those who teach are committed to providing meaningful and interesting experiences to help their pupils learn and they are well supported in this by the work of a highly skilled group of learning support assistants who make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. Staff have a shared understanding of pupils' needs and this strong sense of teamwork is a significant strength of the school. Pupils are very well managed and lessons are characterised by the quality of interactions, encouragement, and good humour. Trust and mutual respect are evident throughout the school and there is an emphasis on 'listening to' and 'sharing with' others.

All teachers of subjects like art, music, physical education and design and technology have very good subject knowledge. However, other lessons are less successful because

teachers' depth of understanding is not always adequate for all the subjects they are required to teach. Consequently, some teaching of subjects including mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and religious education results in some differences in the quality of learning by different groups of pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The English and mathematics strands of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 have had a beneficial impact on standards. The curriculum in years 10 and 11 has very good vocational and work-related aspects. Some pupils benefit greatly from attending lessons in the adjacent mainstream school. All pupils gain from the school's very good community links and from residential experiences.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school works hard and successfully to ensure that Travellers' culture is acknowledged and celebrated through input from outside agencies and recognition through topics of the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are very good, but the assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory and does not contribute to planning pupils' future programmes.
The partnership the school has with parents.	Good. The school has good links with parents and this working partnership contributes positively to pupils' learning and development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is very well led by a very good and effective headteacher who gives the school a sense of purpose, focus and direction. Other senior managers are relatively new and their direct impact on the school's strategic development and day-to-day management is not yet evident.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well, but it does not yet substantially influence the future development of the school because not all governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities or up-to-date awareness of current developments in schools.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school employs robust systems of self-evaluation that enable it to maintain oversight of all aspects of its own performance and of the standards pupils achieve. Therefore it is in a strong position to identify its priorities and targets and to then take the necessary action to address them.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Appropriate and relevant priorities are reflected in an effective school development plan. Very good budgeting and planning procedures ensure that spending is linked to these priorities and to the school's longer-term strategic direction. The school is vigilant in applying the principles of 'best value'.

Staffing is satisfactory and there is a good range of learning resources. Accommodation is good overall and the recently opened creative arts wing provides an excellent addition.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The quality of teaching across the school.</li><li>• The school works closely with them.</li><li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem or concern.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better and more regular information on pupils' progress</li><li>• The amount of homework pupils are given.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments about the school. It also agrees with the view that parents could receive better and more regular information on pupils' progress. The team considers that the provision of homework is appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Boys and girls make similarly good progress and there are no differences in the levels achieved between pupils from a Travellers' background and others. On occasion, higher attaining pupils are prevented from making very good progress because of a lack of suitably challenging activities. The good progress is due to the overall good quality teaching and adult support that is available across the school. This is further enhanced when pupils go out into the community to learn as the school uses local resources and facilities very effectively. However, procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. This means that staff do not always have sufficiently good ongoing records of pupils' achievements to plan future work or to provide the evidence they need to judge pupils' performance against 'p' scores (nationally recognised attainment levels leading up to level 1 of the National Curriculum) and National Curriculum attainment levels.

2. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with both language and literacy skills very much lower than the average for their age. After a period of adjustment and consolidation in their first year they begin to make progress at a good rate and by the end of Year 9 pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 11 they have made sufficient progress to be entered for externally accredited examinations. The consistent progress made by pupils in speaking and listening, reading and, especially, writing is due to purposeful teaching in English lessons brought about by the successful introduction of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 and the National Literacy Strategy. In addition, the school has a clearer understanding of the need to support the acquisition of literacy skills in all aspects of its curriculum. Other factors contributing to pupils' good progress include an improvement in library facilities, individual reading sessions, and the Social Use of Language Programme that has clear benefits for lower attaining pupils and those with specific communication needs. However, on occasion, tasks and content do not suit the needs of higher attaining pupils, and therefore their progress is limited. The highest attaining pupils in all year groups receive their English lessons in the adjacent mainstream school and because this arrangement enables them to be challenged at a sufficient level, they make very good progress.

3. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good because of the successful introduction and implementation of the mathematics strand of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils understand place value and add and subtract three digit numbers. They understand halving and doubling of simple numbers and correctly match fractions such as halves, quarters and eighths to shaded diagrams. Pupils recognise and know the number of sides of common two-dimensional shapes and draw a line of symmetry, knowing the two halves of a regular shape reflect each other. They recognise coins and select the correct coins for a given amount up to a pound. By the end of Year 11, pupils are successful in externally accredited examinations and this prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Investigations such as weighing a range of parcels and letters before calculating the postal charges and choosing the appropriate stamps are used well to enable pupils to develop their skills in estimation and in helping them to learn and understand mathematical concepts and their application in everyday activities. However, the lack of a formal policy on using numeracy across all subject areas results in limited opportunities for pupils to reinforce these skills across the curriculum. On occasion, some pupils' progress is limited by inconsistent planning procedures, which lead to lack of imaginative teaching, and some teachers' uncertain subject knowledge. The organisation of the timetable means that some classes have very long lessons. On occasion at these times

there is a slower pace, less focus and therefore less progress because teachers change to a totally different activity as pupils' lose concentration.

4. Pupils achieve well in science. Analysis of pupils' attainment in relation to National Curriculum level descriptions indicates that all pupils, including those with more complex needs, make good progress as they move through the school. Results in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9 confirm this analysis. Consequently, over the past three years increasing numbers of pupils have reached a level that prepares them well for following accredited courses in years 10 and 11. A very small number of pupils demonstrate very good progress as they follow a General Certificate of Secondary Education course and are predicted to attain in line with their mainstream peers. Others' levels of achievements are more suited to Certificate of Educational Achievement Entry Level examinations. Pupils progress well because teaching is good overall, particularly for pupils in years 10 and 11 when they benefit from the consistency of a single, specialist science teacher. However, at other times pupil achievement is restricted by teachers' insecure subject knowledge that prevents them reinforcing the purpose and practice of fair testing in investigations and developing ideas that challenge higher attaining pupils.

5. Pupils' high levels of achievement in art, music, and design and technology are the direct result of good specialist accommodation and enhanced learning resources being well used by staff with very good subject knowledge. Specialist teachers of humanities also use very high quality resources, supplemented by a programme of extremely informative visits, to provide a range and variety of learning experiences that result in pupils achieving well. The teacher's very good subject knowledge is responsible for raising standards in physical education. Although the school's own accommodation and learning resources do not lend themselves to pupils achieving well, the planned, regular use of local sports facilities compensates and pupils receive a rich variety of sporting experiences. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils also achieve well in French. An appropriate emphasis on oral work and good teaching mean that all pupils achieve well in their spoken French and in their understanding of French life and culture, but at times there is a lack of challenge in written work, which limits the opportunities of the highest attaining pupils.

6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology and religious education. However, in each subject there are elements which restrict pupils from making better progress. In information and communication technology (ICT) staff training in the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 is at an early stage and therefore its implementation has not yet had any significant impact. A big investment in resources and an excellent ratio of computers to pupils are helping to raise standards but two factors constrain further development. The current timetable provides uneven amounts of time for the subject for pupils in years 7 to 10 and insufficient time overall in Year 11. The limited amount of consolidation of knowledge and understanding through other subjects of the curriculum means that there is not yet an appropriate balance between developing skills in discrete ICT lessons and practising and extending them elsewhere in the curriculum. In religious education, pupils study the key elements of some major world religions and their learning is well supported by visits to places of worship. However, on occasion teachers' understanding of the subject is insufficient to extend pupils' knowledge.

7. All pupils are taught personal, social and health education in their class groups, chiefly by their form teacher and they make good progress in these lessons. Comparisons of pupils' 'p' scores in personal, social and health education show that they make significant gains, particularly in their last two years in school, and that most achieve levels of development well above the average for pupils in similar schools. However, the school's current practice of incorporating citizenship within the existing programme for PSHE is not done to a full and sufficient extent. The inadequacy of the citizenship programme of lessons means that pupils

do not make sufficient progress in developing their knowledge and understanding. Pupils make good progress against the social interaction, communication and behaviour targets set in individual education plans, which are reviewed once a term.

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

8. Pupils' very good attitudes to the school and to their work contribute significantly to the progress they make. The majority of parents say that their children like school, and discussions with pupils confirm they are enthusiastic about their studies and participate keenly in a range of extra curricular activities. Arrival at the school in the morning is a happy and exciting time for most as pupils arrive punctually, greet friends and staff in a cheery and polite manner and are clearly enthusiastic about the coming day. In many lessons pupils show an enthusiasm for their learning and an eagerness to contribute, often becoming engrossed in their activities. They show pride in their achievements. Pupils on the school council speak very positively about what a happy and friendly school Oak Lodge is and about how pleased they are to be there. They make the point that pupils can confidently seek help and support from all staff.

9. Behaviour in all but very few lessons is at least satisfactory and in many it is excellent or very good. The very few examples of unsatisfactory behaviour were in Year 7 classes and were characterised by pupils being over excited, demanding attention and refusing to comply with the very good management strategies that were used. The vast majority of pupils respect and observe the behaviour code and the school is an orderly environment which is conducive to learning and development. Pupils show a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and good respect for the feelings and views of peers. There were numerous examples in lessons of pupils working harmoniously together, sharing equipment, taking turns and being helpful to each other, such as in a Year 11 careers lesson when a boy helped a classmate with his reading. He not only helped with particular words but also took time to put the words into context in phrases and sentences to help his friend understand their meaning. Behaviour is good around the school at breaks and lunchtimes. No examples of oppressive or malicious behaviour were seen and no evidence of bullying was witnessed, although records show that there are occasional incidents. Pupils confirm there are minor outbreaks of bullying but also say they are soon dealt with. Exclusions are very rare.

10. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, a strength of the school and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and development. These relationships are often exemplified by the positive use of humour. There can be flash points between pupils but these are quickly sorted out. In the context of the school pupils' levels of personal development are very good. They take advantage of a very good range of outings and residential visits to extend their understanding of the wider world. Many enhance their personal and social skills through extra curricular activities, representing others on the school council and doing jobs around the school. Wherever possible pupils are encouraged effectively to follow their interests and to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning and development.

11. Attendance at the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is now very good and well above the average for similar schools nationally. The high levels of attendance reflect the genuine enthusiasm pupils have for attending school and also reflect the very effective work the school is doing to monitor and encourage families to ensure that children attend. The very good attendance and good punctuality have a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make.

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

12. The quality of teaching and learning are now good overall, with improvements since the last inspection identified in English, mathematics (particularly investigative work), humanities, French, music, and physical education. Teaching is now very good or excellent in almost a quarter of all lessons and it is good or better in almost three-quarters. Very little teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. There are no significant differences between the quality of lessons taught by qualified teachers and those taught by unqualified teachers and learning support assistants, and the same strengths of teaching and areas for development were identified in lessons taught by the two groups of staff.

13. English (including literacy), mathematics (including numeracy) and science are taught well. There is also good teaching overall in physical education, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, and French (taught only to years 7 to 9). Personal, social and health education is also taught well. Music is very well taught. The teaching of information and communication technology and religious education are satisfactory. Consequently, overall all pupils achieve well in all year groups, including those from a Travelling background, and the learning needs of pupils with communication and language difficulties are met particularly well.

14. Teachers are effective at using a variety of methods to help pupils learn, combining individual, group and whole class teaching well. Lessons are generally well structured and follow a consistent format with an introduction which recaps on what pupils have done and learned previously, a main teaching and practical middle part, and a plenary at the end. In the best lessons these plenary sessions are particularly effective as teachers make skilful use of them as opportunities for pupils to celebrate achievements by showing what they have learned and to assess developments in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. However, on a few occasions these opportunities for ongoing assessment are missed as pupils are not given the time to consolidate or to reflect on what they have been doing.

15. Teaching and learning are strong in all parts of the school because of the quality of the collaboration between teachers and support staff. All those who teach are committed to providing meaningful and interesting experiences to help their pupils learn and they are well supported in this by the work of a highly skilled group of learning support assistants. They make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, being adept at using their initiative and intuitively supporting the pupils with the most needs very well. As a result, they have the expertise to balance their roles of directing pupils and allowing them time to think and respond. For example, support of such high quality enabled a group of Year 7 pupils to improve the quality of their landscape paintings and skilful communication encouraged Year 9 pupils to participate in singing sessions of the 'blues'. Staff have a shared understanding of pupils' needs and this strong sense of teamwork is a significant strength of the school.

16. Other features of teaching that contribute powerfully to the quality of pupils' learning are pupil management and the quality of relationships. Pupils are very well managed and relationships are very good so that lessons are characterised by the quality of interactions, encouragement, rapport and good humour. Trust and mutual respect are evident throughout the school and there is an emphasis on 'listening to' and 'sharing with' others. Therefore pupils are willing to try out new experiences secure in the knowledge that they are in a very supportive environment in which help, guidance and support is readily at hand. These very high quality relationships between pupils and staff are also reflected in pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Pupils generally listen carefully to what they are asked to do and respond positively when they are asked to pay attention. As a result, they make a great deal of effort and approach tasks with very good interest and concentration and many are able to demonstrate their growing maturity as they work collaboratively and independently.

17. Many teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. This is particularly

noticeable in art, history, music, physical education and design and technology and all pupils benefit from this specialist teaching. In these subjects, teachers use time and resources extremely well to provide activities that meet pupils' needs, modifying tasks and content so that all pupils are suitably challenged. Some teachers of other subjects display similar expertise, such as science and mathematics lessons in years 10 and 11, but on occasions other teachers of these subjects have uncertain knowledge and this results in some differences in the quality of learning by different groups of pupils.

18. At times, teachers' insecure subject knowledge becomes more evident because of deficiencies in lesson planning. Where two teachers share the teaching across a year group, such as for English and mathematics in years 7 to 9, lesson planning is a joint responsibility but, in practice, one of the teachers initiates the plans. This means that non-specialist teachers are not always able to adapt these lesson plans to incorporate activities that are suitably challenging for the highest attaining pupils. In part this is because extension tasks are not identified within the cross-year lesson plans, and those doing the actual teaching do not add them. Planning for lessons tends to indicate activities to be followed, identified as lesson objectives, rather than anticipated learning outcomes. These objectives are regularly shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson, and recapped at the end, but they tend to be a mixture of a description of the structure of the lesson (i.e. first we will....., then we will .....): and the reinforcement of a key skill (e.g. to work co-operatively in small groups) rather than being subject knowledge based.

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

19. Overall, pupils are provided with a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities, although the curriculum is good for pupils in years 10 and 11. The issues for improvement in music, religious education and modern foreign language identified in the last inspection have been addressed well. All required subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, and careers guidance from Year 9 onwards are taught, but in some subjects, such as information and communication technology, the timetable is unbalanced with uneven amounts of time for pupils in years 7 to 10 and insufficient time overall in Year 11. Provision is not yet adequate for teaching citizenship in any year groups. A number of pupils in years 10 and 11 have been disapplied from learning a modern foreign language, but the school intends to re-introduce the opportunity for these pupils to experience aspects of French language and culture.

20. Overall, the curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities but the structure of the school timetable does have an impact on pupils' learning. Some lessons are too long for the younger pupils to maintain concentration, while other lessons are too short and learning opportunities are limited because of the time lost as pupils move between rooms.

21. The school is very positive in its attitude towards equality of opportunity, educational inclusion, and learning opportunities that meet individual needs and this philosophy is translated into practice very effectively. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of those in classes for pupils with more complex needs but the school also recognises individual learning needs and introduces mechanisms to ensure they are met. In some cases this means support from external agencies, such as clinical and educational psychologists. For other pupils it means making arrangements for their curriculum needs to be met through inclusion in lessons in the adjacent mainstream school. Pupils from all years benefit from these links, including some following General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses. These very productive links greatly enhance the curricular opportunities offered by Oak Lodge and pupils are very well supported by the school's specialist learning support



staff. Pupils from a Travelling background are also included very well. All of these families are now settled in the area and therefore the school is able to meet these pupils' academic, social and cultural needs well with input from the local authority's specialist support service. The school's inclusive policy is also evident in the way it enables other pupils to appreciate this different culture through specifically targeted aspects of the curriculum, which includes Travellers visiting the school to talk to pupils.

22. The organisation of the curriculum is changing. For many years, the curriculum for each year group has been arranged into ten-week blocks where topics in each subject are chosen to link together into a themed unit. For example, the current Year 8 unit is 'Past and Present', and Year 11's is 'Making it Work'. Although the school has won national awards for this approach in the past, more recently it has introduced the nationally recognised schemes of work and guidance for each subject. At the moment, both methods of curricular organisation co-exist, and the school has identified modules from the national schemes of work to fit into their unit approach. However, the themes of the units are now not sufficiently clear for all pupils to make the links themselves between what they have learned in the different subjects, and nor are the links always reinforced by the staff. Overall, the value of this dual approach is open to question.

23. The school has begun to develop the curriculum in line with the National Strategy for Key Stage 3, but this is still at an early stage. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively introduced, and good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their literacy skills through other subjects. However, fewer opportunities are given for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum. The school has started the process of developing the information and communication technology curriculum and provision as recommended by the strategy, and work on science and other subjects is planned for following staff training.

24. Curricular planning is still largely based on long-standing unit plans, and, because of weaknesses in assessment, not securely on what pupils already know. The plans are distributed a few weeks before a new unit begins, and include both an overview of what will be taught in each subject over the ten weeks and the lesson plans for each lesson. It is the teachers' responsibility to adapt the lesson plans to meet the needs of their class. In practice, this is not always effective; for example higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, and there is not always a clear enough match between the existing planning and what is required by the national guidance. This system also prevents teachers from taking full responsibility for their lessons as planning is too generic whereas teaching groups vary greatly in ability. This leads to teacher comments such as "It was given to me to teach, I didn't plan it." when asked about the content of a lesson.

25. The curriculum for the oldest pupils continues and builds on all the subjects offered in years 7 to 9 and is broad, balanced and very relevant to the age and needs of the pupils. Pupils gain suitable accreditation for their work, through the Certificate of Educational Achievement, ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) and, if appropriate, GCSE courses. The curriculum in years 10 and 11 also includes very good vocational, work-related and careers education and guidance which builds on pupils' work in Year 9. All pupils in Year 11 have the opportunity of a work experience placement, either for a three-week block outside school or, if more appropriate, one day a week within the school. Their experiences form the basis of further work on life skills in preparation for leaving school. The curriculum includes modules on basic health and safety, food hygiene and first aid, all of which are very good preparation for adult life. Pupils develop understanding of the commercial world and awareness of the needs of others through mini-enterprise activities, and links with local colleges are strong and offer good preparation for pupils transferring there at the end of Year 11.

26. The curriculum is very well supported by visits to places relevant to topics being studied, such as the group of pupils who attended Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra workshops. Residential visits further enhance the curriculum and are very effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development. Groups of six pupils are regularly taken out to lunch in a restaurant to give them additional social experience. A range of clubs such as choir, computer and five-a-side football are run at lunch times, and sports sometimes take place after school. However, since organised transport cannot be arranged for out-of-hours activities these clubs can only be offered if staff take pupils home afterwards and are understandably not regular occurrences.

27. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and pupils' personal development. Support and guidance is given informally, through the ethos of the school, and more formally through the PSHE curriculum. Pupils follow a programme of lessons in each year that clusters around a number of themes. In the theme "Here I Am", for example, pupils starting at the school learn about the importance of rules and within this what the school rules are. They learn the importance of obeying emergency instructions such as fire drills and how to be safe outside the school, for example in crossing the road. By the end of Year 9, these themes have been supplemented by others, such as health-related issues around hygiene and diet and an awareness of the problems caused by the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. Pupils are encouraged to think about matters such as personal danger, relationships, the pressure that arises from friends to do the wrong thing, and resolving differences without violence. The oldest pupils consider more complex moral and social issues such as World hunger and the role of legislation in sexual matters. Specific elements of sex education that concern HIV and AIDS are also discussed, and pupils are prepared for the world beyond school by examining action planning, personal target setting and decision making. The school's current practice is to incorporate citizenship within the existing programme for PSHE but it does not do this to a full and sufficient extent.

28. At the time of the last inspection provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development was judged as satisfactory and provision for moral development was judged to be good. The good provision for moral development has been maintained, and those for spiritual and cultural development have improved to the extent that they are now good. Provision for promoting pupils' social development has now become very good and is a strength of the school. This marks a good improvement since the last inspection.

29. Provision for spiritual development is good. Adults throughout the school promote an atmosphere where individuals are respected; pupils emulate these attitudes and are kind and considerate to each other. In lessons such as art and mathematics teachers give good opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas, ask questions and feel their opinions are valued. The school allocates daily time for the *Thought for the Week*. This is a good opportunity for pupils to consider issues such as teamwork, feeling worthwhile, faith and relationships. Form tutors lead discussions about how these topics might affect them and pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs. Pupils learn to express their creativity and appreciate beauty through the art and music curricula and there are very good opportunities for them to develop empathy through the imaginative teaching of history, such as the dreadful conditions for soldiers in the trenches during World War 1. Excellent resources such as a uniform and hair locket resulted in pupils developing compassion for those involved. In English literature pupils consider relationships and feelings when they study *Romeo and Juliet* and the different characters in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

30. The provision the school makes to encourage pupils' moral development is good. Assembly themes such as 'The Importance of Listening' are reinforced during the day and in tutor time. Full school assemblies are used effectively to reinforce the expectations of good behaviour and attendance by awarding weekly shields to the classes with most success in

achieving merits and highest attendance. School rules and merit awards are displayed in classrooms and good use is made of pupils' personal targets to reinforce the concepts of acceptable behaviour and the consequences for not conforming to school expectations. Within their different levels of understanding pupils recognise right from wrong. Adults throughout the school spend time willingly with pupils, helping them to see the consequences of their actions and to develop consideration for other people. Adults, through their very good relationships, are very good role models in showing respect for people and promoting the very positive pupil relationships seen during the inspection.

31. Provision for supporting pupils' social development is very good. The school makes good use of extra funding to ensure that every pupil is able to participate in residential experiences and benefit from the very good opportunities they offer in developing social and independence skills. The organisation of work experience for the older pupils is a further commitment by the school to support pupils in developing their social skills. A strength of this provision is the high level of community links forged by the school. Visits to Winchester Cathedral and Southampton Art Gallery provide very good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the expectations of the wider community. Very good links are established with the local church and pupils visit to take part in 'mock' ceremonies such as baptism and to appreciate the church as a special place for worship. The school encourages pupils to be aware of the needs of others through fundraising for Children in Need, singing for the local Derby and Joan group and organising a party for a local playgroup. All adults encourage pupils to work collaboratively within the classroom by supporting them to develop the skills to work effectively with each other. The school council functions with regular meetings for the class representatives, this gives responsibility to individual pupils and a shared responsibility to the school in considering how to improve the ball pool and resurfacing the playground.

32. Provision to support pupils' cultural development is good. They are encouraged to think beyond their own culture and community. The school has established links with Watamu School in Kenya, photographs of the pupils are displayed around the school and letters have already been exchanged. The humanities subjects, English and religious education give pupils a good understanding of traditions associated with different faiths such as the traditional Hindu wedding and the Chinese New Year. When they consider the theme of journeys or pilgrimages pupils examine the Christian journey associated with the Nativity and the Muslim tradition of The Hajj. Through the art curriculum pupils become aware of the styles of a wide range of artists such as Andy Warhol and Salvador Dali. The school has a significant proportion of pupils from a Travelling background and it is very successful in including them in all aspects of school life. It also works hard to ensure that their cultural background, customs and traditions are recognised and celebrated. Good quality displays around the school reflect the good provision for pupils' cultural development.

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

33. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and support are effective, consistently applied and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. All members of staff know pupils very well and have their best interests and well being in mind at all times. Pupils themselves say they feel able to approach staff freely and recognise this as strength of the school. The procedures for dealing with child protection issues are good and meet fully statutory requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The collaboration with a number of external agencies supports effectively the individual care packages developed for some pupils. The school meets well the statutory requirements of provision for those pupils with a statement of special educational need.

34. Health and safety procedures are good and all staff conscientiously ensure that pupils know and adhere to safe practice. Good systems are in place to ensure that any identified

hazards or safety concerns around the site are reported quickly. A sufficient number of first aiders hold up-to-date accreditation and first aid supplies are appropriate. There are clear procedures relating to medicines on site and there are good procedures to ensure parents are quickly informed of any illness or injury.

35. The procedures in place for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are taken accurately at the start of morning and afternoon school. The administrative staff, the headteacher and the educational welfare officer work very effectively as a team monitoring and following up absence on an individual pupil basis. The early identification of attendance problems and the use of imaginative intervention strategies have been instrumental in the significant improvement in attendance over the last few years.

36. The school has very good procedures for monitoring progress against targets related to aspects of behaviour and personal development. These procedures make a good contribution to the level of care and support provided for pupils. Longer term progress is ensured effectively through the formal termly review and determination of new targets. Rewards and sanction records stem from the detailed day-to-day observations of teaching and support staff and they inform well the weekly review of pupil development at year group meetings. Any pupils experiencing difficulties are quickly identified and the school, in conjunction with parents, is quick to agree suitable short term intervention strategies. The early identification of problems, coupled with the high levels of support and care provided, ensure that all pupils adapt well to the behaviour standard and improve their personal and social skills significantly.

37. Merit schemes are used effectively to promote good and caring behaviour and are popular with pupils throughout the school. Staff use praise consistently to recognise achievement and effort and to encourage pupils to try hard. Pupils' personal and social skill development is ensured effectively through the day to day routines in the school and extended through the very good links with the local community and a large number of outings and residential visits.

38. The monitoring and support for pupils' academic progress remains unsatisfactory. The improvement in assessment procedures noted prior to the last inspection has not been well sustained, and disruptions to its management have contributed to this. There have been improvements to the use of assessment in English, design and technology, art, and information and communication technology but further developments are needed. Two emerging strengths are the interpretation made by the assessment manager of externally provided analyses of the pupils' and the school's performance, and the delegation of more responsibility to each subject manager for subject monitoring and improvement. These curriculum managers have begun to monitor other teachers' marking of work to help pupils improve.

39. Because lessons are not planned with assessment opportunities in mind it is not possible to know whether pupils have learned what was intended in the lesson. As a result staff do not have the information they need to plan future lessons. Furthermore, they do not have adequate records of pupils' attainment and progress to judge pupils' performance against the 'p' and National Curriculum attainment levels. There is as yet no formal internal moderation of teachers' judgements and this leads to inconsistencies in assessing pupils' work.

40. The recently introduced marking policy has helped with ongoing assessment procedures, but pupils do not always receive clear written advice about how best to improve their work. The system of selecting some pieces of work to put into end of unit folders is unwieldy and does not provide a clear picture of progress in each subject over time. The

subject learning targets set at the annual review do not form part of the Individual Education Plans. As a result parents only receive information about progress and learning in the key subjects at the annual review, and some have identified this as an area they would like to see improved.

41. The school's priorities for the development of assessment are appropriate and place the school in a good position to improve.

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

42. Oak Lodge enjoys good support from parents and carers. The partnership which exists with the vast majority of parents contributes positively to pupils' learning and development. Responses to the questionnaire and comments at the meeting reveal positive views of the school and confirm parents' pleasure at the progress their children are making. There is almost universal agreement that children enjoy attending the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the leadership and management of the headteacher, the dedication and commitment of classroom staff, the fact that the school is always approachable and the way in which it works closely with them. The main area of concern raised by a few parents is homework, but in the context of the school inspectors feel that the homework set is suitable to consolidate classroom learning and to encourage the development of independent learning skills.

43. The school works very hard to develop positive links with parents and effectively encourages them to become closely involved in the education and development of their children. Parents are kept well informed about school routines, and events and functions that involve their children. It is quick to involve parents if there are any concerns and ensures their involvement in improvement programmes very well. The school is very approachable and parents know that they can raise any worries they may have with staff at any time. Formal communication with parents concerning pupils' development and progress is good. Most parents attend annual reviews of special educational needs and contribute to the discussion leading to targets for individual education plans. Academic progress is reviewed in the annual review report and discussed at the review. This report summarises well what pupils know, understand and can do but does not give simple, measurable short term targets for improvement. Inspectors agree with those parents who said they would like better and more regular information on academic progress particularly given the timing arrangements for annual reviews which can take place up to four terms apart.

44. The school is constantly looking to improve the partnership with parents and to involve them further in their children's education. Increased levels of contact are being encouraged and the school has adopted the practice of sharing good news about effort and achievement. Parents say they are pleased to receive these positive messages. Attendance at a range of school functions is high despite many parents living a long way from the school. A few parents help regularly in the school and the Oak Lodge Association organises both social and educational events, which are well attended. The recently established parent support group is arranging talks from various specialists and these are well received as they help parents to understand and deal with aspects of their children's development. The school has successfully introduced a visual schedules initiative with some pupils and parents that has helped parents become more involved in their children's education at home.

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

45. The very good and effective headteacher gives the school a sense of purpose, focus and direction. These qualities are reflected in the way the school has responded to the changes and difficulties it has faced since the previous inspection. Planning to meet the

needs of all pupils following significant changes in the nature and complexities of pupils' needs and the shift from a language and communication resource base to integrating pupils into the main school have both been addressed skilfully and successfully.

46. Staff recruitment problems have also been dealt with very imaginatively by the headteacher. There has been a very high turnover of teaching staff since the previous inspection, with only two remaining from that time. The success of the school's response to replacing these personnel, namely to appoint a number of unqualified teachers and to give some of the more experienced learning support assistants a teaching responsibility, has been validated by the current high standards of teaching and learning. An effective staff induction and support programme, embedded performance management procedures, and the headteacher's very good systematic and routine monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have all been influential in raising the standard of classroom practice. Pupils' achievements have improved as a result. The school has also embraced the use of Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) which, in the context of a school, is founded on the principle that the key to successful classroom communication lies in the quality of interactions offered. The VIG programme is managed by the school's educational psychologist and consists of staff being supported as they watch, analyse and reflect on their filmed classroom practice.

47. The senior management team is relatively new and therefore it is at the early stages of providing the headteacher with effective support. These other key staff are developing a sense of their roles and delegated responsibilities but their direct impact on the school's strategic development and day-to-day management is not yet evident. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well through an established sub-committee structure with clear terms of reference, but it is not yet in a position to substantially influence and shape the future direction of the school. This is because not all governors have a clear understanding of their responsibilities or up-to-date awareness of current developments in schools. In addition, they do not yet have routine mechanisms, such as focused visits, for acquiring detailed first hand knowledge about the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the whole of the staff and governors are committed to ongoing school development, such as the school's positive response to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (2001). This further illustrates how Oak Lodge works extremely hard and productively to meet the physical and educational needs of its current pupils whilst being prepared for other pupils who may be referred to it.

48. The very good management skills of the headteacher ensure that the school is very effective in promoting the values it considers important. Efficient day-to-day systems, routines and procedures are in place to ensure a structured, secure and ordered learning environment. These routine procedures are supported by robust systems of self-evaluation that enable it to maintain oversight of all aspects of its own performance and of the standards pupils achieve. Consequently, appropriate and relevant priorities, including whole school targets to raise pupils' levels of attainment, are reflected in an effective school development plan. Very good budgeting and planning procedures ensure that spending is linked to these priorities and to the school's longer-term strategic direction. The value and effectiveness of this budgeting is reflected in the planned surpluses that the school accumulated in order to build the very impressive creative arts extension to the building. Both the grant received for this development and all other grants are used very well for their designated purpose.

50. The unit cost per pupil is in the upper range for schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties but this is not an entirely fair comparison because almost half the pupils have far more complex needs. The school uses its money wisely and effectively in meeting this diverse range of needs and therefore it offers good value for money. Day-to-day financial systems and procedures were satisfactory overall when audited by the local authority in June 2000, and recommendations made at that time have been addressed effectively. Therefore,

overall arrangements have since improved and spending is tightly controlled and administered and there are good arrangements, including the use of new technology, for the routine management of the school's finances. Staff and governors have a good understanding of the principle of 'best value' in ensuring that the school provides the best value for money in its purchases and use of resources.

51. Recent staff recruitment problems mean that the match of qualified specialist teachers to subject management responsibilities is not yet fully in place and some staff are teaching subjects with which they are not familiar and do not have adequate specialist knowledge. The impact of this is that subject expertise is not always available to support all those who teach the different subjects of the curriculum. The staffing committee of the governing body and the senior management team recognise this and are implementing an effective staff training and professional development programme. This is aimed at improving staff knowledge and expertise in order to ensure consistently high quality teaching and learning in all lessons.

52. The accommodation is good overall, and the recently opened creative arts wing provides an excellent addition and represents a quality that the school hopes to achieve across the whole site. There is also specialist accommodation for food technology and science and dedicated areas for information and communication technology. The accommodation for Year 9 pupils is satisfactory even though they are housed in a demountable building that is detached from the main school. The playing fields and playground facilities are good and the whole site is used efficiently. When more specialist accommodation is required, such as in physical education, the school makes very good use of local facilities. The displays around the school are excellent and make a colourful and positive contribution to pupils' learning. They are an effective combination of informative displays and examples of pupils' work, reflecting their activities in lessons and illustrating out-of-school activities.

53. The school has a good quality and range of age-appropriate learning resources that are used well to make lessons interesting and to motivate pupils. They are particularly good in science, music, humanities, and design and technology, and the excellent ratio of computers to pupils is helping to raise standards in information and communication technology. There are good resources for supporting learning in art and French, and they are satisfactory in mathematics and physical education, although these are supplemented very well through the use of the recreation centre's facilities. Extensive use of these facilities, such as the swimming pool and trampoline, provide pupils with a rich variety of activities that enable pupils to experience many new sports. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in library facilities and there is now a library club. These facilities support learning well. There are sufficient, relevant reading books, both fiction and non-fiction, to meet the pupils' needs and interests.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to bring about further improvement the headteacher, staff and governors should now:

1. Improve the planning of the curriculum so that teachers are provided with clear guidance from which they can prepare individual lessons and series of lessons\*.  
(*paragraphs: 3, 18, 24, 39, 59, 66*)
2. Improve the quality of assessment procedures by\*:
  - Developing assessment procedures that are consistent across all subjects,
  - Ensuring that staff maintain an accurate record of the standards achieved by pupils
  - Making sure staff use the information gained to inform the planning of their future work. (*paragraphs: 1, 38, 39, 40, 74, 90, 98*)
3. Improve the quality of teaching by developing teachers' subject expertise so that all pupils are challenged at an appropriate level by:
  - Enhancing the management role of curriculum managers so that they monitor the subject more effectively
  - Develop appropriate training opportunities  
(*paragraphs: 3, 4, 6, 17, 66, 73, 74, 93, 110, 114*)
4. Use more effectively the long term academic targets set at Annual Reviews, particularly those for literacy and numeracy, by translating them into short-term targets contained in working documents such as individual education plans.  
(*paragraphs: 40, 61*)
5. Implement a full programme for teaching citizenship and extend the teaching of numeracy across the curriculum. (*paragraphs: 3, 7, 23, 27, 67*)

\* Some aspects of these areas for improvement have been recognised by the school in its development planning.

In addition to the development points above, the following more minor points should be considered for inclusion in the school action plan:

- The construction of the school timetable
- Procedures for ensuring that parents and carers receive more regular information on their children's academic progress.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	16	42	24	2	0	0
Percentage	5	18	48	27	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	107
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	43

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5%

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.2%

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

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	106	6	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	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	0	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	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10.1
Average class size	9.7

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

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	595

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	843990
Total expenditure	822702
Expenditure per pupil	7618
Balance brought forward from previous year	92292
Balance carried forward to next year	113580

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Results of assessments in July 2002 (in percentages). Number of eligible pupils = 18

English	Level	W	1	2	3	4	5
			12	28	50	5	5

  

Mathematics	Level	W	1	2	3	4	5
			17	28	22	28	5

  

Science	Level	W	1	2	3	4	5
			34	17	34	5	5

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

Number of eligible pupils = 24

Course / subject	Number of pupils entered	Number of pupils passed
<b>ASDAN – Silver / Bronze Award</b>	18	18
<b>Certificate of Educational Achievement</b>		
English	20	20
Mathematics	17	17
Science	21	21
Design and technology	19	19
Information and communication technology	21	21
<b>General Certificate of Secondary Education</b>		
Art and design	9	9
English Language	4	3

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	107
Number of questionnaires returned	33

### Percentage of responses in each category (3 per cent is equivalent to 1 parental response)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	32	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	55	3	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	6	68	23	0	3
The teaching is good.	77	19	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	26	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	10	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	19	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	81	19	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	10	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	26	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	48	13	0	6

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

### **ENGLISH**

55. Pupils enter the school with both language and literacy skills very much lower than the average for their age. After an initial period of adjustment and consolidation they begin to achieve well so that by the end of Year 9 pupils' achievement is good. Pupils continue to make good progress in developing their knowledge, skills, and understanding well during their final two years in the school. The consistent progress now made by pupils in speaking and listening, reading and, especially, writing represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. This improvement is due in part to the school's clearer understanding of the need to support the acquisition of literacy skills in all aspects of its curriculum. There is also more purposeful teaching in English lessons brought about by the introduction of the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 and the National Literacy Strategy.

56. The school appropriately places great emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills from the time they first come to the school. Therefore, by the end of Year 9, pupils have made good progress. Pupils of all abilities have improved their listening skills and contribute sensibly to discussion, answer questions reflectively and comment appropriately on what others say. Those with specific language difficulties and more complex needs achieve equally well as others do. Lower attaining pupils depend on adult support to interpret and recall stories but with this help they recall the sequence of events. Higher attaining pupils develop critical understanding of the books that they read and outline the plot and describe the characters in reviews that they write. Reading is sufficiently developed to support learning in other subjects and everyday life. For example, in a unit of work about newspapers, most pupils, including a significant number of those with more complex special educational needs, were able to read the headlines on newspaper stories, particularly the tabloids. Many read newspaper stories accurately although their understanding of what they read was limited by their knowledge of world affairs. They then produced coherent, short, news stories in a newspaper style working either individually or collaboratively.

57. By Year 11, many pupils have made sufficient progress to be successful in Certificate of Educational Achievement entry level qualifications and a significant proportion are on course to reach the required standard in General Certificate of Secondary Education this year because of the good progress in reading and writing. On occasion, the highest attaining pupils in years 10 and 11 receive their English lessons in the adjacent mainstream school; this arrangement enables them to be challenged at a sufficient level so that those who use this facility make very good progress. Pupils in Year 11 draw together their emerging skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing and use these for practical purposes. For example, in one good lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to talk freely about their recent work experience placements. Some identified particular benefits they had derived from their placement while a few were disappointed by what had happened. They understood that it was appropriate to write to the placement providers to acknowledge the help they had received and they read and reflected upon examples of letters written by others for this purpose. All pupils were fully included in this exercise before writing formal letters of their own composition, for the most part in legible handwriting or sound word processing with accurate punctuation and spelling.

58. Teaching is of good quality overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection when there was some poor teaching. On this occasion there were no unsatisfactory lessons. As a result pupils learn well and, in most cases, are interested in their tasks and apply themselves. Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their

pupils and match the questions they ask and the work they set to their pupils' capabilities. Therefore, pupils at all levels of attainment have work that they are capable of doing. Good use is made of the effective lesson structure recommended by the National Literacy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Lessons commence with an introductory session, usually a word game or a vocabulary or spelling round that encourages pupils and gets them thinking and actively engaged in their work. The purposes of lessons are made clear to pupils at the outset but the benefits of this good practice are tempered by the fact that these "lesson objectives" are a description of the activities in which pupils will engage rather than being expressed in terms of what new things pupils will know, understand and be able to do as a result of the lesson.

59. Those who teach English have sufficient knowledge of the subject and good knowledge in one or two cases. However, the practice used to plan lessons has flaws. Where two teachers share the teaching across a year group, lesson planning is a joint responsibility but, in practice, one of the teachers initiates the plans. However, a good lesson plan in one context is not necessarily effective in another without substantial modification. On occasion this leads to an imperfect understanding of the significance of some lesson activities, or, where the teaching groups vary greatly in ability, insufficient modification of tasks and content to suit pupils' needs. For example, in a Year 8 lesson that started promisingly with a word game that extended vocabulary and spelling, pupils were asked to read an extract from the book that is their current class text and to single out any words they could read but did not understand. Then, using clues from the text around these words the pupils were to try to discover their meaning. However, the choice of written passage made this worthwhile activity less useful to the higher attaining group of pupils because most of them could find no words the meaning of which they did not already know.

60. General strengths of teaching lie in teachers' effective management of pupils and the positive relationships that pupils have with teachers and learning support assistants. These classroom features result in pupils co-operating with adults and classmates and clearly lead to them developing confidence in themselves as learners. This is seen by the number of pupils who feel able to "have a go" at answering questions in lessons, at reading aloud or attempting tricky writing tasks. As pupils are interested in their work and understand what they are asked to do they behave well in most lessons. On occasion pupil management and classroom organisation is less secure when individual pupils with particular, special educational needs pose a challenge but these are predominantly in Year 7 and are still adjusting to the school's expectations.

61. There is a manager for English who has only recently taken up this responsibility but a good start has been made in raising standards by auditing provision and setting targets for pupils' achievement. In addition, the manager has begun to monitor broad overall curriculum planning and the work of pupils in different classes and good use is made of twilight sessions to help colleagues achieve greater understanding and consistency in their planning. However, the broad planning that was previously in place of what should be taught to each age group has not yet been modified. As a result, the school's practice whereby English is taught by the class teacher increases the number of teachers of the subject and makes it more difficult to achieve consistency. Regular assessment is made of pupils' attainment and clear records are kept. Targets are set for pupils in literacy skills and records show that most achieve their primary targets. It is a shortcoming, however, that the broad English aims set at annual reviews are not transferred into working documents that translate them into short-term targets.

62. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in library facilities and there is now a library club. These facilities support learning well. There are sufficient, relevant reading books, both fiction and non-fiction, to meet the pupils' needs and interests. The

Social Use of Language programme is well taught and has clear benefits for lower attaining pupils and those with specific communication needs. It is also clear that pupils derive benefit from individual reading sessions, but the timing of these should be reviewed so that they do not repeatedly interrupt learning in lessons.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. The provision for mathematics is good as the Key Stage 3 Strategy has been successfully introduced and assessment procedures have improved. Teaching is now good overall and so all groups of pupils are fully included and achieve well. These developments mark a good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged that assessment was weak and a significant amount of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor.

64. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good in relation to their prior levels of attainment. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils understand place value and add and subtract three digit numbers. They understand halving and doubling of simple numbers and correctly match fractions such as halves, quarters and eighths to shaded diagrams. Pupils recognise and know the number of sides of common two-dimensional shapes and draw a line of symmetry, knowing the two halves of a regular shape reflect each other. They recognise coins and select the correct coins for a given amount up to a pound. They understand the concept of full and empty, gaining an understanding of capacity when they use a variety of containers and work out how many litres they contain. The highest attaining pupils use their literacy skills to write the names of four digit numbers and compare digital and analogue times, correctly using half past, quarter past and quarter to. Lower attaining pupils recognise numbers up to twenty and confidently give the next number when they are counting up to twenty. They use counting aids to help their addition of numbers under ten and a number line as they learn to count back or 'take away'. They name triangles, squares, rectangles and circles and tell the time using 'o' clock.

65. By the end of Year 11, pupils have continued to make good progress and are therefore successful in externally accredited courses, such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education and Certificate of Educational Achievement Entry Level. This prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Higher attaining pupils recognise fraction, percentage and decimal equivalents and use their mathematical skills to solve straightforward addition, subtraction, multiplication and division sums. They use their improving knowledge of data handling to produce scatter graphs showing, for example, the correlation between shoe sizes and height. Pupils extend their knowledge of measurement by calculating perimeter and learn to use their counting skills to work out the area of simple shapes. Their understanding of measure increases when they use a range of scales to weigh items with increasing accuracy. Lower attaining pupils work out the change from transactions of fifty pence and two pounds and multiply by five and by ten. Their understanding of measure develops when they estimate the size of a metre, half a metre and a centimetre and carefully check the accuracy of their estimates.

66. Teaching is good overall. It ranges between satisfactory and good in years 7 to 9 but is consistently good in years 10 and 11. A significant strength of teaching is the appropriate focus placed on investigative work and this means that pupils enjoy the subject. This is an improvement since the last inspection when investigations were judged to be 'at an early stage'. This was clearly in evidence when Year 8 pupils used bottles and coloured water, margarine tubs and rice to experiment with litres and gain an understanding of the concept of capacity. Likewise, older pupils in Year 11 enjoyed weighing a range of parcels and letters before calculating the postal charges and choosing the appropriate stamps. These investigations are useful in allowing pupils to develop their skills in estimation and in helping them to learn and understand mathematical concepts and their application in everyday

activities. Lessons are planned across a year group and this results in consistency in subject matter. However, although planning is usually of good quality and includes activities for pupils of all abilities, there is not consistency across the whole school and on occasions this can lead to lack of imaginative teaching. Where teachers are insecure in their subject knowledge, pupils become confused leading to a slower rate of learning. Teachers and support staff work well together, they have positive and often lively attitudes that encourage pupils to participate and to achieve well. Teachers use the Key Stage 3 Strategy as a basis for their teaching and lessons throughout the school start with 'warm up' activities before pupils concentrate on the main part of their lesson. At the end of lessons teachers sum up the learning that has taken place although the best practice occurs when teachers involve their pupils in reviewing and discussing what they have learned, such as throughout Year 8.

67. Teachers allow good opportunities for discussion and this encourages learning through consolidation and repetition. It also enhances self-esteem. As a result pupils settle to work well. On the rare occasions of disruption, teachers deal with this in a calm manner and the disruption does not affect the learning of other pupils. The amount of time given to mathematics is appropriate, but the organisation of the timetable means that some classes have very long lessons. This results in a slower pace and less focus so that on occasions teachers change to a totally different activity as pupils lose concentration. Teachers display key mathematical words around their classrooms and good quality interactive classroom displays encourage pupils to think about numbers or test their understanding of symmetry. The acquisition of numeracy skills is supported well in some other subjects, such as design and technology and humanities, but the lack of a formal policy on using numeracy across all subject areas means that these skills are not reinforced consistently across the curriculum.

68. The subject is co-ordinated well. The curriculum is balanced, relevant and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and the learning resources used to support the subject are adequate. The curriculum manager monitors teaching informally and moderates pupils' work regularly, providing written reports that help the school to improve the provision. The school has identified 'telling the time' as a mathematical target and pupils' progress has been carefully monitored and new targets set. A further strength is the very good support given by the school for several higher attaining pupils who link with the adjoining college for their mathematics lessons. Assessment procedures are now satisfactory as teachers have improved their accuracy in assessing pupils' skills so this information has become more useful in teaching and planning to meet individual educational needs. A computer-based interactive mathematics programme has been introduced with a small number of younger pupils, but, as the curriculum manager has correctly identified, information technology is not being used sufficiently well to support the teaching and learning of mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

69. Pupils achieve well in science, which is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with more complex needs, make good progress as they move through the school. Results in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 9 confirm this analysis. Consequently, over the past three years increasing numbers of pupils have reached a level that prepares them well for following accredited courses in years 10 and 11. A very small number of pupils follow a General Certificate of Secondary Education course and are predicted to attain in line with their mainstream peers while others' achievements levels are more suited to Certificate of Educational Achievement Entry Level examinations.

70. Pupils develop their skills of scientific enquiry throughout years 7 to 9 so that by the end of Year 9 they choose their own resources when setting up an investigation, for example when making an electrical circuit, and with support they make predictions about the outcomes. Higher attaining pupils know that they have to be systematic in their



investigations, such as when testing foodstuffs for fat content, and that they must record their results. They also apply their knowledge and understanding to give explanations for what they observe, for example why a bi-metallic strip bends when heated. Pupils also make good progress in developing their understanding of both the living and non-living worlds. They name the basic components of foods, such as fats and proteins, and the highest attaining pupils know that they need food to give them energy and to enable growth. Pupils understand that some materials expand and contract in different temperatures and they apply this knowledge to predict what will happen when various metal items are heated, with most writing a simple explanation for what they have seen. They also know simple facts about electricity and understand that some items work with batteries, and others with electricity gained from 'plugging in'. Pupils know the names of electrical components such as a crocodile clip and construct simple series circuits. Higher attaining pupils draw diagrams of these circuits using the appropriate symbols.

71. Pupils continue to improve their scientific skills in years 10 and 11 as they take part in investigations and take readings from scientific equipment, such as a carbon monoxide detector. They solve problems by applying what they have learned earlier to investigations, such as explaining why larger pieces of calcium carbonate dissolve more slowly in acid than when powdered. They know the structure of the lungs and heart, and relate this information to the dangers of smoking. By the end of Year 11, pupils know how water affects the environment, in the formation of caves and fissures, and the effects of acid rain, as well as understanding volcanic action and why earthquakes happen.

72. Teaching is good overall, and is particularly good in years 10 and 11 when pupils benefit from the consistency of a single, specialist science teacher. This means that tasks are motivating and challenging, and pupils are riveted with interest. Characteristics of the most effective lessons include excellent subject knowledge, which enables the teacher to explain a concept in several ways in order to maximise pupils' learning. The teacher's approach to pupils is warm and relaxed, yet interesting. At times, information is passed to pupils through anecdotes and personal "stories" which maintains pupils' interest and helps them understand and learn. Activities and resources are very well matched to the different needs of the pupils so that they have opportunities to show that they had understood the concepts. These high quality features of teaching and learning were strikingly evident in one lesson on the respiratory system in Year 10, when the teacher showed pupils a pig's heart and lungs. The pupils were entirely sensible, and asked highly relevant questions about the functions of different parts of the organs. The teacher's confident use of new technology extended learning very well as one pupil used the microscope connected to the computer and projector to show the structure of a tiny piece of the lung. Pupils participated very willingly in tests to indicate the amount of carbon monoxide in their lungs, and were horrified at the amount of tar produced by a single cigarette, one pupil saying "I must get my dad to stop smoking."

73. However, some lessons have unsatisfactory features. In particular, insecure subject knowledge prevents all teachers from getting the most out of the resources and reinforcing the purpose and practice of fair testing in investigations. On occasions, these shortcomings are evident in insufficient content in the lesson to fill the time available, which results in some activities being unnecessarily drawn out. At other times a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils is evident as additional extension activities are not available. Consequently, some pupils get bored as they finish their work long before the end of the activity or session.

74. Subject management is unsatisfactory which is a less positive picture than at the time of the previous inspection. The curriculum manager is not yet developing the subject by working systematically towards raising standards. There have not been opportunities for the curriculum manager to monitor teaching and learning in different classes or to moderate

other teachers' assessments of pupils' levels of attainment. The Key Stage 3 Strategy for science has not yet been fully considered and assessment procedures do not properly match the new-style curriculum, now based on the nationally recommended schemes of work. The assessment of pupils' attainment against the National Curriculum levels is therefore not secure. For example, almost all pupils are assessed to be at the same level across all four areas of the subject, which is unlikely. At the moment, therefore, there is no systematic way of accurately tracking pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school, or of using this information to inform planning for individuals, for curriculum adaptations or for improving achievement.

75. The new science laboratory and very good resources are a great asset and a considerable improvement. Staff report how pupils' behaviour has improved as a result of working in this specialist environment and as a consequence they are learning increasingly effectively.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

76. Provision for this subject is good and there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. A new art room has been built and this has rectified the limitations in preparation and drying surfaces noted at the time of the last inspection. A further improvement has been the appointment of a specialist art teacher resulting in the consistently good teaching seen throughout the inspection.

77. Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 9 they have developed their skills in observational drawing, and improved pencil control. Higher attaining pupils use pencil, paint and oil pastels as they experiment and explore possibilities for their final pieces of work such as designing a poster for a fruit shop and working in the style of the artist Mondrian. They use their sketchbooks to make preliminary drawings of the locality and on return to school review their work, making improved drawings and using watercolours effectively to create the background. Pupils know what 'hue' is and understand how to mix paint so they can darken or lighten a colour.

78. By the end of Year 11 pupils have increased their confidence in working to improve their art. They discuss their work with the teacher and support staff and listen to advice but also offer their own suggestions and are prepared to experiment with paint. Pupils examine and appreciate the work of a range of artists such as Esher and Chagall, choose their preferred picture and write about their choice. They then use parts of the original work as inspiration for their own creative thoughts. Pupils develop these ideas further through discussions and research before they make final decisions about the layout and design of their own work. Pupils consolidate and develop their skills in painting, sketching and shading when they create self-portraits and portraits of each other. They further extend their drawing skills as they experiment with pen and ink in their observational drawing of plants and use combinations of ink and watercolours to create an unusual effect. All pupils gain accreditation either at General Certificate of Secondary Education or Certificate of Educational Achievement Entry Level certification.

79. Teaching and learning are consistently good so that all groups of pupils make good progress. The support assistants work well with the teacher and the good quality teamwork results in pupils receiving immediate and appropriate comments that help them to keep on task with a range of challenging activities. The teacher starts the main activities with very good demonstrations that make pupils feel confident of their own ability to create a successful piece of work. Lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and to achieve success in their creative skills. Pupils enjoy their lessons, they take pride in their work, are careful with resources and conform to expectations of clearing up their

equipment and treating work with respect. Pupils persevere, have positive attitudes and respond well to the creative challenges. A strength of the teaching is the written self evaluation completed by all pupils at the end of a unit of work, these show pupils think about the materials they have used, how successful they have been and consider how much they enjoyed the topic. Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their spiritual and cultural experiences when they examine the work of known artists, look at examples of traditional art from Africa and see their own creative efforts become valued pieces of work.

80. The subject is managed well and even though the curriculum manager was only recently appointed good progress has been made in a short time in developing the subject. Art benefits from the skills a specialist teacher brings to planning an appropriate curriculum as well as teaching the necessary skills and techniques that encourage pupils to achieve well in the subject. The scheme of work has been reviewed and is now being updated in line with national guidelines. Similarly, assessment records have been evaluated and are in the process of being adapted to reflect the skills being taught. These assessment procedures are being further enhanced through the development of a system of collating pupils' work and producing personal portfolios. The very good accommodation and good quality resources reflect the value placed by the school on this aspect of the curriculum. The new art room was commissioned so recently that there was a limited range of pupils' three-dimensional work available but planning indicates good use will be made of these pottery facilities.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

81. The provision for design and technology is good. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in both food technology and when working with resistant materials, and this represents good improvement since the last inspection.

82. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils demonstrate good understanding of resistant materials and have the skills and knowledge required to work with them. They perform basic tasks like cutting, sticking, and cleaning very competently and the most skilled join metals by welding and spray their finished work. Pupils name and use appropriately a number of tools when working on projects and they have emerging understanding of design and of the concept of a 'specification'. Therefore, although some pupils are still at the early stages of overcoming problems they meet when designing items such as a wind powered vehicle, others design and make a 'steady hand' game, using computer generated pictures to decorate the game and attaching batteries to complete the circuits to a buzzer. Pupils work with great care and take pride in what they are doing but they also recognise areas for improvement as they evaluate the quality of their projects. Pupils' ability to evaluate and compare is also evident in their work in food technology. They participate in exercises comparing the taste of cooked and uncooked foods, choosing favourites and determining which foods taste better raw. Pupils make choices, such as sandwich fillings, and follow recipes as they use kitchen tools and appliances, such as a grill, competently and safely.

83. Pupils continue to extend their designing and making skills throughout years 10 and 11. They experience an increasing range of resistant materials, such as plastics, wood and metal as they undertake projects for their Certificate of Educational Achievement Entry Level examination. Therefore, by the end of Year 11 higher attaining pupils plan, make and test these products which range from wind direction indicators and bird tables to CD racks. New technology is used very well to provide additional learning opportunities so that pupils understand the use of computers in both designing and making products. Lessons in food technology focus on developing pupils' self help skills and independent living. They understand the importance of healthy foods and know the value of cleanliness and hygiene in the kitchen. Pupils also develop increasing confidence in their practical skills so that they roll out and cut pastry shapes when making Cornish pasties, beat and mix ingredients for

pancakes and prepare equipment correctly, such as lining baking tins.

84. Both strands of design and technology are taught well by staff with very good subject knowledge. Some teaching is of very high quality and on these occasions detailed planning results in activities that meet pupils' individual needs particularly well. However, occasionally the work is not accessible to the whole group and at these times pupils' behaviour and attitudes deteriorate but generally they behave well and work enthusiastically because they have a good understanding of what they are required to do. Teachers generally manage pupils very well and have high expectations and so pupils work quickly, safely and accurately because they are keen to succeed and they take pride in their work. Relationships are very good and consequently pupils feel confident to ask questions about processes and procedures and on many occasions pupils help each other. Staff make good use of opportunities to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Key subject vocabulary is emphasised and staff reinforce the school's focus on improving pupils' spelling. Numeracy skills are consolidated well through activities associated with measuring and weighing.

85. The subject is very well managed by a subject specialist who is providing valuable advice to non-specialist teachers. They are supported by effective schemes of work, planning guidance and assessment procedures, and the recent improvements are now becoming evident as the school is considering offering an accredited examination course in food technology. Pupils' learning is very well supported by specialist accommodation and very good resources.

## **HUMANITIES**

86. The school's provision for humanities is good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils now make very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of historical events and place these in geographical settings. History and geography are taught through integrated humanities for pupils in years 7 to 9, whilst in years 10 and 11 aspects of history and geography are linked to life skills work, leading to national accreditation. There are no opportunities for specific accreditation in either history or geography.

87. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a good knowledge of the British Isles and its relationship to Europe, and they recognise some major countries of the world through their studies of two world wars. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of earlier periods of British history, such as details of everyday life under the Tudors and Stuarts. They use photographs to identify and compare changes in the landscape, appearance of buildings and, from their observations, explain how fashions and daily life have changed. They also recognise the changes that climate and time have made to local landscapes.

88. Pupils in Year 10 examine twentieth century industrial development and how this affects imports, exports and modern living. For example, their studies of maritime development are reinforced extremely well by visits to Portsmouth historic shipyards and a Southampton container port. By the end of Year 11, pupils have examined aspects of the modern world through studies of countries like Japan, and they know how cultural and historical aspects have contributed to economic growth made by such countries.

89. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes excellent. Well-planned and structured lessons are lively and fun, promoting the pupils' genuine enthusiasm and interest. The very well planned use of resources provides excellent reinforcement to learning. For example pupils in Year 8 used carefully matched old and new photographs as a preliminary study of Beaulieu Village, which prepared them very well for their subsequent off-site visit. Similarly, a class of Year 9 pupils were presented with excellent artefacts, clothing and

soldiers' personal effects from the First World War that 'brought alive' their study of life in the trenches. Teachers' good classroom control and pupil management ensure that no time is wasted and maximum learning takes place. Some teachers make good use of graded worksheets to ensure that all pupils can complete the set task, including appropriate challenge for higher achieving pupils, and learning assistants provide good levels of in-class support. Lessons also feature good examples of teachers' attention to basic literacy skills, with key vocabulary and discussion work, and numeracy skills, such as calculating temperature changes and the length of time since an historical incident occurred. Pupils have access to computers, and there is evidence of their use in their work, but this is limited and was not seen to support humanities during this inspection.

90. Good quality and constructive marking, and effectively targeted question and answer sessions at the end of lessons promote pupils' awareness of their learning and give teachers some opportunity for assessing progress. However, overall procedures for monitoring and recording pupil progress are unsatisfactory. An effective subject-specialist curriculum manager has identified this shortcoming which tends to lead to inaccurate matching of the pupils' attainment against national levels. Resources are very good, with good library and video aids to support learning and the school's own resources are supplemented very well by a local resource library.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

91. Pupils' achievement and progress in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is good by the end of Year 9 and satisfactory by the end of Year 11. Achievement has improved in the past year and looks set to improve further as a result of the intensive subject training and support being provided for all staff by the new curriculum co-ordinator. Recent developments to improve and extend the scheme of work provide a very good platform from which to raise standards further. However, two factors constrain further improvement. The first is the current timetable, which provides uneven amounts of time for the subject for pupils in years 7 to 10 and insufficient time overall in Year 11. The second is the limited amount of consolidation of knowledge and understanding through other subjects of the curriculum which means that there is not yet an appropriate balance between developing skills in discrete ICT subject lessons and practising and extending them elsewhere in the curriculum.

92. Between years 7 and 9 pupils extend their knowledge about the potential of computers in everyday life. They also show skills in using a range of software to present and analyse data and communicate information for different purposes to a range of audiences. Higher attaining pupils consider the key information needed for a book cover, using adapted word processing software, which includes clip art, to produce a simple design whilst lower attaining pupils select a font, resize it and copy type the information on to their cover. The highest attaining pupils manipulate text and graphics to create headed notepaper, review the versions they have created and explain which one is the most effective. By the end of Year 11, the most competent pupils have developed skills in programming a floor robot, used graphs and spreadsheets and increased their skills in desktop publishing. These pupils identify what information they need to create a promotional calendar, communicate and present it and make final decisions about layout and impact having reviewed a range of images found online using refined internet searches. When making similar calendars, lower attaining pupils re-format and position blocks of information and graphics provided for them,

93. Specialist teaching in the subject is rapidly improving. All teachers have recently completed their national training programme and are gaining in confidence. The curriculum manager's strategy of leading the first weekly specialist skills development lesson, and supporting the class teacher in the second lesson, makes a very good contribution that benefits staff and pupils alike. During the inspection her unavoidable absence created

changes to lesson content and management but despite this, teaching was consistently satisfactory and at times good. The strengths of teaching include effective grouping of pupils, good individual support and praise, very good use of support staff and subject facilities, and well-designed tasks that engage pupils' interest. However, there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. These lie in teachers' knowledge of software and hardware to enable them to solve network problems when they arise and of the strategies needed to extend the learning of higher attaining pupils. This is particularly noticeable with pupils who have already developed keyboard skills through extensive use at home, often through playing games and Internet use. Their enthusiasm needs to be channelled more productively through a range of demanding extension activities. Pupils show good attitudes in lessons and those using specialist interactive English and mathematics programs are focused and persistent when faced with challenges.

94. Leadership and management of the subject have been very disrupted since the last inspection because of changes of staff and major problems with the school's network. The curriculum co-ordinator has been in post since January 2002 since when she has worked with the close support of the headteacher to develop an excellent strategic plan. This has enabled the school to begin implementing the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 for the subject. Investment in resources and the excellent ratio of computers to pupils are also helping to raise standards. The school is now in a good position to move forward.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

95. The provision for modern languages was judged as unsatisfactory during the previous inspection, but it is now good. The appointment of language specialists and the significant improvement in the quality of teaching mean that pupils now learn well and make good progress. These changes point to very good improvement but this is tempered by the fact that the issue around the imbalance of time allocation to French has not been resolved. Therefore, improvement is good overall.

96. By the end of Year 9, pupils have made good progress against their prior levels of attainment in the French language and their knowledge of French culture. They discuss their sporting likes and dislikes and are beginning to use regular verbs and everyday adjectives with developing confidence as skilled teachers encourage the oral participation of all pupils. They know about aspects of family life, naming different rooms in a house, and how to describe people's features using characteristics such as the colour of their eyes and hair and the clothes they are wearing. Higher attaining pupils practise their use of regular, irregular and reflexive verbs in their conversation and they extend their vocabulary to include food, drink and shopping. Most pupils have a basic knowledge of everyday greetings and respond accurately to simple instructions such as hello, listen, please or sit down, and they try hard with their spoken French, spontaneously greeting staff in the corridors with a happy 'bonjour monsieur/Madame'. French is not taught as a specific subject in years 10 and 11, but there is satisfactory provision for promoting aspects of French culture, history and geography through the school's life-skills programme.

97. The quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned but are not always well balanced, with insufficient emphasis on written work, particularly in Year 9. However, oral sessions are good because teachers and learning support assistants are skilled linguists and use French almost entirely throughout lessons. Staff reinforce their meanings with body language, gesture and some English translation. A good level of challenge is presented and pupils respond enthusiastically to these high expectations. For example, after a preliminary question and answer session a class of Year 9 pupils engaged well in a bingo activity which

reinforced their translation of school subjects when preparing a French school timetable. Very good relationships underpin very good teamwork between staff, and this produces an effective learning environment in which pupils feel confident and are motivated to work. One-to-one support during lessons assists pupils with additional learning needs, but there is little extension work to stretch higher attaining pupils. Literacy skills are promoted well through speaking and listening exercises and although some opportunities are used to extend pupils' numeracy skills, through counting and number activities, these opportunities are not always seized.

98. The subject is well led and managed by a knowledgeable curriculum manager, with units of work matched to the National Curriculum guidelines. In addition, planning provides for good cross-curricular links, particularly to geography and history, through maps and focused topics linked to projects such as Bastille Day and the French Revolution. Videos, posters, games and good quality flashcards are used well to consolidate learning, but the use of new technology is under-developed. The subject provides very good opportunities for pupils' multi-cultural development and there are plans to form e-mail links with a similar school in Northern France, which will further enhance opportunities for pupils' social and cultural development. Teachers monitor the pupils' progress through the use of video and tape recordings, and written work is marked during lessons. However, this assessment information is not used satisfactorily to inform curriculum planning.

## **MUSIC**

99. There is now very good provision for music; a newly built and equipped music room is used effectively to provide a venue for teaching and for pupils' leisure enjoyment. Pupils across the age range achieve very well in their music lessons and are beginning to make extremely good progress because of the improved provision. This is a great improvement since the last inspection when achievement and progress were unsatisfactory because there was no provision for the subject.

100. By the end of Year 9 almost all pupils fully understand the main elements of what they have been taught and have met the targets set for them in composition and performance. The speed at which they learn was well illustrated in a very good lesson in which pupils in Year 8 demonstrated that they understood the meaning of the terms "ostinato" and "texture" as they used tuned and untuned percussion instruments to produce an ostinato bass figure throughout the playing of a rock record. Knowledge of musical forms has also developed by Year 9 where very successful learning was seen in lessons about the "Blues". Pupils understood that this musical form originated in the United States of America among people whose ancestors had been brought from Africa as slaves. They collaborated well to compose their own lyrics and performed these with confidence. Pupils' literacy development, their social confidence and their cultural awareness were greatly enhanced throughout this activity. Pupils are enthusiastic in their singing, doing so with clear diction and rhythm and although some find it hard to meet all the notes they stay in tune. They follow the directions of the conductor well.

101. By the end of Year 11, pupils compose simple tunes to convey emotions and they understand that music is a prime means of describing mood. They compose simple "happy", "angry", "sad" or "lonely" pieces on key boards, play them for each other and evaluate their own and others' work. They listen to the work of established composers on the same theme and note the similarities and differences in orchestration, tempo and rhythm between their compositions.

102. Teaching is of high quality and an improvement on that reported previously. Teaching shows great understanding of the pupils' social and educational needs and cultural

backgrounds and lessons are characterised by a sensitive and patient approach. Sufficient time is given to the necessary repetition and reinforcement that ensures that pupils continue to develop their understanding and skill. The piano is used confidently and very well to accompany singing and rhythm performances and to illustrate musical points. Lessons are varied in content and presentation. Full and well-controlled use is made of information and communication technology to enhance learning opportunities. Learning support assistants make a very strong contribution to pupils' success. As a result of all of this pupils enjoy music as they are ready and willing to extend their skills and knowledge, to listen carefully and to offer evaluative opinions on their own work and that of others. Behaviour in lessons is very good in almost all cases. Good, accurate, records are made of what pupils know, understand and can do and this information is used to ensure that planned lessons are at a level that challenges pupils appropriately.

103. The subject is managed by a curriculum manager who works effectively with an accomplished musician who is, as yet, unqualified as a teacher, to plan individual and series of lessons very well. These accord with the requirements of the National Curriculum. Facilities for music are very good. The new music room is spacious and well equipped and excellent additional use is made of the facility that it provides when the regular lunchtime karaoke club is held there. Currently, the music programme offered to pupils in years 10 and 11 does not lead to an externally accredited qualification. However, in view of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' interest in the subject thought could be given to introducing this, perhaps through the unit accreditation method, in order to help raise standards further and as a way of recognising pupils' achievements.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

104. There has been a good improvement in provision since the previous inspection. The subject is now well organised, with good schemes of work throughout the school, a knowledgeable subject manager and an interesting and a challenging curriculum. The overall quality of teaching has also improved and therefore pupils learn well in lessons and make good progress over time.

105. By the end of Year 9, pupils understand the rules of many games, which is evident when they play in small groups or in teams. These sessions also enable pupils to demonstrate their ball skills in activities like football and basketball, and their developing understanding of space and movement. The more skilful ones catch, pass, bounce, and kick a ball and move around while changing pace and direction, avoiding other people. Pupils follow instructions and directions well, such as during warm-up exercises and when participating in orienteering, cross-country running and fitness activities. Higher attaining pupils listen carefully to music such as *'Right Said Fred'* to develop sequences of movements and balances in dance sessions. They listen and watch attentively before constructing routines associated with moving over, around and under equipment. The most adventurous pupils do this confidently, finishing off their programmes with a flourish.

106. Pupils continue to extend the range and depth of their understanding of physical education during years 10 and 11 to the extent that the school is now offering a course leading to a Certificate of Educational Achievement Entry Level examination. By the end of Year 11, pupils have further developed their understanding of games and their rules so that they keep the score accurately when playing badminton and basketball. They also take part in larger team games, including competitive matches against other schools in local leagues. Activities such as this make a very good contribution to pupils' social development and opportunities for personal growth are also enhanced extremely well during residential trips, when pupils participate in a range of outdoor adventure pursuits.



107. Pupils' achievement in swimming is good and is a strong element in the physical education programme. The adjacent recreation centre enables pupils to swim regularly and therefore all pupils make good progress as they steadily improve during their time in school. They know the importance of water safety and understand the range of strokes that they can use.

108. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than good and on occasions it is very good. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and therefore they plan to meet the needs of them all. This enables teachers to maintain an appropriate level of challenge, which for some pupils means consolidating basic skills whilst for others it means trying the most challenging dismounts from apparatus. The combination of challenge, praise and encouragement means that pupils behave well and learn effectively because they enjoy their lessons and have fun. The high quality of learning is also facilitated by teachers' high expectations of behaviour and participation. Secure pupil management and effective teamwork means that pupils work safely and good relationships encourage pupils to work co-operatively and collaboratively, helping and encouraging each other. Teachers provide effective demonstrations and coach individual pupils, thereby enhancing the standard of their performance. They also allow pupils to show their achievements to the class, and this gives additional impetus for other pupils to extend their own skills.

109. The leadership and management of physical education are very good because the curriculum manager has very good subject knowledge and a clear vision of how the subject can promote pupils' physical, social and personal development. As a result, pupils follow a curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to their needs and interests because the range of activities is very good and imaginatively delivered. However, assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and current arrangements do not provide an effective mechanism for monitoring and recording pupils' achievements. The school's own accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory but it makes extremely good use of the facility provided by the neighbouring recreation centre to ensure pupils' standards are maintained or enhanced in all areas of the subject.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

110. Pupils' achievement in religious education has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory for all age groups. This is because the subject is now timetabled for all pupils in years 7-9 and schemes of work have developed well to reflect the Locally Agreed Syllabus for the subject. However, achievement is at present inconsistent, with pupils in some groups making better progress than others in developing their knowledge and understanding. This happens because the subject is taught mainly by group tutors and their own subject knowledge is in some cases weak.

111. By the end of Year 9, pupils have studied the key elements of some major world religions, being well supported by visits to different places of worship. Lower attaining pupils understand about holy books, important symbols, festivals and celebrations, while higher attaining pupils begin to draw comparisons between these traditions and Christianity. These have growing understanding of aspects of the New Testament so that by the end of Year 11 their writing shows in some detail a confident grasp of the differences between these world religions. All pupils' understanding of Christianity is well supported by the school's strong and positive relationship with the local vicar and their exposure to a range of forms of Christian worship.

112. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but lessons seen were predominantly either very good with excellent features or only just satisfactory. The key to the differences is teachers' subject knowledge and personal study. The impact of good teaching on pupils' learning is

striking in the best lessons. Meticulous preparation, planning and imaginative use of resources bring unfamiliar experiences to life vividly. For example, pupils in Year 10 showed first class recall of their prior learning about Sikhism as they prepared to take part in a simulated Sikh wedding ceremony. Similarly, in a very good Year 7 lesson pupils' experience of quiet reflection was effectively promoted as they discovered the symbolic importance of water. This also contributed to their spiritual development as they watched and listened to running water, describing how this made them feel and, by the end of the lesson they were able to explain its importance as a symbol of the cleansing of sins in the process of baptism. In these lessons pupils concentrated very well, thought carefully before they spoke and, in the simulated wedding, were absolutely riveted by the ceremony itself.

113. However, other teachers do not have enough subject knowledge and sometimes this leaves them uncertain about how to spell or pronounce key place names and terms or answer questions confidently. Consequently, pupils' learning is limited in these lessons because although there is a good emphasis on speaking, listening and comprehension this can be at the expense of sufficiently demanding subject content. The use of lesson plans prepared by others can emphasise this shortcoming if teachers have not undertaken their own research and preparation about the topic. Lesson plans do not include sufficiently clear learning objectives for pupils of differing ability. As a result, day to day assessment of learning is unsatisfactory and end of unit assessment procedures do not provide teachers with robust evidence that they can use to determine pupils' levels of achievement accurately. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good overall and most engage in discussion positively.

114. Leadership and management of the subject have been disrupted by changes in staffing and these disruptions have had an impact on pupils' achievements. Shortcomings in monitoring the work of others are only now being addressed as the curriculum manager is monitoring planning and marking but not yet monitoring teaching. The lack of effective monitoring is evident in the variable progress made by different groups of pupils, with most progress being made by those pupils who receive the most confident and well-informed teaching. The focus on using local faith communities is effective in improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of the religious and cultural traditions of others.