

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **AVONBOURNE SCHOOL**

Bournemouth

LEA area: Bournemouth

Unique reference number: 113094

Headteacher: Mrs P Greaves

Reporting inspector: Mr T Feast  
3650

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 252929

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary modern

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Girls

School address: Harewood Avenue  
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Dorset

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Manners

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3650	T Feast	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14214	G Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4359	W Hola	Team inspector	Mathematics	
1085	J Laver	Team inspector	English	
20832	M Galowalia	Team inspector	Science Education inclusion, including race equality	
28106	M Majid	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
10053	J Simms	Team inspector	Art and design English as an additional language	
12331	V Grigg	Team inspector	Design and technology Special educational needs	
32221	K Williams	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15576	D Nebesnuick	Team inspector	History Citizenship	
31889	M Thomas	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
12276	T Payne	Team inspector	Music	
31821	B McCann	Team inspector	Physical education	
18912	C Large	Team inspector	Religious education	



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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Avonbourne School is a foundation secondary modern school for girls aged 11 to 16 years. This oversubscribed school has 1045 pupils on roll. This is about the same size as for secondary schools nationally and about the same size as at the last inspection. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school was below the national average for the current Years 8 to 11 and this is not unexpected in a secondary modern school operating within a selective system. Since 1999, the attainment on entry has improved greatly each year and, for the Year 7 in 2002, was broadly in line with the national average. One hundred and fifty pupils have been identified as having special educational needs by the school and, as a percentage, this figure is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have been provided with statements of special educational needs by the local education authority; as a percentage, this figure is well below the national average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs has declined since the last inspection, in line with the local education authority's policy of devolution of much of the special educational needs funding to schools. The number of pupils who have mother tongues not believed to be English is 32 and, as a percentage, this figure is broadly in line with national figures. No pupils have been identified as asylum-seekers or refugees. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 98 and, as a percentage, this figure is broadly in line with the national average. The school serves much of the area of Bournemouth, and the family circumstances of the pupils are in line with those nationally. The school has applied for specialist business college status.

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

Avonbourne is a very good and very effective school. Standards overall are at least in line with schools nationally and often above or well above. The quality of teaching is very good. Leadership and management are very good. The value for money the school provides is very good.

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

- Standards at GCSE in art and design, design and technology, drama, English language and English literature, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education, which were well above the national average in 2002.
- The achievement of pupils is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- The personal development of the pupils is very good, as are their attitudes and behaviour.
- Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- Financial planning and management are excellent.
- The school's care and welfare for the pupils is very good.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.

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

- Attainment in science in Years 10 and 11, which is below that of English and mathematics.
- The provision for citizenship, which is unsatisfactory.

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

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

The school was last inspected in October 1997 and has made good improvement since then. There has been a good improvement in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, especially for lower attainers. Standards in games and the standards in music in Years 10 and 11 have improved more than expected. There has been a good improvement in the use of time for special educational needs. Individual education plans are more sharply focused on personal needs. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision for the differing needs of pupils in lessons. It is not a consistent feature of all lessons, particularly in meeting the needs of higher attainers. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the monitoring of teaching and learning by faculty heads but it is not consistent across all faculties.



## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations. Average point scores are calculated by giving a numerical value to all the examination grades, totalling them for all who are 16 in the year of the examinations and dividing the total by the number of pupils who are 16 during the year.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	B	C	C	A

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

The standards the pupils have attained in GCSE examinations since 1999 have been in line with or above the national average and well above those achieved by secondary modern schools. In 2002, the average results represented achievement below that nationally in relation to the same pupils' standards in their national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2000. The trend in the pupils' average point scores in their GCSE examinations over the last five years has been below the national trend. The school met all its targets for GCSE results in 2002. The results in art and design, design and technology, drama, English language and English literature, religious education and ICT were well above the national averages. They were above the national average in geography, music, physical education and history and in line in mathematics. In science and French they were well below. In work seen during the inspection in Years 10 and 11, pupils' attainment was well above that expected nationally in art and design, design and technology, English language and literature, ICT and religious education. It was above that expected nationally in geography, history, physical education and dance. It was in line with national expectations in mathematics, music and modern foreign languages and below in science. This represents very good achievement from the pupils' starting points in the subjects at the start of Year 10.

The standards that pupils attained in the national tests at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average in both 2001 and 2002. The 2002 results represent very good achievement in relation to the same pupils' standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6. The trend in the pupils' average point scores in the national tests at the age of 14 over the last five years has been in line with the national trend. The targets the school set for itself for the 2002 national tests were not all met. In the work seen during the inspection in Year 9, attainment was well above that expected in art and design and design and technology. It was above that expected nationally in ICT, geography, modern foreign languages and religious education. Attainment was in line with national expectations in mathematics, English, science, history and physical education. It was below national expectations in music. Overall, these standards represent very good achievement on their attainment when starting at the school in Year 7.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in and out of lessons, is very good. The school shows great trust in the pupils and the pupils respond very well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Relationships are very good and very well demonstrated in the many activities in which the pupils participate and which they organise very well.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, being well above the national average.

The school's provision enables the pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem considerably. Many parents believe this to be the school's particular strength. There is a great pride in very good attendance, and the number of pupils who regularly achieve full attendance is very impressive.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and contributes significantly to the very good achievement of pupils. The teaching is excellent in art and design and very good in English, design and technology and music, and in ICT and religious education in Years 10 and 11 and in GCSE courses for physical education and dance. Most teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects. They have very high expectations. Their management of pupils is very good. They make very good use of resources. Literacy across the curriculum is taught well, whilst numeracy across the curriculum is taught satisfactorily. The teaching in the school meets the needs of the majority of pupils well. The needs of higher attaining pupils are not always met. Pupils acquire skills very well and demonstrate considerable intellectual, physical and creative efforts. They work very productively, showing a very great deal of interest. They have a very good knowledge of how well they are learning. The quality of teaching and learning in the extra-curricular activities contributes very well to the standards the pupils attain in many subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The quality and range of the extra-curricular activities are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. The school's strong commitment to this area of provision helps the pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes specific provision for pupils with English as an additional language and the impact of the school's support is that pupils make very good progress with their competency in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision is very good overall; it is very good for moral and social development and good for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for pupils The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the academic and personal development of pupils are very good.

The school works well in partnership with the parents. The school offers a broad curriculum in all years, which is well targeted to meet the needs of the majority of pupils. The school does not offer a modern local history study, and the provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. There is a very clear vision of the school's educational priorities, linked very closely to maintaining very high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very well. Principles of competition and comparison in obtaining services and resources are very well applied.
The strategic use of resources	There is very good strategic use of resources. Financial planning and management are excellent.

There is considerable attention to detail and the rigorous implementation of school procedures. The impact of the monitoring and evaluation roles of middle managers is not always consistent. Staffing is good overall. The accommodation is good, as are the learning resources available.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school expects the pupils to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• The pupils make good progress.</li><li>• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li><li>• They would feel comfortable approaching the school.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school working more closely with parents.</li><li>• Parents being kept well informed about how their children are getting on.</li><li>• Their children getting the right amount of homework.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the many positive views that parents have of the school. The school has tried very hard to work closely with parents but many parents do not respond to many of their initiatives. The school provides parents with very good information on how their children are getting on. The school provides about the right amount of homework.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The standards against which the judgements for Avonbourne School have been made in most areas are the results of all schools nationally. For some areas, there are also figures for secondary modern schools nationally and these are included and they are indicated as such.

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

##### Strengths

- Standards in GCSE in art and design, design and technology, drama, English language, English literature, ICT and religious education, which are well above the national average.
- Standards in literacy across the curriculum are well above national expectations.
- The achievement of pupils is very good.

##### Areas for improvement

- Attainment in science in Years 10 and 11, which is below that of English and mathematics.

1. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the school was below the national average for the current Years 8 to 11. Since 1999, the attainment on entry overall has improved greatly each year and, for the current Year 7, who joined the school in September 2002, it is broadly in line with the national average. The standard of work of pupils in Year 9 seen in lessons and books during the inspection in English, mathematics and science was in line with national expectations for all schools. This judgement replicates a similar performance to that reported in the national tests for pupils aged 14 in Year 9 in 2002 for mathematics and science and an improvement in English. These test results represent very good achievement, well above that expected when compared to the same pupils' results in the national tests for pupils aged eleven (Year 6) in 1999 and reflect the very good teaching they receive.
2. The standard of work seen in lessons and in the books of the pupils in Year 11 during the inspection was above that expected nationally in all schools, although there were variations in the standards between the various subjects. In the core subjects, standards were well above national expectations in English, in line with national expectations in mathematics and below them in science. Overall, these judgements represent a much better performance in English, a similar performance in mathematics and a worse performance in science when compared to the same pupils' performance in the national tests for pupils aged 14 (Year 9) in 2002. Taking standards across all the subjects, the inspectors' judgement of standards represents very good achievement and reflects the very good teaching these pupils have received.
3. The school's overall performance in the 2002 national tests in Year 9 when using average point scores was in line with all schools nationally and well above that of similar schools when using the same pupils' prior attainment at the age of eleven (Year 6) as a comparator. The average point scores for the three subjects declined from 35.2 in 2001 to 32.8 in 2002. The decline in points was reflected in English, mathematics and science, but particularly in English. These results, however, were above the national average for secondary modern schools and these pupils' achievement was very good in comparison with their results in the national tests at the age of eleven. Since 1998, the trend in the school's average point score for all core subjects has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school's targets for the percentage of pupils attaining at

least the expected Level 5 were exceeded in science, but not in English and mathematics.

4. The school's performance in the GCSE examinations in 2002 was in line with all schools nationally using pupils' average point scores and well above the national average for secondary modern schools. The average point score per pupil rose from 37.8 in 2001 to 41.2 in 2002. The percentage of pupils who achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C was above average for all schools nationally and increased from 50 per cent in 2001 to 55 per cent in 2002. The percentage of pupils achieving at least five or more A\*-G grades was well above average for all schools nationally, although the percentage declined from 97 per cent in 2001 to 95 per cent in 2002. The trend in the school's average point score per pupil in GCSE examinations since 1998 has been below the national trend but its current performance is well above that of secondary modern schools nationally. The school achieved all its GCSE targets for 2002.
5. In the GCSE examinations in 2002, the overall results of pupils in art and design, design and technology, drama, English language, English literature, ICT and religious education were well above the national average for all schools. In geography, history, physical education and music, they were above the national average. They were in line with the national average in mathematics but were the best mathematics results the school had ever attained. In French they were below, and in science, they were well below the national average.
6. The attainment of pupils is in line with that expected nationally overall at the end of Year 9. It is well above the national expectation in art and design and design and technology. It is above national expectations in geography, ICT, modern foreign languages and religious education. It is in line with national expectations in English, mathematics, science, history and physical education and below expectations in music. Overall, these judgements indicate very good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points in the subjects when they entered the school in Year 7.
7. The attainment of pupils is above that expected nationally at the end of Year 11. It is well above the national average in art and design, design and technology, English, ICT and religious education. It is above that expected nationally in geography, history and physical education. It is in line with national expectations in mathematics, modern foreign languages and music and below in science. Given their starting point in many of the subjects, these judgements represent very good achievement.
8. Standards in literacy across the curriculum are well above national expectations and there is good evidence of the school's successful underpinning of pupils' studies with a good emphasis on the acquisition of very good literacy skills. The standards in numeracy across the curriculum are in line with expectations, although there is not a consistent focus on pupils acquiring numeracy skills in all the subjects. There was evidence in the work of many pupils and in many lessons of the very good capabilities pupils have in using ICT across the curriculum and of these skills contributing significantly to the high standards attained in many of the subjects.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress from Years 7 to 11. For example, all these identified pupils in Year 11 in 2002 gained at least two grades in the GCSE examinations for which they were entered. The register of pupils with special educational needs reflects the very good improvement some pupils make in Years 8, 9 and 10.

10. General school data, provided by the headteacher, indicate that the achievement of pupils whose native language is other than English is at least as good as their peers. Staff involved in teaching these pupils have no such information and therefore cannot make judgments about how much their lack of competency in English literacy skills is affecting achievement. The school does not have information from which staff can specifically identify levels of language acquisition in the very few pupils who are at the early stages of learning. The lack of such assessment means that the teaching staff are unaware of the particular difficulties faced by individuals in their classes and thus are unable to make appropriate provision in the lessons to meet those needs.
11. Standards overall are higher than those reported at the last inspection. Though the attainment of pupils on entry has risen, so has the achievement of the pupils, which is very good, both in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11. This good improvement in standards has been the result of a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

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

#### **Strengths**

- Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and have a very positive attitude to the school.
- Pupils are very well behaved during lessons and break-times.
- Pupils' personal development is very good; they develop into confident and sensible young women.
- Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good; pupils respect and trust teachers and look after the school's facilities and resources.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now well above the national average; punctuality is good and unauthorised absences are very rare.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- The truculent attitudes of a small minority can monopolise their teacher's attention and adversely affect the progress that the rest of their class can make.
- Some pupils lack the skills and confidence to work on their own and are too dependent upon their teachers.

12. The previous inspection found that pupils enjoyed coming to school and that they were well behaved. Over the intervening five years, this positive picture has improved further. The overwhelming majority of pupils of all ages and abilities now arrive in a very positive frame of mind and are very well behaved. Pupils work hard and are keen to do their best and are very loyal towards their school. The number of fixed-term exclusions is similar to other schools and there have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. Attendance is well above the national average and there are very few unauthorised absences. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and are based upon mutual trust and respect. These elements combine to create a very positive and enterprising atmosphere and inspire pupils in their work; they make very good progress from the moment they arrive in Year 7.
13. Teachers at this school lead by example. They share a wholehearted commitment to their pupils and really want them to do well. This positive 'can do' attitude is clearly rubbing off and the pupils are very enthusiastic about both the academic and social sides of school life. Although some of the pupils are slow to contribute verbally during lessons, most are willing to 'have a go'. Pupils are keen to take part in the wide range of clubs and to create opportunities of their own whenever they can. For example, after-school and lunchtime clubs are very well attended. Many pupils use these times to

choreograph and practise dances and performances that they will subsequently perform during, for example, school productions and assemblies.

14. Pupils are usually very well behaved during lessons. Teachers are consistent in their expectations of behaviour and the result is a lively but harmonious community. During lessons, pupils work constructively on their own, in small groups or pairs. For example, during an English lesson when they were studying 'Macbeth', Year 9 pupils persevered well when learning how to evaluate the structure of the text and the motives of the characters portrayed. The school expects and achieves high standards of behaviour both in lessons and when pupils move around the school and has established a very effective blend of high expectations and praise. In between lessons and when in large groups such as assemblies, pupils also behave very well. They listen attentively and respectfully and, although they may feel unsure of themselves, frequently join in. Although bullying does occasionally occur, pupils feel confident that teachers deal with such behaviour firmly and very effectively. During the inspection, unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in very few lessons. It usually arose because pupils did not know what they were supposed to be doing, or why. Around five to ten per cent of the pupils in these lessons lacked motivation and expressed this by calling out and by repeatedly interrupting the teacher. Teachers usually deal with such disruption very well. Their more committed classmates do their best to ignore this behaviour and try not to allow it to impede their progress.
15. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good. Members of staff provide very good examples of how to behave and address the pupils with the respect and consideration they deserve. Pupils, in turn, speak highly of their teachers and feel that they are firm, but fair. A noticeable feature of this school is the high quality personal and academic support teachers provide. This is reflected in the very good progress pupils make and in the harmonious and friendly atmosphere, the low incidence of bullying and the very low number of racist incidents.
16. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is having a very positive impact upon pupils' personal development. The very good range of opportunities for social development creates a climate within which pupils are able to thrive.
17. Pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is good. Over time, they form their own set of values and beliefs and increasingly appreciate how their actions impact upon others. As they move up through the school, they learn to understand intangible concepts such as the value of friendship and, through the performing arts, become more confident in their expressive and creative abilities. They learn about their own culture and increasingly appreciate the diversity of other ways of life and traditions. Within religious education, for example, they study the main religions of the world. They develop an ability to appreciate and understand their own culture, as well as other people's values and beliefs.
18. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. In response to a concerted effort by their teachers, pupils' self-confidence steadily grows. They clearly understand the impact that their actions have on their schoolmates and respond very well to the very many opportunities to show initiative and to take personal responsibility. As they get older, pupils are increasingly able to distinguish right from wrong and develop the ability to make reasoned and responsible decisions on moral dilemmas. They work constructively in class, in sports teams and on other school activities.
19. Pupils with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to school and to learning, and this is shown in their high levels of attendance. They behave well, and the

rare instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are from those who have behaviour as part of the reason for being on the register. They take a full part in the life of the school, for example joining in sport activities after school. They also show a high degree of initiative. This was seen when those who were on the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course undertook a sponsored walk in order to raise money to take pupils from Linwood Special School to 'Monkey World'. Pupils with English as an additional language have similar positive attitudes to school and learning as their peers and they also behave very well.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching in art and design is excellent and in English, design and technology and religious education it is very good.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and management of pupils which are very good.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work which is very good.

### Areas for improvement

- The inconsistent planning to meet the needs of differing groups of pupils in lessons.
- The inconsistent planning for numeracy across the curriculum.

20. The quality of teaching is very good overall in Years 7 to 11. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection in the reduction of the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed and in the very good improvement in the teaching observed that was very good or excellent. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in art and design, English, mathematics, music, physical education and religious education. In the excellent lessons, teachers had very high expectations and the pupils responded accordingly. Teachers used their excellent subject knowledge to plan and use activities that challenged and inspired the pupils to respond with very good or excellent learning. Relatively little unsatisfactory or poor teaching was seen. Much of that observed was in lessons taken by temporary staff, where either control was not sufficiently established or teachers' expectations were not sufficiently high.
21. Overall, teaching is excellent in art and design. It is very good in English, design and technology and religious education. It is good in mathematics, geography, history, ICT, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in science overall.
22. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of the lessons observed. It was excellent in six per cent and very good in a further 37 per cent. Thirty- three per cent of the teaching observed was good and, in a further 19 per cent, it was satisfactory. In three per cent of the lessons, it was unsatisfactory and, in a further one per cent, it was poor.
23. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good overall. This results in confident staff teaching very well and making very good use of materials to stimulate very good learning as, for example, in a Year 11 art and design lesson on cubism. In most lessons, the learning objectives are made very clear to the pupils at the start. This approach was seen to very good effect in a Year 10 ICT lesson involving desktop publishing and the use of the Internet. This clarity of purpose helps the pupils greatly in being sure of what they have to do and being increasingly confident that they can attain high standards.



24. In many lessons, there is good attention to the teaching of skills that are common to all subjects, especially for literacy. In many lessons, there is a very good focus on technical and subject-specific vocabulary and, in the better lessons, appropriate guidance is given to pupils through strategies, such as providing the first sentence to start the piece of work. There was evidence in the work of many pupils and in many lessons of the very good capabilities pupils have in using ICT across the curriculum and these skills supporting very well the raising of standards. There is insufficient emphasis on numeracy across the curriculum and it not a consistent feature in the planning of all subjects.
25. Teachers' planning is good overall. Most teachers identify good activities and resources and these support well pupils' very good learning. Teachers' planning maximises the use of time and this is rewarded by very good interest and concentration by the pupils in most lessons. In some lessons, for example in a Year 8 science lesson, there is insufficient planning of different activities and resources to meet the differing needs of the pupils in the groups. There is very little evidence of specific planning to meet the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language. In the best lessons, excellent opportunities were provided for pupils to demonstrate some self-reliance in their studies, admirably demonstrated in design and technology lessons where pupils determined the appropriate techniques which they wished to use in creating their models.
26. The quality of teachers' assessment and its use to raise standards and the learning of pupils are very good. Marking is regular and there is a good dialogue in many subjects with teachers indicating to pupils what they now need to do to improve to the next grade or level. Overall, individual targets are set in subjects and these are discussed with the pupils and their parents. In the best lessons, such as in art and design and dance, there are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own performance, resulting in improved standards in subsequent pieces of work.
27. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is very good. There were very many examples of the re-inforcement of positive behaviour with supportive comments and encouragement. As seen in the few lessons where teaching was less than satisfactory, the expectations were insufficiently high and pupils lacked firm guidance as to how to behave. It is evident that in the majority of lessons, the pupils know very well what is expected of them and are very well managed and the impact of this very good management is that the quality of their learning is very good.
28. Pupils' learning is very good and reflects the very good teaching the pupils receive which encourages them to succeed. Pupils demonstrate increasingly as they go through the school that they are very willing partners in the learning process and demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of their own learning. There were many examples of the pupils' very good intellectual, physical and creative efforts across many subjects, from drama and dance to business studies. Pupils work very hard in the majority of the lessons. They acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding very well and increasingly have the confidence to demonstrate their new skills in related work. They show high levels of concentration and interest in their work, but are not always given sufficient opportunities to show their capacity to work independently, in otherwise satisfactory lessons. The quality of learning of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is in line with their peers and is very good.
29. The quality of teaching of pupils who have special educational needs, when they are taught in small groups or receiving individual tuition, is never less than good. Tasks are

very carefully selected, so that they are achievable by pupils, but they also provide a good challenge. Learning is made fun, for example playing games to reinforce the understanding of sounds. Also, when pupils learnt about the cost of living, an activity relating to real life, the result was pupils' total engagement in the lesson. There is some inconsistency in the liaison departments have with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and there are examples of very good liaison, for example with the humanities and design and technology faculties, which results in very effective use of teaching assistants and the identification of tasks which match the differing needs of these pupils well. Pupils' individual education plans are excellent, as they include clear, specific targets that can be met, such as 'to improve a piece of coursework by at least one grade'. The quality of individual education plans has improved since the time of the last report, and copies are now provided for pupils and parents.

30. Special tuition sessions for pupils for whom English is an additional language are arranged by the school and provide satisfactory support for their needs. Teaching staff do not receive detailed information from the specialist teacher or the school about the precise needs of these few pupils so that their needs can be precisely planned for in the majority of their timetable.

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

### **Strengths**

- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good.
- The school's relationships with partner institutions are very good.
- The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

### **Areas for improvement**

- The school's provision for citizenship is unsatisfactory.

31. The school provides a good curriculum that is organised effectively to meet the needs of its pupils. There is a good quality and range of opportunities for learning across Years 7 to 11. The school has a two-week timetable that produces 25 hours of taught time per week. The curriculum review that took place in 1998 led to considerable improvements in the curriculum provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been eradicated. The curriculum in Years 7 to 9 is broad and balanced. There is an ongoing process of development and improvement related to the school's application for specialist business college status and the school's continuous drive to provide a challenging and relevant curriculum so that all its pupils reach their full potential. The school believes that the extra-curricular programme, the focus on personal development and the school's developing links with businesses are all an essential part of its curriculum vision. Curriculum planning remains a strength of the school and is used well to support pupil learning and provide relevant opportunities which support pupils' educational progression beyond the age of 16.
32. The statutory curriculum is in place in Years 7 to 9, with the sole exception of a modern local history study. It is enhanced by subjects such as health, careers and community education (HCC), drama and dance. Only one modern foreign language is studied in Years 7 to 9 and this is French. Most National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught as discrete subjects. Citizenship is taught across the curriculum but is not yet fully identified in lessons in all subjects and this is unsatisfactory. Personal, social and health education is provided by the HCC course which is taught in

all years in a one-hour period over the two-week timetable. This course provides a strong, positive influence on personal development. The subjects taught provide a good range of appropriate and stimulating activities.

33. The statutory curriculum is in place in Years 10 and 11. The school has created a good, broad and balanced curriculum that offers pupils a wide range of choice. The curriculum offered since the last inspection has improved, especially for some of the lower attaining pupils who can now follow the ASDAN course. The current arrangements offer greater curriculum flexibility and match pupil needs more effectively. However, the balance of pupil choice is carefully monitored by senior staff. There has been a reduction in the number of GCSE subjects that pupils have to study from ten to nine. This has had a positive impact on the pupils' results overall and the curriculum offered has been broadened. A second modern foreign language, Spanish, is available and there are applied GCSEs in ICT and travel and tourism. Unit awards are also offered and accredited for pupils in Years 10 and 11 in addition to GCSEs. Additional business courses have been provided to support the vocational opportunities that exist for pupils. These courses support the bid the school is making for specialist college status. All pupils follow an ICT course as well as a short course in religious education. The pupils' curriculum is enhanced by the well-structured HCC programme. The school's plan is that citizenship is taught across the curriculum but the implementation of the current arrangements does not ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement.
34. The school's strategy for promoting literacy throughout the curriculum is good. Although the strategy has not been monitored rigorously, the efforts made by most departments to improve speaking, listening and the accuracy and range of writing are having a positive effect on standards. Specific literacy objectives have been delegated to all subject areas in order to improve attainment in Years 7 and 8. In some subject areas such as history and geography, there has been a strong emphasis on learning subject-specific vocabulary and reading aloud. Many teachers emphasise the importance of speaking confidently and listening well. Opportunities to write at length are good in English. There are still some inconsistencies across departments in some aspects, such as the highlighting of corrections in written work.
35. The school's strategy for promoting numeracy through the curriculum is satisfactory overall but is not sufficiently consistent in its implementation across all the subjects. Examples of the use of numeracy were seen in subjects such as design and technology and science but there is insufficient focus and the effect is not as good as that seen for literacy.
36. The provision for, and range of, extra-curricular activities are very good and are a strength of the school. There are a rich variety of activities which help to support pupils' learning in the classroom, from sporting activities and mini-enterprises through to opportunities to perform in drama and dance. The high priority that the school places upon this work is reflected in the decision to begin school early in order for clubs and activities to thrive. Activities take place not only after school but during lunchtime also. Inter-house competitions contribute to a full and rewarding programme. The pupils value these opportunities and their participation rate is very high, as is the staff commitment. The learning resource centre and ICT rooms are available every day after school. There is a full range of subject revision clubs, work study and booster classes. Activities such as that provided by the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme and Project Trident are well supported by pupils. Opportunities exist for pupils to develop their own clubs and activities. There is a full lunchtime entertainment programme provided by the pupils and a successful school radio station providing music and comment. Pupils value and speak highly of the opportunities offered. These varied activities not only support

learning but provide pupils with a much wider range of opportunities to enhance their personal development. Field trips, visits to museums and abroad all enable pupils to extend their knowledge through experience.

37. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. The programme is delivered through the HCC course and is taught by an identified team of teachers. The programme's content develops well through the year and is well resourced. It is sensitive to the needs of maturing pupils and covers a broad range of topics, such as personal relationships and responsibilities, bullying and decision making, as well as the statutory requirements for sex and drugs education. There is provision for self-assessment and review and opportunities exist for pupils to develop skills and attitudes and to explore a wide range of moral and social issues. The work on health education is supported by a co-ordinated programme provided by external health visitors. A variety of opportunities exists through the house system for pupils to undertake and exercise responsibility and to develop leadership qualities. There is a strong commitment to, and enthusiasm for, organising fund-raising events which benefit both local and national charities. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are very well supported by a structured mentoring programme which aids both their academic and personal development.
38. The provision for careers and vocational education is good. There is a dedicated careers room and library which is available for pupil use each lunchtime. There are good links for careers with the Connexions Service which supports the HCC programme in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are encouraged to explore their strengths and weaknesses and examine possible careers enabling them to be aware of the advice and guidance available prior to their option choices at 14 and 16. Work experience is very well organised and much valued by the pupils for the insight it gives them into the world of work.
39. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. The school has developed a network of contacts, especially in the business world, to support its application for specialist college status. These links already enhance work in ICT and business studies. The work experience placements also provide the school with a wealth of local contacts. Very good use is made of the Validation Board whereby a group of adults from the community support Year 11 pupils on a weekly basis with their record of achievement. Effective use is made of local faith groups and organisations such as Amnesty International and The Samaritans, as well as the police and fire services to support pupil development.
40. The school's relationships with its partner institutions are very good. Constructive relationships exist with local primary schools and pupils have opportunities to get to know the school before they join it. Year 8 pupils work with local primary schools in delivering a co-ordinated assembly programme in the primary schools. There are good links for Year 11 pupils with the providers for post-16 education in both further education and sixth-form college. These links allow for both academic and vocational pathways to be followed. Sound links exist with Exeter University for the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programme and with the Dorset Young Enterprise who work with the school supporting subjects such as business studies and the HCC course.
41. The curriculum offer is a good one for pupils with special educational needs, as all these pupils have access to the full curriculum. Withdrawal from lessons in order that pupils with special educational needs receive specific teaching is kept to the minimum. These pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education, particularly through the ASDAN course. In this course, pupils attend the local college and attain certification,

which can be added to at post-16 level. Pupils receive invaluable individual advice from the careers service.

42. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are withdrawn from lessons on a flexible rotational basis which ensures that they do not miss too many of their subject lessons. This help often takes the form of curriculum support, for example in a lesson seen with a pupil with a low level of English, where aspects of language for a geography test were being explained. However, this level of support is not consistent across all lessons and insufficient allowance is sometimes made for the few pupils whose language level is low, for example in the vocabulary used in such textual materials. However, overall, the pupils with English as an additional language make progress similar to that of their peers across the full range of subjects.
43. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. There is a clear school focus on respectful and good relationships within the school community. The environment created is one which recognises the importance of all pupils and is based upon clear values and principles, which influence every aspect of school life. There is a positive recognition that the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values has a significant impact on pupils' attitudes and achievement.
44. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good overall. Assemblies take place twice each week for each class. One assembly is by year group and one is by house. There is a co-ordinated programme of themes, which provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon the development of the human spirit by encouraging pupils to develop feelings and exercise imagination and creativity. The programme involves a range of guest speakers from different faith backgrounds as well as different organisations such as Amnesty International and the Young Carers. Pupils are encouraged to take part and their success in a variety of school activities is celebrated. The spiritual dimension is not addressed consistently in all assemblies, although this dimension was clearly evident in a Year 10 assembly on 'hope' and the importance the speaker attached to her belief in God. There is a morning tutor time but this does not consistently use the opportunity to develop the very useful 'thought for the day' programme. Often this time is used for administration and pastoral matters but good practice was seen in a Year 8 class where the tutor was getting pupils to reflect and think on the day's thought. Extra-curricular activities also contribute to spiritual development, for example work experience, the many team games and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual development are not sufficiently planned across all subjects of the curriculum. The work seen in religious education was very good, being challenging and emotive. Good practice was observed in design and technology where pupils were appreciating the beauty of textiles and developing feelings of empathy. Work in art and design encouraged positive reflection. The school does not meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. The school plans whole-school assemblies at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival, and other assemblies during the school year which regularly have a very clear spiritual message.
45. The provision for moral development is very good. The school has very clear expectations of pupils knowing right from wrong and pupils are very responsive to these expectations. The school encourages pupils by helping them to determine what is right, understand that there are choices and recognise that choices have consequences. The pupils develop an understanding of common values and are challenged to reassess them in the light of experience. The headteacher and staff are excellent role models for the pupils. Compassion and understanding are encouraged through the very good use of assemblies and the HCC programme. This programme allows pupils to show concern for and how to defend others by challenging prejudice and discrimination, to

understand the different forms of bullying and to be assertive when there is pressure to do wrong. It offers pupils an opportunity to examine both their own values and attitudes towards issues of drugs and sex education. The school ethos strongly reflects an environment that respects and values each individual. Positive reinforcement is a feature of the school, which has a clear system of rewards, involving commendations and letters sent home to parents and carers informing them of positive achievements in a range of activities. Several subjects contribute well in providing opportunities for moral development. In religious education, moral issues are planned into the curriculum and pupils are able to respond to aspects of morality using their knowledge of religious and ethical issues concerned with racism, prejudice and the Holocaust. In ICT, pupils were considering issues to do with data protection; in geography, they were considering sustainable and economic growth and, in physical education, pupils demonstrated a sense of fair play based on rules and conventions. Pupils were seen developing attitudes, moral feelings and forming judgments as well as exploring their own feelings.

46. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils' social development is encouraged by the many instances in which pupils work with staff, work together by themselves and by the opportunities given to take increasing responsibility and develop social understanding. The house system with its clear pupil roles and responsibilities, the excellent charity work and the HCC course, all provide a valuable contribution to developing attitudes and encouraging pupils to form their own personal views and opinions. Social skills are developed by the many lunchtime activities, which make the school such a vibrant community. The school council is an active and responsible forum providing very good opportunities for pupils to develop their sense of commitment to the school, as well as developing their communication and listening skills. The council's role makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The meetings are regular and items discussed include the school magazine, the redecoration of the toilets and litter. The pupils support the school procedures to stamp out any forms of bullying through their dinnertime listening and advice club. Most subjects contribute towards social development. Pupils work extremely well together and many opportunities are provided for them to express their views in paired, group and class discussion. In ICT, the appropriateness of Internet sites and the impact of technology on people's lives were discussed. In both design and technology and geography, pupils' awareness and responsibility to the environment were discussed.
47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. A range of cultural and aesthetic experiences supports pupils' cultural development. These include the visits made by the English department to theatre productions at Southampton and Salisbury for pupils studying GCSE, modern foreign language exchange and study visits to France and a dance visit to Greece. The art and design department organises visits to both local and national galleries and has also organised cultural visits to Barcelona, Paris and Madrid. The school's cultural values are reinforced through some good displays of work evident around the building. In design and technology, work was seen which showed pupils' awareness and appreciation of other cultures, for example in their production of kimonos. The dance programme includes work which reflects multicultural themes. In a Year 9 religious education lesson, there was discussion about a range of different faiths and their local places of worship. The school's programme of assemblies provides pupils with a range of cultural issues and speakers from other cultural backgrounds. Pupils are encouraged to perform at assembly and explore their cultural identity. In one assembly, raps were being performed to a theme of nursery rhymes. Special events are organised, such as the Year 7 racial discrimination presentation, when the day is devoted to such things as combating racism and providing pupils with opportunities to explore their own cultural assumptions and values.

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

### Strengths

- Pupils are very well looked after during the school day; health and safety procedures are very good.
- Procedures for child protection are very good.
- Pupils receive very good educational and personal support and guidance.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour and for eliminating bullying are very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good.
- Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Procedures for assessing the level of competency in English for those pupils with English as an additional language.

48. The previous inspection found that this school provided good support and guidance for its pupils. Over the intervening five years, this provision has improved further; pupils are now very well looked after and they receive very good personal and academic support. On entry, pupils are assigned to one of the four houses and this structure acts as the cornerstone of the pastoral care system. Very good teamwork helps to ensure that pupils are very well looked after during the school day. Routine health and safety procedures are in place. Child protection procedures are very good and meet statutory requirements.
49. The system of allocating pupils and their siblings to a particular house is popular with pupils and their parents and it contributes towards a strong sense of school identity. House heads liaise very closely with each other and with their individual form tutors. Tutors stay with pupils as they move up through the school and are, therefore, in a good position to monitor pupils' personal development; they do so well. During discussions, pupils say that they like coming to school and that they feel well looked after. This high standard of educational and personal support plays an important part in motivating and enabling pupils to work hard and to make the most of their time at school. Form tutors and heads of house are well supported by the senior management team and by a conscientious and dedicated education welfare officer. This school works closely with its partner primary schools, and incoming pupils receive a warm welcome. These elements help to ensure that pupils settle down quickly once they arrive in Year 7 and they are able to make very good progress in their work.
50. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are very good. National test results are being increasingly used, along with the school's data from cognitive attainment tests, which are taken very early in Year 7 and later in Year 9 to build up very clear profiles of pupils' attainment. This information is used as a baseline for monitoring pupils' progress over their time in the school and information is sent to the faculties for all teaching staff to use. From the information obtained, attainment predictions are made for individual pupils for all subjects. These predictions show expected attainment for the next statutory assessment at the end of Year 9 and potential GCSE grades. Results are re-analysed after the national tests and predictions adjusted. There is a systematic use of data to analyse and monitor progress and to set both subject and pupil targets. The school has good systems to compare current levels of performance with those at specific times in the past and department heads are actively encouraged to use assessment data to aid learning and curriculum planning. Heads of both faculties and departments are involved in rigorous examination analysis. Underachieving pupils are quickly identified by the school's data manager and information is forwarded to heads of

department and year co-ordinators who are increasingly involved in the monitoring progress. Detailed analysis of progress generates letters of commendation and concern. The assessment cycle includes both interim and full reports, which include both attainment and effort grades and are consistent across departments. Reporting to parents is integrated into the school's assessment cycle. Pupils are aware of their predicted GCSE grades or their predicted levels indicated in national tests they are working at throughout their time in the school. Predicted levels and grades enable teaching staff to set realistic targets to help raise attainment. The school has a very clear view of the progress being achieved by pupils through its procedures for collecting and analysing data.

51. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Test results are used, along with referrals by staff, parents and pupils, and invaluable concern sheets, and pupils are then given appropriate support. However, the level of support is not set in tablets of stone as pupils are reassessed if there is any report of concern or improvement. The two pupils who have statements of special educational needs have their needs very well met. Assessment of pupils with English as an additional language follows that of their peers. The school uses no formal assessment of pupils' levels of English acquisition, nor of their progress in these areas, and subject teachers have no indication of the specific level of support required.
52. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Pupils are placed in one of four houses when they enrol and their tutor and tutor group are also drawn from their designated house. Relationships between pupils and members of staff are very good and teachers are sensitive to pupils' 'ups and downs'. Tutors also closely monitor their pupils' attendance, punctuality and their personal planners. As well as encouraging a basic work ethic, this monitoring also helps tutors to spot any personal problems and deal with them at an early stage. At regular intervals, pupils in Years 10 and 11 have one-to-one reviews with their mentor. These meetings follow a set format and pupils say that they find these discussions to be useful. Pupils reflect upon their personal strengths and weaknesses and on the academic progress that they have made over the intervening period. As a result, they have a very clear idea of how well they are progressing and targets are identified in order to help them to improve in the future. This structured system of self-review helps pupils and mentor alike to monitor individual progress and to identify if and when additional support is needed.
53. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective. Members of staff provide very good examples of how to behave and their expectations are high. Pupils know exactly what is, and what is not, acceptable and, in the main, they willingly comply. Disciplinary procedures are flexible and can be tailored to suit the individual misdemeanour. For example, if a prefect misbehaves, she may lose her status. Procedures for dealing with bullying are also very effective and Year 11 pupils run lunchtime 'drop-in' sessions three times a week. Parents and pupils are confident that any such behaviour is dealt with firmly. There are close ties with outside agencies and a wide range of different types of support is available for pupils who are at risk of exclusion. These pupils are very well supported. If needs be, they may, for example, move to a part-time timetable and choose from a range of vocational courses provided by Bournemouth and Poole Further Education College. The number of fixed-period exclusions is similar to the national average and there have been no permanent exclusions for several years. This is a testament to the school's skilful management of challenging situations and to its successful policies for social and educational inclusion.



54. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Teachers complete a register at the start of every lesson and the parents of any unexplained absentees are contacted on the first day. Helped by a system of electronic registration, the school monitors individual attendance very closely and emerging trends are quickly identified. Any pupil whose attendance gives cause for concern is reported to the relevant house head or their assistant. Any issues that remain unresolved are passed onto the education welfare officer during their weekly meetings. This liaison is very effective and is reflected in the very low level of unauthorised absence.

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

### Strengths

- This school is very popular and is regularly over-subscribed.
- Parents are very well informed about the progress their children are making.
- Parents support their children well and ensure that they attend very regularly.

### Areas for improvement

- Almost half the parents do not attend their children's annual consultation meeting.

55. This school enjoys a very good reputation within Bournemouth and is regularly over-subscribed. It places great emphasis on working closely with parents and is keen to involve them as much as possible. Although only ten per cent of the pre-inspection questionnaires were returned, analysis of parents' collective response indicates that there is very little about the school that they would like to change. This positive picture was endorsed by the very supportive views of those who attended the parents' meeting.
56. Parents support their children well and encourage them to work hard and to do their best. They ensure that they attend regularly and help them to participate in the many extra-curricular activities. There are, however, three areas about which parents have concerns. These are the closeness of the partnership between home and school, the amount of information provided about their children's progress and the amount of homework that is set. The inspection team does not support these concerns. The quality of information provided is very good; pupils' annual reports contain much detailed information about the standard of pupils' work, including target grades and an assessment of the effort they are putting in. In response to parents' concerns, an interim report has been introduced and this gives parents a very useful bulletin during the school year. The school does everything it can to involve parents, however, a significant proportion do not respond to these overtures. For example, almost half do not choose to come along to their children's annual consultation meeting. Homework is set regularly and pupils say that teachers adhere closely to the set timetable.
57. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are supportive of their children. This is seen in the response to the three evenings to which they were invited. Almost three-quarters of parents attended. There is a very good level of informal communication with parents as they know that the co-ordinator will always make sure that he is available. Parents of pupils with English as an additional language are very supportive of the school, appreciating the support given by other pupils and by the school's own provision.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### Strengths

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.

- Leadership and management are very good overall.
- Leadership and management of special educational needs are excellent.
- The school's development planning is very good.
- The school's management of its finances is excellent.
- The school's effectiveness is very good and it gives very good value for money.

#### Areas for improvement

- The monitoring and evaluation functions of faculty heads are not consistently undertaken.

58. The leadership and management of the school are very good. There is a very clear educational direction to the work of the school and there is particular emphasis on raising standards, improving the quality of teaching and learning and maintaining the very high standards of attendance and behaviour. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and, throughout the staff, there is considerable attention to detail and the rigorous implementation of school procedures. Overall, the leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good in focusing the school's drive for improvement and of ensuring that it is successfully reflected in the school's ethos, strategic planning and day-to-day operations.
59. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in the overall focus of managers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of work in the school. There are clear job descriptions at all management levels. There is a comprehensive structure to cover all aspects of the school's work. In the main, it works well, although at all levels it has not had the intended impact in provision for citizenship. There are still some faculty managers whose implementation of their monitoring and evaluation role is inconsistent. The drive to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been very successful. The result has been a significant reduction in the incidence of unsatisfactory teaching and a considerable rise in the proportion of teaching that is identified as good or better. The quality of leadership and management is very good in art and design, design and technology, English, mathematics, ICT and religious education. It is good in geography, history, music, modern foreign languages and physical education. It is satisfactory in science and unsatisfactory for citizenship. The impact of this improving leadership and management is seen to good effect on the rising standards or the maintenance of high standards in many subjects.
60. The senior management team is an experienced group who know and understand their responsibilities very well and work very well as a cohesive and very effective team. The work of the senior management team has a very good influence on the drive for improved quality throughout the school and on the effective use of new technology. The senior management team assesses data well to identify trends, to produce strategies and to target areas for improvement. There is very good quality information in most areas to determine and analyse progress towards targets set.
61. The governing body shows a very good commitment in its involvement in the school's work. Governors fulfill their role well in determining the school's directions and priorities and they have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They play their part well in holding the school to account but have not made sufficient progress in ensuring that statutory requirements are met, for example in respect of collective worship and aspects of the curriculum, such as citizenship. There has been excellent teamwork between the governing body and school leaders in ensuring that ambitious projects, such as the bid for specialist college status and improving facilities on site have been realised.

62. Leadership and management of special educational needs are excellent. The co-ordinator foresees the future needs of pupils and plans very well for them. There is a very good development plan for this area of the school's work and its impact was seen in the successful introduction of the ASDAN course. There is a clear rationale to the allocation of support and to the creation of an effective team. Despite the work of the special educational needs co-ordinator, not all departments have created effective links with his team. There has been the creation of additional demands as a response to the devolvement of responsibilities for pupils with statements of special educational needs to schools by the local education authority. The governor for special educational needs is very well informed and keeps the governing body well briefed.
63. The school's development planning is very good and has improved since the last inspection. There is very good identification of the school's priorities and, overall, there has been good progress towards meeting both academic and pastoral targets. The main area where there has been insufficient progress is in the consistent implementation of citizenship throughout the curriculum.
64. The school's management of its finances is excellent. The management of the budget is efficiently and effectively carried out. There is very careful linkage of the school's finances to plans for improvements. The school is very effective in its use of new technology. The bursar plays an excellent role in ensuring that the school secures excellent deals when making purchases. Some recent examples include the new dining facilities and the new monitors for ICT equipment. The cost of educating a pupil annually is broadly average for secondary schools. The percentage of time teachers spend in contact with pupils is broadly average. All designated funds have been very effectively and efficiently directed towards the purposes for which they are intended, for example towards staff professional development. The overall effectiveness of the school is very good and it gives very good value for money.
65. The school has a good, stable, experienced and committed teaching staff. Subjects are taught by well-qualified specialist teams, grouped in faculties. Teachers who join Avonbourne are well supported by the school, faculties and departments and, in the case of newly qualified teachers, by the local education authority. Teaching assistants, administrative and other non-teaching staff are well inducted into school procedures and requirements. In some areas, such as ICT, there is insufficient teacher assistant support for pupils with special educational needs. There is currently no technical support available for food technology and art and design.
66. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very well qualified and experienced, and is an advanced skills teacher for this area of provision, which is recognition of his abilities. He also has sufficient time to carry out the many responsibilities, which is an improvement since the time of the last report. However, there are insufficient assistants to meet the current needs of pupils who have been identified as requiring support. The assistants are very experienced and well qualified and committed to providing the best possible support for these pupils.
67. There are so few pupils with English as an additional language in the school that there is no specific need for a department as such. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the deputy headteacher have line-management responsibility, but there is little liaison with local outside agencies, where resources in terms of finance and staffing are short. The school receives no external funding for pupils with English as an additional language, although there are currently some pupils who require support. This is provided from the school's own budget.

68. The school does offer good opportunities for teachers to attend courses to further their professional development. This is well monitored with teachers being required to identify and apply their training for the benefit of the school. Teaching assistants and other non-teaching staff are also given opportunities for training. For example, on school training days, administrative and other staff 'shadow' their colleagues in order to widen their own expertise and the range of expertise available to the school. The success of the school's training and support programme is reflected in its obtaining the Investor in People award.
69. The standard of accommodation is consistently good across the school. Accommodation for music, including practice cells, is very good. Most rooms are clean, bright and spacious. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics, history and modern foreign languages. In art and design, where accommodation is also good, no lessons are taught outside the specialist rooms. This is an improvement on the position at the time of the previous inspection. Indoor accommodation for physical education is good, although the spacious sports hall continues to be shared with the neighbouring boys' school. The playing fields are very uneven in places, parts of the hockey pitch require maintenance and areas of the tennis courts need urgent repairs.
70. There is a designated teaching area for pupils with special educational needs. This is an improvement on the provision reported in the 1997 inspection. The accommodation for the area of special educational needs consists of a small classroom and adjoining office, which is centrally placed in the school, therefore easily accessible. It is a focus for these pupils, who are frequently found there, to talk to staff and gain support. It is, however, too small to accommodate all who wish to attend the learning skills club, and many have to move to the library, which is not a satisfactory situation. The school does not have full access for disabled pupils who use wheelchairs. However, there is access for parents and visitors who use wheelchairs, and the school has a toilet for the disabled.
71. The quantity and quality of learning resources within departments are good overall and are sufficient to teach the National Curriculum and religious education.
72. In English and mathematics, there are good facilities dedicated to ICT which support learning within those subjects. In history and geography, there is also good access and use of ICT and, in history, there is a particularly good range of books and videos. Every pupil has a textbook in modern foreign languages and every teacher has good audio-visual resources in their classroom. The department also has its own ICT room to enhance learning. In religious education, there is a very good range of artefacts and new sets of textbooks for pupils studying for GCSE. In music, although there are some good resources, shortages that have a negative impact on learning include computers, classroom instruments and recording equipment. Resources for the area of special educational needs are excellent. A bank of worksheets relating to all subjects is retained by the department, also workbooks, primarily for literacy. Successmaker, an ICT program for literacy and numeracy, is also used effectively.
73. The good resourcing of ICT within discrete lessons and within a good range of their other subjects enables pupils to have experiences that support their learning. Most ICT equipment is new and of good quality but there are insufficient interactive whiteboards. Many pupils use their home computers to support their schoolwork.
74. The attractive library and resources centre is used well to support learning especially by pupils researching topics across a good range of subjects. The centre has eight computers with Internet access, magazines and videos.

75. Resources outside the school are used well. In English, pupils go on theatre trips, In art and design, there are visits to London galleries, and galleries abroad in Paris, Madrid and Barcelona for Years 10 and 11. Pupils' field trips include one to a local quarry in geography but pupils make limited use of local historical resources. In physical education, they use the local swimming pool. In music, pupils go to concerts of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and take part in workshops at Glyndebourne.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

76. The governors should include in their post-inspection plan the way that they intend to respond to the following issues in order to raise standards in the school. The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Raise attainment in science in Years 10 and 11 by:

- a) increasing the focus on scientific enquiry;
- b) increasing the focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT;
- c) improving the quality of teachers' planning and raising teachers' expectations, especially for the higher attainers;
- d) improving teachers' assessment of pupils' work, especially in providing guidance on how pupils can improve their work to attain a higher level; and
- e) managers monitoring and evaluating consistently the quality of provision and taking effective action to raise standards.

Paragraphs 2, 5, 7, 21, 59, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

- (2) Improve the provision in citizenship by:

- a) developing a scheme of work and supporting documentation to support the implementation of a coherent curriculum;
- b) establishing and implementing an assessment procedure;
- c) developing a robust monitoring system that maps pupils' attainment and progression in the subject;
- d) implementing planned procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject; and
- e) providing effective leadership support in establishing the subject in the school's curriculum.

Paragraphs 32, 33, 59, 61, 105, 106, 107

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	163
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	61	54	31	5	2	0
Percentage	6	37	33	19	3	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Rounding up or down may make the figure less than or more than 100 per cent.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7– Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1045
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	98

Special educational needs	Y7– Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	150

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	32

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	n/a	207	207

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	137	139	144
	Total	137	139	144
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (91)	71 (75)	70 (76)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	25 (63)	35 (49)	27 (31)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	130	149	143
	Total	130	149	143
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (72)	72 (81)	69 (70)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	20 (28)	30 (43)	26 (19)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2002	n/a	207	207

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	114	197	202
	Total	114	197	202
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	55 (50)	95 (97)	98 (99)
	National	50 (48)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41.2 (37.8)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		



***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
755	26	0
0	0	0
23	0	0
5	1	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
10	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
236	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	59.58
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5:1

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

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	427

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.1
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.8
Key Stage 4	20.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	3,028,782
Total expenditure	3,032,021
Expenditure per pupil	2,896
Balance brought forward from previous year	71,258
Balance carried forward to next year	68,019

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1043
Number of questionnaires returned	102

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	48	6	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	60	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	59	13	0	0
The teaching is good.	30	66	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	52	12	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	42	5	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	56	14	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	41	52	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	47	4	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	36	5	0	0

### Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents raised at the meeting or on the questionnaire form the lack of provision of lockers for the girls.

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

### ENGLISH

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

#### Strengths

- By the end of Year 11, standards are well above those expected and pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes, which contribute to the very good learning.
- There is very good teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- There is very good leadership and management of a successful department.
- There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' confidence, independent learning skills and personal development.

#### Areas for improvement

- In a minority of lessons, teachers do not adapt tasks and resources with sufficient appropriateness to the needs of all pupils.

77. Standards of pupils by the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations nationally, reflecting the standards attained by that Year 9 in the 2002 national tests, standards which were close to the national average for pupils achieving Level 5 or above. Although current standards are lower than those reached in the 2001 tests, when Year 9 contained a higher proportion of more competent pupils, they represent good achievement for pupils in the current year group, which joined the school with below average standards in reading and writing. Achievement is good for pupils of all levels of competence, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs.
78. Standards of pupils by the end of Year 11 are well above those expected in all areas of English. This judgement reflects the GCSE examination results in 2002, when the proportion of pupils achieving an A\*-C grade in both English language and English literature was well above the national average. The current standards represent very good achievement for pupils of all levels of competence in relation to their prior attainment, and are part of a very positive and improving trend in attainment.
79. During Years 7 to 9, most pupils make good progress in extending the full range of English skills. They enjoy opportunities to read their work aloud and to contribute their ideas in class, and pupils prepare presentations on topics such as hobbies. They also listen well to the teacher and to each other, as seen, for example when Year 9 pupils enthusiastically discussed events in 'Macbeth'. Pupils also develop well their ability to write at length. The enjoyment of Year 7 pupils in language is evident in various types of poems they write, such as haikus and acrostic poems. More competent writers develop good analytical skills when writing autobiographically or factually. They also make good progress in writing creatively, for example when producing play scripts.
80. During Years 10 and 11, pupils build on these foundations to make very good progress in developing speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, often of a high order. Pupils' growing confidence in speaking was very evident in lessons when they made thoughtful and analytical presentations on poems they had studied. The analysis of texts, such as 'An Inspector Calls' and 'The Merchant of Venice', is often penetrating, and is well supported by textual analysis. When studying media projects, pupils develop a good understanding of presentational devices. The quality of presentation is good. Pupils also

show a good aptitude for using ICT, as seen, for example in PowerPoint presentations in Year 11. Less competent pupils make frequent technical errors in their writing, but often show good comprehension skills.

81. Teaching in English is very good overall, although it is most effective in Years 10 and 11. The best teaching is characterised by challenging expectations and a focus on active, independent learning by pupils who respond readily to such opportunities and learn well. These features were particularly evident in a Year 11 lesson in which groups of pupils gave confident, analytical presentations of poems from their literature anthology, demonstrating good evidence of independent research and using technology such as PowerPoint effectively. Other features of effective teaching include the good use of feedback and assessment to show pupils not only how well they have done but also how they can improve their work, as when Year 10 pupils produced assignments on the significance of a particular scene in 'Romeo and Juliet'. Teachers prepare pupils well for national tests and GCSE examinations, carefully isolating the criteria of good practice, as seen when pupils were studying characterisation in 'Macbeth'. Occasionally, there is insufficient variety in the tasks set, or resources such as worksheets are not adapted sufficiently for the needs of particular pupils, especially more competent learners who are capable of making more rapid progress. For example, Year 8 pupils studying the Arthurian legends were given a series of comprehension exercises which were not challenging for some pupils and which did not help them establish the key features of legends as an aid to their own creative writing. Whilst the structure of the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily, 'starter' and 'review' sessions are not always sufficiently paced or related clearly enough to the teacher's objectives to enable pupils to make all the significant gains in learning of which they are capable. The subject contributes very well to pupils' personal development. When studying challenging literature, such as the poem 'The World is a Beautiful Place', pupils are helped to consider important social and political issues of personal and collective responsibility.
82. Leadership and management in English are very good. The faculty has overcome some staffing problems and has successfully adapted schemes of work to incorporate key areas of citizenship and computer skills. There is effective monitoring of teaching and standards, with a common approach to marking. Resources, particularly for ICT, are good and have a positive impact upon standards. The department uses standardised assessments and the resulting data well to target pupils and group them by ability.
83. The strengths identified in the 1997 inspection have been maintained: high standards at the end of Year 11; positive attitudes of pupils; effective teaching; and strong leadership. Although standards at the end of Year 9 are now not as high, pupils now achieve well since they joined the school with lower levels of attainment than the current Year 7. There is more use of ICT. Therefore, overall, there has been good improvement in English since the previous inspection.

## **Literacy**

84. Standards of literacy throughout the school are good and are an important factor in the good attainment in several subjects. The strategy for promoting literacy is not rigorously co-ordinated and there are inconsistencies in the way in which some departments approach literacy. Nevertheless, the school succeeds in cultivating pupils who are good listeners, confident speakers and readers and who often write thoughtfully, accurately and analytically. Teachers give opportunities for pupils to research and present information, for example presenting assignments in English on poetry texts. Year 7 pupils do effective role-play exercises in geography to increase their awareness of how

industrial change affects people. Pupils speak confidently in assembly, and Year 8 pupils discuss school council business constructively in registration periods. Most departments follow a programme designed to improve the technical skills of writing. For example, Year 7 pupils in ICT lessons correct texts for spelling, grammar and punctuation. Opportunities to promote writing at length are sometimes missed, for example in history, but most subjects make use of devices such as providing starter sentences to develop pupils' writing skills. Consequently, pupils of all levels of competence make good progress in developing the full range of literacy skills in a variety of contexts.

## MATHEMATICS

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

### Strengths

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because of the commitment and hard work of both pupils and teachers.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and most have very good classroom management skills. They ensure that pupils work hard to achieve their best by keeping a close check on their effort and progress.
- Leadership and management are very good, fostering effective teamwork to constantly improve mathematics provision and standards.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and positive, supportive relationships, based on mutual respect, contribute to good learning in most lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- The basic numeracy skills of a significant minority of pupils are weak and this impedes their learning in both mathematics and some other subjects.
- Mathematics lessons do not include enough examples of applications from a broad range of contexts; neither do they contribute enough to pupils' understanding of wider issues such as citizenship.
- Opportunities for pupils to estimate, hypothesize, predict and explain their reasoning are too limited, although they occur in the best lessons.
- ICT is used but not frequently enough in teaching and learning in mathematics.

85. Overall, national test results in 2002 for Year 9 pupils are similar to those in other schools nationally. The proportions of pupils obtaining the expected Level 5 are similar to the national averages but a smaller than average proportion obtains higher levels. Taking account of pupils' starting points when they enter the school, results show that these pupils achieved very well. National test results for 14-year-olds have risen since 2001 in much the same way as results nationally. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is in line with their peers.
86. Results in mathematics in GCSE examinations were in line with the national average for all schools in 2002. They have risen significantly since 2001 and, in 2002, 50.7 per cent of pupils obtained grades A\*-C. This result is the best ever for mathematics in the school. In 2002, a higher than average proportion of the pupils also obtained GCSE grades A\*-G. These results overall show that pupils' progress over five years at the school is good.
87. Standards of work seen in lessons and in pupils' books are in line with what is expected at the end of both Year 9 and Year 11. For most pupils, skills in number work, algebra, shape and space and data handling develop well over the five years and at a faster rate

than in many similar schools. Their skills in problem solving and investigative mathematics are satisfactory but not as strong as other aspects. Pupils use technical vocabulary correctly. Some pupils, however, even in Years 10 and 11, have difficulty in using a ruler correctly, handling simple fractions or decimals, multiplying by two or ten or estimating lengths.

88. Pupils between Year 7 and Year 11 develop well their technical skills, such as solving equations or findings areas of shapes. However, they do not routinely use these skills to solve real-life problems and their capacity to estimate, hypothesize and predict does not grow as they get older because the opportunity to do this is not developed systematically, although it does happen in the best lessons. The use of ICT assists pupils to make good progress in mathematics and this does occur but not frequently enough.
89. Pupils in all years are diligent and come to lessons promptly, well-organised and prepared to work, with only a very few exceptions. Most work at a good pace and feel at home within the supportive atmosphere created. They feel able to ask for help when this is needed. Some lack confidence in their mathematical ability and require much reassurance. Many others are willing to tackle challenging problems without fear of being made to feel awkward if they do not immediately succeed. Most pupils undertake homework conscientiously and work neatly.
90. Teaching and learning are good overall. Positive relationships between pupils and teachers are a strength and this contributes to pupils' good learning. Teachers use their very good classroom management skills to ensure pupils work hard and with real enjoyment. Most teachers pose questions very well to determine exactly how much has been understood or where pupils are stumbling. In the best lessons, teachers use diagrams well to help pupils visualise mathematical concepts. They link different techniques so that pupils see the connection between graphical or algebraic methods or pictorial and computational ones. Examples of such teaching were seen in a Year 10 lesson on simultaneous equations and a Year 8 class on adding fractions.
91. Just occasionally, teaching and learning are less than satisfactory because the tasks set lack interest or challenge or because a few pupils disrupt learning. In such lessons, teachers do not take full account of what pupils can already do well, from their primary school or the previous year, for example, so that little new learning takes place.
92. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They support and encourage pupils very well to build their confidence. The way in which pupils' written or oral work is assessed is also very good so that pupils are given very clear explanations about how well they are doing and what should be improved.
93. The department is very well led and managed. Staff work in effective partnership and seek constantly to improve mathematics provision so that pupils can achieve highly. Mathematics teachers have access to well-assembled data on pupils' attainment and most use this well to ensure that pupils continue to learn in line with their potential. Learning support assistants are deployed well and effectively. Resources and accommodation are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good primarily because standards have risen. They are now in line with national expectations, whereas previously they were below.

## Numeracy

94. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. There is a numeracy policy and managers identified as having whole-school responsibility. The mathematics department has begun to work in collaboration with staff in other areas, for example ICT, to promote numeracy across the curriculum but this work is still at an early stage and does not yet show a consistent approach. Overall, pupils are given insufficient practice in basic skills, and levels of numeracy do let some pupils down in other subjects, for example in design and technology.

## SCIENCE

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

### Strengths

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject.
- Teachers manage pupils well, hold their attention and keep them engaged in learning.

### Areas for improvement

- Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 11 are below those for English and mathematics.
- Planning of lessons and assessment of learning are a common weakness of teaching.
- Teachers do not focus sufficiently on scientific enquiry.
- Leadership of the provision in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient focus on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

95. Pupils in Year 9 attain standards in line with national expectations. These are similar to their attainment at the time of the previous inspection. Their attainment in comparison to secondary modern schools is above average. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 for the past four years have shown a steady improvement. Inspection findings confirm standards are in line with national expectations in the current Year 9.
96. Pupils in Year 11 attain standards below the national expectation and this is confirmed by their results in the GCSE examinations. The percentage of pupils attaining A\*-C grades in 2002 was below the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining A\*-G grades was in line with the national average. These are similar to standards reported in 2001. Overall, the results are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. Inspection findings confirm standards below the national expectation in the current Year 11.
97. The satisfactory achievement of Year 11 pupils is below that of these same pupils in English and mathematics and all other subjects. This is partly due to weaknesses in the planning of lessons, especially that for scientific enquiry, and the assessment of learning in lessons. These two factors also affect the achievement of Year 9 pupils but to a lesser extent. Another factor that depresses the achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is the slower pace of implementation of the national strategy for science than is normally found nationally. On the positive side is the school's very good atmosphere for learning. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, and teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this effectively to explain and illustrate ideas and information. These factors have a positive impact on pupils' good achievement in Years 7 to 9.



98. Year 11 pupils know the factors that affect the rate of chemical reaction. They understand the uses of satellites, for example for radio, television and the telephone. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the characteristics of sound waves – wavelength, frequency and amplitude – and are able to explain pitch and loudness. Lower attaining pupils understand the feeding relationships in a habitat and the meaning of terms such as ‘producers’, ‘consumers’, ‘herbivores’ and ‘carnivores’. Year 9 pupils have a good grasp of scientific phenomena. For example, they explain how heat breaks bonds between particles and makes a solid melt, boil and evaporate. They understand that some substances like wax need more energy to break bonds and melt than ice. They know how quickly bacteria grow. Although they carry out a good range of practical activities, their skills of scientific enquiry are weak. The relatively small proportion of pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, mainly because of working in small groups organised by the ability of the pupils. Group working also helps pupils with English as an additional language to make satisfactory progress.
99. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Staff illness has had a negative impact as temporary staff have had to be used and this resulted in some of the teaching and learning during the inspection being unsatisfactory. Generally, throughout the department, teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject well to stimulate pupils’ interest in learning science. They explain scientific ideas and processes clearly and use illustrations and demonstrations effectively. For example, one teacher made very good use of a ripple tank and questioning to explain wave energy. These resources and activities provided very good intellectual stimulus and promoted pupils’ grasp of the idea of wave energy and its movement. This style of teaching helped pupils make very good progress in acquiring new knowledge and understanding of science. The two main weaknesses in teaching are lesson planning and assessment. Lessons are not structured well overall. The learning objectives are neither planned clearly nor conveyed to pupils so that they know what precisely the teachers require them to learn. Furthermore, many lessons do not have a concluding part in which to assess and sum up and consolidate learning. As a result, the teachers know what they have taught but do not know accurately what pupils have learnt and what they need to do next to prevent gaps in their knowledge and understanding. This also makes setting individual and class targets for pupils difficult. The lack of such targets in science is a weakness. The lack of matching appropriate tasks to pupils’ needs among the classes, both those organised by ability and among the mixed ability classes, is also a weakness that is hindering the progress of all pupils. This weakness makes setting of learning expectations difficult. The department does not contribute enough to developing pupils’ literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. As a result, pupils’ learning of ideas, for example the interpretation of information in graphs and independent research skills, are weaker than normally expected. Management of pupils and the effective use of time and resources are a consistent strength. Lessons have good pace and pupils enjoy learning in an orderly atmosphere.
100. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of issues facing the faculty but too little has been done to eradicate weaknesses and to raise standards in GCSE examinations. The audit for implementation of the national strategy for science has been conducted thoroughly. However, a weakness in leadership in this area is not moving the department fast enough. This is slowing pupils’ progress and affecting achievement of Year 11 pupils in the school. The curriculum lacks focus on scientific enquiry. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory but the results are not analysed enough to set realistic but challenging targets and to monitor and evaluate progress. The daily organisation of the department is good. It helps it to run smoothly. The technicians provide effective support. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.

## ART AND DESIGN

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

### Strengths

- Pupils' achievement in all practical aspects of the subject is excellent.
- Teaching and learning are excellent overall.
- GCSE results have been well above the national average in recent years.
- Sketchbooks are used very effectively.
- The range and scale of two- and three-dimensional work are very good.

### Areas for improvement

- Pupils use too little creative ICT in their work because the department lacks resources.

101. Pupils' standards in art and design when they enter the school in Year 7 are below the national average and they lack confidence in their skills. They make extremely rapid progress and, by Year 9, attainment in practical aspects of the subject is well above that expected. Pupils learn key skills extremely effectively, so those who take GCSE can apply these imaginatively in all their work. GCSE A\*-C grade results in recent years, including 2002, have been well above average. Given their low attainment on entry, pupils' progress to these very high standards is excellent. Very few pupils fall below C grade, with over a third of the pupils entered for the examination in 2002 attaining A grades.

102. Pupils' current standards also reflect their excellent achievements in art and design across the school. Self-confidence also develops rapidly as pupils begin to recognise the progress they are making in being able to draw, paint and construct things well. This confidence arises mostly through the excellent teaching, where every opportunity is taken to give pupils detailed oral and written feedback about how well they are doing, including targets for improvement. The department also provides a very well-designed curriculum, focusing on practical skills development early in the school. This approach enables pupils to develop the technical competencies they need to do well. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils were learning very successfully about a wide variety of interesting techniques for applying paint. Although writing is a weaker aspect, pupils learn very effectively how to incorporate what they read and research about artists' work into the visual aspects of their projects. In another Year 7 lesson about Van Gogh, basic literacy and numeracy were being well developed, though many pupils' writing and measuring are weak. By Year 8, pupils' tonal drawing is well above average, for example in their pencil drawings of shoes and in the shading they can use in many colour-based studies. The rapid rate of progress continues into Year 9, greatly helped by double lessons, where pupils can develop depth in their studies in each lesson. Year 9 pupils' current three-dimensional work in ceramics, where pupils have made excellently constructed and unusually well-observed models of food items such as cakes, filled rolls and burgers, shows these mark-making skills highly effectively applied as painted decoration. These effects are exceptionally life-like. Standards by Year 9 are well above average in all practical aspects of pupils' work. These very high standards at Year 9 provide any pupil with a very good basis for GCSE studies. Pupils begin to develop a high degree of individuality from early in Year 10, using a wide range of media, for example printing, batik, silk-painting and glass-painting. Early GCSE projects, therefore, include work of a technically high quality, which very effectively interprets ideas in a personalised way. By Year 11, standards are well above average. Pupils' written critique, linking their visual work with artists and evaluating the learning process

in their sketchbook annotations, is often good. The very highest attaining pupils' critical, reflective evaluations, however, lack sufficient depth and individuality to enable them to reach the very top grades, despite the excellence of their practical work.

103. The quality of teaching is excellent overall. Most lessons seen were very good or excellent. Teachers consistently and effectively teach pupils in Years 7 to 9 to acquire practical skills, and how to use and mix media to create excellent effects. Demonstrations and explanations are very good, but it is the quiet, purposeful, highly focused one-to-one sessions in activity phases of lessons which are the key method of facilitating improvement. Teachers challenge pupils very effectively at an individual level, supporting well those who need most help. Pupils' highly positive attitudes result from very good relationships, very effective management of classes and the high expectations which teachers convey and which pupils are eager to meet. Pupils develop a high degree of independence and commitment in GCSE classes because teachers have developed their self-confidence so effectively in earlier years.
104. Department management has remained very good, as at the time of the last inspection. The high standards described then have improved because the department manager has retained a strong focus on enabling pupils to achieve excellently, whilst maintaining enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject. The monitoring and evaluation role of the head of department have been carried out very well. Improvement has been good. Department development plans rightly prioritise the acquisition of better ICT hardware and software, because this lack of provision causes standards in these areas of pupils' work to be significantly lower than others.

## CITIZENSHIP

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

### Strengths

- A comprehensive audit has been undertaken to identify subject contributions, which has given a good idea of where the curriculum could be taught.
- There is a good information flow about developments to staff and governors.

### Areas for improvement

- There is no scheme of work or supporting documentation, this is unsatisfactory.
- There are no assessment procedures and this is unsatisfactory.
- The monitoring and tracking system is not robust enough in mapping pupils' achievement and progress.
- The current management arrangements are unsatisfactory.
- There are no planned arrangements for monitoring teaching or learning, which is unsatisfactory.

105. This is a newly established subject, in place in practice since September 2002, so there are no available national measures for assessing standards. Inspectors were unable to collect substantial evidence in respect of standards, either from lesson observations or from the scrutiny of work, and it was therefore impossible to make an overall judgment about standards. The model chosen by the school for teaching citizenship is the use of lessons in all the faculties. The strategic planning to implement this was effective during 2001 to 2002 and, by September 2002, the expectation that all staff would teach the three elements of citizenship was accepted. Some initial training was undertaken. A comprehensive audit identified all the major elements to be taught and through which departments. However, although departments identified in their schemes of work

opportunities to teach citizenship, the school has not produced an overall scheme of work for the subject which clearly identifies how and where the curriculum is to be taught. A monitoring system was included in September 2002 in the pupil planning diaries to track the teaching and learning in the subject in Years 7, 8 and 9. Inspection evidence has indicated that this is not robust enough and there have been very few entries since September 2002 to indicate that the curriculum is being taught and how the pupils are progressing. No equivalent monitoring system was set up in Years 10 and 11 and the option system means that it is very difficult to ensure that all pupils get their entitlement within the subject. In the light of this, using both the Department for Education and Skills and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance, the judgement is that overall provision is unsatisfactory.

106. No substantial evidence was collected during the inspection to give an overall judgment on teaching and learning because, to date, very little teaching of citizenship has been directly planned and learning objectives identified. The scrutiny of work and planning diaries identified just two citizenship entries in Year 7 and four in Year 9 since September 2002. All pupils in Year 10 take part in the Project Trident scheme and in the Junior Sports Leaders Award. However, their contribution to the citizenship curriculum has not been specifically planned for or evaluated. Some evidence of citizenship themes was observed in an assembly that linked the Holocaust to its impact on pupils today if it occurred in the present day, and pupils were involved during the tutor periods in elections to the school council. In English lessons, there was the effective use of magistrates, as outside speakers, to inform pupils about the criminal justice system. In a Year 7 geography class, environmental issues were studied with reference to their impact on society. However, although some evidence of citizenship issues has been identified, the implementation overall lacks co-ordination and the mechanisms for monitoring the effectiveness of the teaching and learning do not currently exist. It was therefore impossible to ascertain what progress pupils have made or whether the curriculum is able to deliver sufficient elements of the three strands for satisfactory learning to take place.
107. A curriculum co-ordinator was appointed in 2001. However, he has no designated time to develop the subject, nor is there a budget to enable him to build up a bank of resources or to plan for outside speakers or specific events. Initially, the planning was good with a comprehensive audit of what each subject was able to deliver, although this has not been developed sufficiently in the schemes of work. An effective newsletter was established to keep staff and governors informed, although the subsequent ineffective implementation of the subject has reduced the impact of this initiative. Senior management support for the initiative is inconsistent as, at present, the management of citizenship does not appear to be based on clear aims with appropriate priorities and targets for implementation. There is no subject scheme of work, nor is there a subject development plan. The lack of these planning tools makes the effective delivery of the planned model difficult to achieve. The school recognises that this model is inappropriate for Years 10 and 11 and plans to teach the necessary elements of the curriculum through specific day events. These days have, however, not yet been planned, programmed or costed for in 2003.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

### Strengths

- Standards of work seen are well above those expected.
- The very good teaching results in excellent achievement by pupils.
- The very good leadership and management give a clear direction to the subject; teamwork is strong.
- Relationships are very good and, consequently, pupils strive to do well.

### Areas for improvement

- There is no technician for food technology, which results in an inefficient use of teachers' time.
- The very large classes raise a safety concern in practical lessons.
- The very good use of computer-aided manufacture is not yet introduced in Years 7 and 8.

108. Standards seen at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 were well above the national expectation and, in the GCSE examinations, are well above the national average. There has been an excellent improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. Results are higher in design and technology, and particularly in textiles, than the average in other subjects. Through an analysis of work and observation of lessons, these standards were confirmed during the inspection. When pupils enter the school, they have standards that are well below national expectations. This is because they have had only limited experience of the subject. Therefore, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make excellent progress to reach standards well above those expected at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.

109. At the end of Year 9, pupils have a very good understanding of the design process. Their research is of a very high standard and is well presented with good use of ICT, for example when pupils investigated the nutritional value of ingredients using a specific food program. However, the use of the computer-aided vinyl cutter is only used in Year 9, and pupils in Years 7 and 8 do not benefit from this resource. Pupils' making skills are very good. These skills were seen when they made wooden boxes. The wood was cut with precision, and pupils took care with the finish. All tasks allow the higher attainers to develop their ideas and use higher level skills. For example, some pupils made hexagonal boxes, where care had to be taken to make angled joints. At the end of Year 11, research is thorough. For example, graphics pupils not only used the Internet, but undertook research to choose the most suitable materials. Pupils are encouraged to experiment, demonstrated when they made shortbread using a variety of ingredients. Much of pupils' presentation is outstanding. This standard was seen in fashion designs, when the fluid drawings of garments showed an appreciation of line and colour. The products made in textiles are of an exceptionally high standard because pupils' creativity is encouraged. Recognition of this standard is exemplified by a pupil who gained one of the five top marks in the country in GCSE textiles in 2002. Garments are made using a wide variety of unusual materials, such as PVC, which tests pupils' determination to succeed with their making. An area that is particularly well tackled through all years is pupils' evaluation of their products. For example, Year 8 pupils critically evaluated designs, looking at colour and pattern, to a good standard.

110. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and has greatly improved since the time of the last inspection when it was satisfactory. It is based on teachers' very good subject knowledge, and their high expectations of pupils' behaviour and what they can do. This results in very good learning and a high level of motivation from all pupils. Year 9 pupils move between workshops confidently, and consistently apply themselves. This confidence and motivation are the result of very good teaching of all the skills that are covered in the subject, and tasks that interest and involve pupils, in which all succeed. In textiles, for example, the choice of type and design of bags was left to pupils. Pupils produced a wide range of designs and materials, from which all pupils learnt many skills. For example, a pupil with special educational needs chose a beautiful, but extraordinarily difficult material to sew. Her application and determination to succeed were due to the fact that it was her choice. Teachers' questioning is very good to make pupils think and therefore learn. For example, a pupil was asked to explain how the various cams resulted in differing movements. Relationships are very good, which encourage pupils to strive for high standards. Pupils are highly motivated and learn very well.
111. Leadership and management are very good, and the cohesiveness of the experienced team has contributed to standards well above those expected. There is total agreement on the teaching and learning approaches adopted in the different areas of the subject throughout Years 7 to 9. The one exercise book used by pupils for all aspects of the subject ensures that the very good assessment is continuous, so that pupils know the level at which they are working and how to improve. The literacy strategy has led to an improvement in the use and understanding of technical language. The many areas for improvement noted in the last report have all been tackled, with the exception of the lack of a technician for food technology. This situation has not changed, and the use of experienced teachers in basic tasks is a remarkably inefficient use of their time. In Years 7 and 8, there are very large classes, up to 29, which could create a safety hazard in practical lessons where there is no support.

## GEOGRAPHY

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

### Strengths

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers have high expectations and are committed to raising achievement.
- Relationships, pupil attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils work and learn in a variety of ways, using subject-specific language.
- The department has a strong team ethos.

### Areas for improvement

- The development of systematic procedures to monitor teaching and learning.
- Making pupil targets more explicit, clearly showing pupils how to progress.
- Enhancement of work with ICT to include database and spreadsheets for analysis and modelling.

112. Attainment by the end of Year 9 is above that expected and this observation is confirmed by the statutory teacher assessments, which for 2002 showed 83 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 and above. Attainment on entry is currently in line with both national and local figures, although there is a wide ability range. Some Year 7 pupils were weak in locating the earth's major features while others were very knowledgeable and confident in using a range of sources.

113. Pupils make good progress and achievement from Years 7 to 9 through extending their subject vocabulary, the development of fieldwork and graphic skills, decision-making activities and the growing use of ICT. The majority of pupils show satisfactory progress in map work skills but others lack confidence and lack sufficient support. Higher achievers produce detailed and analytical work. In lessons seen, Year 9 pupils were asking and seeking answers to challenging questions on weather systems, and a Year 7 role-play on London Docklands produced some very good language work relating to key geographical ideas. Some higher attaining pupils are not offered sufficiently challenging tasks to meet their needs. Despite some pupils with special educational needs having weak literacy skills, they make at least satisfactory progress.
114. Attainment by the end of Year 11 is slightly above that expected. In their GCSE examinations in 2002, 58.9 per cent of pupils gained grades A\*-C compared to a national figure of 56.3 per cent. There was a 100 per cent success rate at A\*-G grade, again better than the national norm. The average point score gained by pupils was similar to what they achieved in the other subjects that they studied. Although results have fluctuated over the last five years, the trend is one of improvement.
115. Pupils make good progress and achievement from Years 10 to 11, a rate of progress greater than that suggested by their standards at the end of Year 9. Pupils displayed good listening skills and were increasingly reliable in their concept formation and subject language. Coursework was of a good quality with some very good work on drainage basins. Year 11 pupils confidently discussed and analysed case study work on Gambia in a sensitive and mature manner, grappling with the very real issues of sustainable and economic growth and the relative value of improvement schemes for literacy, agriculture and water provision.
116. The overall quality of teaching is good and was never less than satisfactory. Teachers were enthusiastic, displaying good subject knowledge and effective classroom management. Lessons were well planned but teachers were inconsistent in conveying what they expected pupils to know, understand and be able to do at the end of the lesson. There was insufficient integration of topic key word displays into the teaching process to support pupil learning. A variety of techniques were used in all years which led to good lesson pace and pupil interest. A feature of the work is the sensible use of praise and the regular assessment of pupils' understanding during and at the end of the lesson. The developing ICT work of Internet searches, use of interactive programs on river work and PowerPoint presentations is not sufficiently enhanced by the use of database and spreadsheets to increase analysis and modelling. In very good lessons, expectations were high and lesson objectives were clearly stated for all pupils. In a Year 10 lesson on the location of Disneyland Paris, questioning was challenging, the pace was good, resources were relevant and pupils analysed locational factors well. There were a range of tasks and pupils were productive. Pupils are aware of their National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades but targets for improvement are not sufficiently explicit. Pupil attitudes and levels of concentration were a feature of the work observed and were very good. They work very well together, showing good listening and respect for one another's opinions.
117. Leadership and management are good. The head of department has created a good team ethos. There is a mutual respect between colleagues. Expectations of the quality of teaching and learning are high, although the monitoring of them is insufficiently systematic. Documentation is comprehensive. There is a clear vision about how to improve, focused on raising attainment through the quality of learning. Assessment procedures exist to monitor pupil progress and data is used well. Through the issues-

based curriculum, the department is making a good contribution to citizenship and pupils' social, moral and cultural development. The opportunities that exist to contribute to their spiritual development through the wonders of the natural landscape have not been identified sufficiently into schemes of work.

118. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection in the use of data, the developing ICT work and the raising of standards.

## HISTORY

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and improving and is supporting effective learning.
- Teacher knowledge of the subject and the planning of lessons are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- There is good use of ICT to promote effective learning.
- Standards at GCSE are above average and improving steadily.

### Areas for improvement

- The curriculum in Year 9 does not include a local history module and is unsatisfactory.
- Fieldwork opportunities, as at the last inspection, are limited.
- The schemes of work are yet to be fully revised to include all cross-curricular themes.
- The planned monitoring of teaching and learning is not consistently implemented.

119. Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 7 to 9 were comparable to the national expectation and the achievement of all pupils in these years is good as it represents good progress on their starting point in the subject in Year 7. Teacher assessments for Year 9 in 2002 were judged to be well above average, but this level was not substantiated by inspection findings. In Years 7 to 9, pupils develop a good range of historical skills, including the interpretation of evidence and data, the analysis of complex historical issues and a good understanding of chronology. Pupils use a wide range of learning materials including thematic worksheets, pictorial evidence, timelines, writing frames, videos, ICT and a wide range of primary and secondary source material. The use of ICT for research and for presentations is particularly effective. Year 7 can effectively 'brainstorm' about life in the Middle Ages, developing understanding of the social contrasts inherent in the times. Year 8 can, using analysis cards, distinguish between national and local causes of the English Civil War. By Year 9, pupils' analytical skills have developed so that they can draw out the similarities and contrasts of the Jewish Holocaust and the 18<sup>th</sup> century slave trade. In some of the written work, there is insufficient care to complete all assignments and to ensure that the good teacher support material is not lost.

120. At the end of Year 11, GCSE results in 2002 were above the national average and this showed a considerable improvement on the previous year's results, which were slightly below. The results indicate very good achievement for all pupils taking the subject. Since the last inspection, the standards have been steadily improving. Standards in work seen in Years 10 and 11 are above those expected and reflect good achievement. In Year 10, pupils make very good progress and work very enthusiastically, for example when demonstrated through a medicine game. Relationships were excellent during this activity. Co-operation between the pupils is very high and leads to very good learning. In Year 11, pupils can effectively interpret video evidence of the Easter Uprising to develop



their own questions and answers and to construct a good spider diagram of the causes and consequences of the event.

121. Teaching is good overall and this supports good learning throughout the department. In the best lessons, learning objectives are shared with the pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson so that a judgment on progress can be made. In these lessons, the pace is good, there is a high degree of challenge in the learning activities and pupils are very heavily involved in their own learning. In a very small number of lessons, there is too much teacher-led input with little expected of the pupils. In most lessons, there is evidence of the very good knowledge of teachers that is used very effectively in the careful planning of the activities. There is good support for literacy in the use of key words and the use of strategies such as starter sentences. The effective use of ICT, both by pupils and teachers, is a particular feature of the department. The use of numeracy is not consistently planned for across the scheme of work or observed in lessons.
122. Very good examples of pupils listening carefully to each other are observed and listening skills are actively promoted in the Year 9 lessons, as, for example in the use of video material to determine relevant information. The pupils' attitudes towards history are very positive and their behaviour in classes is of a very high order. These strong features enable good learning for all pupils to take place. Homework is set and marked regularly. Teachers have a good knowledge of each pupil's National Curriculum level; however, this information is not used systematically enough to ensure that each pupil understands how she can progress to the next level.
123. Leadership and management functions are shared between the head of department and the faculty manager for humanities. Overall, this arrangement works well, resulting in good leadership and management. The history department has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and in raising the standards in Years 10 and 11. Fieldwork opportunities remain limited as they did at the last inspection, particularly in Years 8 and 9. Some revision to the Year 9 syllabus is required as currently there is no local history module in the 1750 to 1900 period. This is a National Curriculum requirement. Resources are good with a wide range of books and teacher-produced material. Most lessons are taught in dedicated history rooms with good display space. Relationships are very good and the department has created an environment in which good teaching and learning can flourish.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

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

### **Strengths**

- Standards above expectations in Years 7 to 9 and well above expectations in Years 10 and 11.
- Good achievement in Years 7 to 9 and very good achievement in Years 10 and 11.
- Provision for Years 10 and 11 is very good.
- Leadership and management are very good and of high quality.
- The development of ICT across the curriculum and collaboration with other departments are good.
- The attitudes and response of pupils, especially in Years 10 and 11, which are very good.

Areas for improvement

- To improve provision of different tasks and resources in lessons to meet the differing needs of pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- To add breadth to the curriculum by more use of multimedia.
- Improve the use of control technology.

124. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection and standards of attainment are above expectations in Years 7 to 9 and well above expectations in Years 10 and 11. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 strategy for ICT in Year 7 is a positive move to raise standards in this year. Lower attaining pupils are achieving very well, although in one lesson the high number in the class and the lack of support resulted in the lower attainers not making enough progress. Pupils are developing skills in controlling and measuring in design and technology, although they are capable of more. There are now software packages for computer-aided design which are used well and this is a very good improvement.
125. By Year 9, pupils have made good progress in wordprocessing, desktop publishing and the use of presentation software, spreadsheets and databases. They use search engines on the Internet to look for information. According to assessment results, pupils are achieving above the national expectation. On entry in Year 7, the pupils are given tests, for example in wordprocessing and using the Internet, and the school is extending this testing to spreadsheets and databases. Teachers are planning lessons effectively. For example, in a very good lesson, discussion at the end helped pupils to share ideas and to see how their work could be improved. Pupils in Year 7 are enjoying the work on presentation software and are making very good progress. Pupils in Year 8 are making good progress in the use of spreadsheets, and independent work is encouraged, as they are given opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge of averages to write a formula for the spreadsheet. Pupils in the Year 9 lessons observed made only satisfactory progress; in both lessons, there was no apparent planning and higher attaining pupils were repeating previous work. Progress over time is good as there has been some very good work on wordprocessing and desktop publishing which pupils have evaluated well.
126. The standards of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are well above expectations and this judgement is reflected in the GCSE results. Eighty-one per cent of pupils who were entered for the subject in 2002 attained grades A\*-C, which was well beyond the pass rate predicted for these pupils and well above the national average. There are comprehensive opportunities for the pupils to achieve some form of accreditation, especially for the current Year 10, who are all taking GCSE in applied ICT and also have the option of GCSE ICT and business and communication systems. Pupils in Year 11, who are not taking GCSE ICT, are following a key skills course in ICT. The GCSE in applied ICT is supported by using online course materials. The pupils are learning to work independently, especially in GCSE business and communication systems, where pupils in Year 10 are using their ICT skills on a project, 'setting up a small business'. In a very good Year 11 lesson, pupils were working independently as they followed instructions on designing a web page.
127. The provision and use of ICT across the curriculum are good. A recent school audit identified how each curriculum area covered particular areas of study. All staff have completed the New Opportunities Fund training and are applying their knowledge to their subjects. Particularly good use is made of ICT in history, where pupils use the Internet for research and presentation software and wordprocessing for their assignments. In English, pupils in Year 7 are writing a poem and creating a multimedia version using images and sound. The pupils use computer-aided design and learn about control

systems in design and technology and data logging in science. ICT provides a valuable resource for pupils with special educational needs to support and enhance the curriculum, encouraging motivation and the development of skills. There are computer facilities in some faculty areas which are used well, for example in humanities. ICT is used less sufficiently in art and design and music, where there are fewer facilities available in the departments.

128. Teaching and learning are good overall. Where teaching was very good, the lessons had clear objectives and excellent teacher knowledge. There was a good pace to the lessons and very high expectations of the pupils. Pupils' work is carefully assessed and marked constructively with suggestions for improvement. There was very positive behaviour management with the good use of praise and encouragement, and teachers are good role models. As a result of the commitment of the teachers, the pupils work very hard and make very good progress, especially in Years 10 and 11. Where teaching is satisfactory, the planning of tasks to meet the differing needs of pupils is weak and the worksheets are not suitable for the whole class, the work lacks challenge and teachers do not take full account of what pupils can already do.
129. The curriculum for ICT is good with a very good balance of essential ICT skills. However, there is insufficient use of multimedia, including the use of recording and graphic software, digital cameras, camcorders and webcams with opportunities for video conferencing. ICT makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy and this is explicit in the planning. For example, in a lesson on editing text, Year 8 pupils correct spelling, grammar and the use of capital letters and punctuation. The correct use of spelling and grammar is reinforced in all lessons. Speaking and listening skills are reinforced when pupils deliver a presentation. Skills in numeracy are applied to work on spreadsheets. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, ensuring pupils know how ICT should be used appropriately and emphasising the dangers of misuse.
130. The leadership and management of ICT are very good and are committed to improvement. Planning for improvement is part of the school development plan and includes the development of higher level skills. The head of faculty and team leader work well together, are well informed about provision and standards and collaborate well with other departments. They oversee schemes of work, checking targets and marking and monitoring teaching and learning well. Pupils' attainment is very well assessed overall and pupils have a very good knowledge of their own progress and how they need to improve. There is insufficient use of assessment data to determine appropriate opportunities for different tasks and resources for lower and higher attaining pupils.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

### Strengths

- The leadership and management of the faculty are good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Attitudes and behaviour are good.

### Areas for improvement

- The lack of challenge for some higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Marking is not used consistently to tell pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- The lack of a coherent policy in the use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

131. Results at GCSE in French in 2000 and 2001 showed a significant fall in the proportion of candidates who achieved A\*-C grades, compared to results reported at the last inspection, and were well below the national average. Results for 2002 indicate the trend has been reversed but, although they show a substantial improvement, they remain below the national average. The proportion of pupils entered for the examinations is well above that of most schools. Results in Spanish in each of the years 2001 and 2002 are well below the national average.
132. In work seen, the standard of work of pupils in Year 9 is above that expected nationally and pupils make good progress. Pupils respond well to good teaching. Higher attaining pupils have a good range of essential vocabulary and grammar. They demonstrate a good understanding of past and future tenses in their speech and writing. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. They identify accurately specific items of information from short or slightly extended extracts of speech. They understand well short, written extracts on familiar topics and they make brief but adequate responses to their teachers with comprehensible pronunciation. Little reading aloud in class to boost oral confidence and to improve pronunciation was seen. Knowledge and understanding of grammar are not consistently re-inforced in all classes.
133. The standard of work seen by pupils in Year 11 is in line with national expectations and this represents good progress on their starting point in the subjects in Year 10. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good knowledge of vocabulary and a sound understanding of grammar, although some higher attaining pupils do not develop these skills as well as expected. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good pronunciation. They speak well in situations controlled by the teachers but are not so confident when asked questions of a general nature based on previous learning. Lower attaining pupils have satisfactory listening and speaking skills, although their pronunciation is only approximate at times. In written work, there is an increasing range of vocabulary, grammatical expressions and tenses by higher attaining pupils. However, there is evidence of underachievement amongst this group. Part of the reason is that all pupils are doing the same task with a consequent lack of challenge for the most able. Lower attainers are developing well the basic language and structures needed for the foundation level of the GCSE and are making good progress. Pupils' ability to write in Spanish is below that expected. Pupils are able to write about themselves and their daily lives. In view of the delayed starting point for the uptake of Spanish, progress is better than expected.
134. Overall, teaching is good. There are several elements of good teaching in lessons throughout the faculty. Teachers have a very good command of the language they teach. The management of pupils is good. In most lessons, teachers provide a variety of activities which enable pupils to make good progress in listening, speaking and writing. Good lessons have brisk pace which keeps pupils on their toes. Expectations of higher and lower attaining pupils are high. The teaching of modern foreign languages is making a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills by making them think about language patterns and sounds and to compare them with their own language. With some groups of higher attaining pupils, there is the tendency to teach to one level and not to discriminate between individual pupils' needs. Marking of pupils' work is regular with good examples of positive, helpful comments by teachers to help pupils improve their written standards but this practice is inconsistent across the faculty. There were some good examples seen of the use made of ICT to enhance pupils' language skills. One Year 7 class had produced 'Guides to Learning French', giving practical advice in 'pupil-speak' on how to improve linguistic skills. These were not only beautifully illustrated but functional as well. Generally, the faculty does not yet

have a consistently coherent policy in ICT and its integration more closely into curriculum themes.

135. Leadership and management are good. The head of the faculty has identified areas for improvement and is developing with colleagues a shared vision relating to the raising of standards. The faculty meets the requirements of performance management and there is a sharing of ideas on good practice but there are insufficient opportunities taken to observe those ideas in the classroom. The faculty follows school requirements for monitoring pupil achievement and progress but pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to raise their standards. Assessment is being improved systematically but there is still insufficient emphasis placed on identifying and working on shortfalls in individual language skills. The faculty's documentation is concise and informative, setting out clear aims and guidance for colleagues on how and when to achieve them. The existing programme of exchanges and study trips to France is making an important contribution to the interest and motivation of pupils towards foreign language study. Since the last report, the quality of teaching is now consistently good in Years 7 to 11 and the improvement overall has been good.

## MUSIC

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

### Strengths

- Pupils' attainment in Years 10 and 11 is above expectation, and in Years 10 and 11 is well above expectation.
- Teaching and pupils' learning are good.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes and behaviour is good.
- The range of opportunities in instrumental tuition is very good and teaching is good.
- Teaching and the standards reached in extra-curricular work are very good and often excellent and bring credit to the school.
- Leadership and management are good.

### Areas for improvement

- Learning is too keyboard based; pupils make insufficient use of their own or other instruments in classroom work.
- Shortages in resourcing have a negative impact on learning.

136. GCSE examination results between 1997 and 2001 improved steadily from a low base and the 2002 results were above average when compared with all schools. Since the last inspection, there has been excellent improvement in examination results, when they were well below the national average.

137. Pupils enter the school with very variable musical experience related to the quality of their musical education in their previous schools, instrumental tuition experience, interests and level of home support. Some pupils enter with above average attainment but most enter with below or well below average attainment in music, and teachers' assessments confirm this. By Year 9, when pupils are 14, standards have improved but are below those expected; a few talented pupils attain levels well above those expected. Pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well. Pupils sing as expected in parts and in tune. Instrumental performing skills are lower than expected; pupils make good use of keyboards but have insufficient opportunity to use their own instruments in

classwork. Music-reading skills are much lower than expected and composing skills are lower than expected. Pupils listen respectfully to recordings and to each other when performing but their general musical knowledge, for example of instruments, composers, forms, structures and well-known pieces of music, are below that expected. The more experienced use technical vocabulary in appraising but the majority makes insufficient use of musical terms.

138. In GCSE work, pupils achieve very well. Attainment in the current Years 10 and 11 groups is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' instrumental skills average over music grade 4 in Years 10 and 11. Pupils sing accurately with a sense of enjoyment. The most talented show a good understanding of devices and structures in composing and create imaginative pieces. Pupils use music technologies well (including those at home) but are disadvantaged by the limited number of computers in the department to help them develop pieces and notate their work. Pupils listen respectfully and appraise using appropriate terminology; their general musical knowledge is broadly in line with that expected.
139. The quality of teaching in classroom work is good overall but very good in GCSE classes in Years 10 and 11; there is some very good and excellent teaching and very little unsatisfactory teaching. In the best lessons, teachers use their specialist knowledge well to teach confidently when demonstrating, accompanying, directing or conducting. Instructions are clear; pupils understand the objectives and how to achieve them. Planning ensures that learning is well organised, musical and mainly practical – hence its success. Expectations are high and pupils are challenged; pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and make good progress. Pupil management is very good; lessons are orderly and time used well. As a result, relationships are very good, pupils are good-humoured, work productively and maintain their effort and concentration. Lessons start and proceed briskly but overhead projector illustrations and classroom displays are not used enough to reinforce learning. Attention is paid to developing pupils' musical vocabulary, literacy and ICT skills. Teachers show pupils clearly how they can improve, as seen when pupils performed reggae pieces to the class. In a small percentage of lessons, discipline is not firm enough so that time is wasted and homework is not set regularly enough to extend pupils' learning. Most pupils enjoy music and are supportive of each other in group work. Pupils are keen to answer questions and the most enthusiastic involve themselves in opportunities offered by the department and musical opportunities outside school. In GCSE work, attitudes are mature and almost all pupils take advantage of the opportunities in instrumental or voice tuition and extra-curricular work; this strengthens their achievement.
140. The head of department is enthusiastic, committed to raising standards and extremely hard working; leadership and management are good. Schemes of work, systems for monitoring and evaluating the subject's performance, planning for the future, assessment and strategies to raise standards are all in place. These are under review with a view to developing pupils' basic musical skills in performing more to support work in composing and listening to further raise standards. There are useful and developing links with other schools but curricular links with primary schools are insufficiently robust to build on the school's work. The good quality music accommodation supports learning well but there are insufficient computers, keyboard stands, piano stools, classroom instruments to enhance creative work, music for the library, overhead projector, audio (including mini-disc) and recording equipment. There is no technical support in music, which imposes great pressures on the staff, and insufficient time is given to the head of department to organise music and monitor lessons.

141. Approximately 170 girls, about 16 per cent of the pupils, which is double the national average, receive instrumental or voice lessons from 12 visiting teachers. The school is to be commended on providing subsidised tuition. Standards of attainment are broadly average. The progress and achievement of pupils are good in relation to their ages and the time they have received tuition but most pupils do not have practice books to encourage more regular practice. Teaching is mainly very good as seen in flute, cello and wind tuition. The keyboard-focused curriculum insufficiently supports instrumental tuition and tuition makes insufficient impact on classroom work; a weakness the department intends to tackle.
142. The range of extra-curricular activities in music is very good and includes orchestra, choir, senior and lower school 'a cappella' groups, flute group and samba band. Standards, achievement and the quality of teaching are excellent. The visiting teachers give excellent support to these groups. The school promotes a large number of regular concerts and other musical events involving large numbers of pupils. The school produces a musical every two years, most recently 'Grease' and 'Calamity Jane'. Groups perform for special events and in assembly but there is insufficient use of recorded music in assemblies. Groups perform at local arts and charity events and festivals as well as in old peoples' homes and for local schools. Visits to Glyndebourne workshops and visits to Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra concerts enhance the curriculum. Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, especially their social and cultural development. These activities reflect the dedication of staff, support of parents and the enthusiasm of the musicians whose performances and successes bring much credit to the school and this vibrant department. The extra-curricular groups especially are a strength of the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is good, particularly in examination classes in Years 10 and 11.
- Improving GCSE results that are now above the national average in both physical education and dance.
- The interest shown by a significant number of pupils in both physical education and dance in and out of lessons.

### Areas for improvement

- Extend the opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others.
- Identify gifted and talented pupils so that they can be offered appropriate challenges in lessons.
- Implement the existing plans to revise the schemes of work in Years 10 and 11.

143. On the basis of the assessments undertaken by teachers, standards at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were deemed to be well above average. It was possible to see only one lesson in the present Year 9 where, in dance, standards were above average. In lessons seen, attainment by the majority of pupils in Years 7 and 8 is in line with expectations and remains similar to the picture described at the time of the previous inspection. This represents good attainment on the standards in the subject when pupils start at the school in Year 7. In 2002, 68 per cent of pupils entered for the GCSE examination gained A\*-C grades and all obtained A\*-G grades. These results and the average point score are above the national average. They are the best results achieved

by the department since the examination course was first introduced. An impressive feature of the 2002 results is the fact that nine of the 16 candidates achieved A\* or A grades. In dance, all 12 candidates passed, with seven obtaining A or B grades. This represents very good achievement by the pupils on the starting point in the subject in Year 10.

144. A scrutiny of pupils' folders and observation of GCSE classes show that pupils in the present Years 10 and 11 have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of the course. For example, by the end of one lesson observed in Year 10, pupils demonstrated a sound grasp of the principles of training. The work seen, together with teachers' records, indicates that the majority of pupils following the examination syllabus are attaining above average standards. This is also the case in dance where pupils in Years 10 and 11 are producing work of good quality. The optional weekly revision classes in both physical education and dance are having a positive impact on standards. The attainment of non-examination pupils in Years 10 and 11, who have less curriculum time than pupils in Years 7 to 9, is in line with national expectations.
145. The achievement of pupils in Years 7 to 9 is good. Assessment carried out by the department shows that, on entry, the ability level of pupils varies considerably. Pupils make good progress. For example, two Year 7 classes worked enthusiastically in netball lessons and improved their basic skills. The standard now being reached by pupils following the examination courses in both physical education and dance represents very good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are progressing as well as others. Three pupils with special educational needs are currently following the GCSE course in Year 10. Links with several local organisations, including Littledown Trampolining Club, Bournemouth Netball League and local dance schools, provide higher attaining pupils with additional opportunities to extend their skills. At present, there is no formal mechanism for identifying gifted and talented pupils. Such a system could enable teachers to set more challenging tasks for these pupils in lessons where appropriate.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. This is an improvement on the position stated at the time of the last inspection report in 1997. Teaching and learning vary between satisfactory and excellent. In the majority of lessons, teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning are particularly good in examination classes in both physical education and dance. Strong features of most lessons include good planning, supportive relationships and high expectations. Pupils respond very positively to the teaching they receive, even in the Arctic conditions that prevailed during the inspection. Consequently, the quality of learning is good in the majority of lessons. Pupils are always correctly dressed for physical activity. Levels of participation are high throughout the school. Pupils at all levels of ability show a ready willingness to work with their teachers in order to make progress. The good practice seen in some lessons of encouraging pupils to comment on their own work and that of others as a means of improving performance is not consistent across the subject. Pupils, who are following the GCSE courses, work with persistence and determination in order to improve. They co-operate well together, they are highly motivated and their behaviour in class is exemplary.
147. Five members of the department contribute to a good range of extra-curricular activities, most of which take place after school. The activities offered are well supported by pupils. During the inspection, pupils took part enthusiastically and with a clear sense of purpose in badminton, netball, dance and self-defence.



148. The team leader, who is in only her second year at the school, is providing good leadership and management. She has a clear commitment to raise standards further. Other members of the department share that commitment and they are working well as a team. Improvement since the last inspection, initiated both by the team leader and her colleagues, has been very good. The timetable problems identified in the previous report have been rectified. The allocation of curriculum time has been increased. The organisation of classes by ability in Years 8 and 9 is helping to raise standards. Attainment in games has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with expectations overall. Individual target setting has been introduced. GCSE results are now well above average. Additional activities have been added in Years 10 and 11 where all pupils take the Junior Sports Leaders Award. The extra-curricular programme has been expanded. The team leader has identified the need to revise the existing schemes of work in Years 10 and 11 to take account of the new subject orders. Accommodation is good but sections of the tennis courts are in urgent need of repair. The department does not have a permanent base for teaching the theoretical elements of the syllabus making the delivery of this aspect of the course more difficult. Such a facility could also enable teachers to promote the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT more effectively.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

### Strengths

- Very good quality of teaching which is leading to standards, well above average, especially at GCSE.
- Very good attitude and effort of the pupils.
- Very good range and quality of learning resources.
- Very good leadership and management

### Areas for improvement

- Range of support materials for the lower and higher attaining pupils.

149. Since the last inspection, standards have improved in both Year 9 and Year 11 and notably in the GCSE courses where results in 2002 were well above national averages for the full and the short course.

150. By Year 9, attainment is above that expected in the Dorset Agreed Syllabus. It is particularly strong in relation to pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and practices and in the recognition that belief affects behaviour. As they move through from Year 7 to Year 9, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. They develop competence in skills such as empathy, research and reflection. They gain in confidence as they express their own beliefs and values. Higher attaining pupils develop their evaluative skills well. Pupils show a very diligent attitude to their work. They display a growing respect for the beliefs of others. Lower attaining pupils struggle at times to understand and keep up with written work.

151. Attainment by Year 11 is well above national expectations. There are substantial gains in knowledge, understanding and evaluation in relation to the areas of study in both the full and short course. For example, pupils in the full course GCSE have a very good grasp of Jewish beliefs about their history and God and can make links with those beliefs and Jewish festivals. Their positive attitudes and acquisition of examination skills are a

significant factor in their examination success. Research for coursework is of a high standard. Overall, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress. Higher attaining pupils in the short course sometimes do not receive sufficiently challenging tasks.

152. The quality of teaching overall is very good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. They use a very good range of approaches to motivate pupils and to help them learn successfully. For example, there are opportunities for personal reflection, for investigation and research, for group work based on video extracts and photographs and for the use of artefacts in simulated activities such as the Passover meal. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations. In Years 10 and 11, teachers' subject knowledge and expertise in examination technique are major factors in the high standards reached. Pupils' work is regularly marked with comments to help them improve.
153. There are major assessment tasks built into schemes of work in Years 7 to 9. These tasks help teachers assess pupils' progress in relation to the requirements of the Dorset Agreed Syllabus for religious education. That agreed syllabus is due for revision shortly. Currently, it does not set out standards in relation to national criteria. This means that teachers are not, at present, able to link attainment to national averages. This has led to some uncertainty and inconsistency in assessment across the department.
154. The quality of learning is very good overall. It is very good in Years 10 and 11 and good in Years 7 to 9. In Years 7 to 9, the best examples of learning are in the areas of knowledge and understanding. Pupils have a good grasp of subject terminology and understand concepts such as equality in Sikhism. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to evaluate issues on the basis of their learning, for example relating stories of creation to such fundamental questions as 'Why are we here?' Most pupils in Years 7 to 9 are uncertain about the standards they are reaching. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are very clear about their goals.
155. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. There is a clear educational direction and a reflection of this in the work of the department. There is a strong team ethos and a very good commitment to improve. There is good monitoring and evaluation of the department's provision. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. For example, there is a good range of visits to Christian and Sikh places of worship and the Holocaust museum.
156. Since the last inspection, the department has made good progress. It has improved standards in attainment for all pupils in Year 11. It has improved the provision of ICT. Accommodation and storage have also improved. The proximity of teaching rooms now creates a strong departmental ethos – another factor contributing to the success of the department.