

INSPECTION REPORT

DOWNTON SCHOOL

Salisbury

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126447

Headteacher: Mrs J Lawrie

Lead inspector: Mrs C Worthington

Dates of inspection: 1–4 December 2003

Inspection number: 258614

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary, becoming comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	394
School address:	Breamore Road Downton Salisbury
Postcode:	SP5 3HN
Telephone number:	01725 510610
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Chair of governors:	Ceri Hurford-Jones
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Downton is a small mixed secondary school, which from 2003 is becoming comprehensive. It received a School Achievements Award in 2001 and 2003, and the Sportsmark award in 2001. It serves a rural catchment area south east of Salisbury. There are more boys than girls, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 11. Attainment on entry to Year 7 has historically been below average, but the current year group came in with average attainment. Most pupils are white British and all speak English as their first language. There are ten pupils on roll from traveller families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with Statements of Special Educational Needs, is average at 18.5 per cent. The nature of special needs is largely to do with moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. A small number have physical disabilities. There is an average turnover of pupils and recently, after a long period of stability, a great change in staffing.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a school which is improving rapidly under the very good leadership of the new headteacher, whose vision for further development is supported by the school and the local community. The school's focus on raising attainment through the development of teaching and learning is having a good effect. Teaching is sound and standards are starting to rise. **The school gives satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership is very good.
- There is very good induction for pupils in Year 7.
- Provision for art, history and design and technology is good.
- Science GCSE results are consistently above average, but they are consistently below in mathematics.
- Standards of literacy – especially in writing – are below average.
- Attainment overall at the end of both key stages is below average.
- There is a lack of aspiration in many older pupils – targets set have been too low in the past.
- Target setting and monitoring of individuals are underdeveloped.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- Accommodation for drama and physical education is unsatisfactory.

Since the last inspection, the effectiveness of the school has changed. Improvement has been rapid since the advent of the new headteacher four terms ago, since when improvement has been good, and the key issues have been addressed. The quality of ICT provision has improved, except for Year 9; music provision has improved. The standards of attainment are rising because challenging targets for performance have been identified. Schemes of work have been written by new heads of department. There is good technical support for ICT but not for design and technology. There are now many more opportunities for younger pupils to take responsibility. The impact of new heads of department in mathematics, music, religious education, and geography has been to bring about radical changes; because of the high quality of newly appointed staff and the school's corporate aim to raise standards, the school has very good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
	D	E	E	E*

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average E – very low
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

Pupils have been underachieving throughout the school in recent years. In 2002, performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was well below average. About 50 per cent of pupils who took GCSE achieved five A* to C grades, but not all sat the examinations. When the average points scores of all pupils are considered, achievement overall that year was very low and standards well below average. In 2003, performance at Key Stage 3 was considerably better and calculations of the value added to pupils' education shows that they have made much better progress. Although GCSE results were similarly low, achievement of pupils of this age showed significant improvement during the inspection. Standards observed were higher, particularly in Years 7 and 10, where they were judged to be average, and achievement is good in these two

years. Achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are showing signs of improvement in all years.

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning, particularly in creative and practical subjects. The standard of their behaviour is satisfactory. **The school equips them well with an understanding of right and wrong and respect for the beliefs of others. It helps them to take responsibility for life in a community and achieves a sense of spiritual awareness.** The level of attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is hampered by reliance on the local bus service.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is sound and has many good features.

Teachers have good expertise and plan their lessons well with a wide variety of teaching methods and styles to motivate their pupils to learn. In a small minority of lessons, the pace is too slow and expectations are not high enough, so pupils lose concentration and misbehave, resulting in unsatisfactory learning.

The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced, except in the provision of ICT in Year 9.

Provision is good for extra-curricular games, performing arts and computer clubs.

Overall, the school takes satisfactory care of its pupils. It provides good academic and personal support and guidance, and has developed systems to take account of pupils' views. A few procedures to do with pastoral care are not up to date. Parents' views are taken into account well and they are actively encouraged to participate in their children's education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by her senior staff.

Management is effective and constantly striving to improve standards. The governance of the school is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school maintains a strong partnership with parents, who are generally very happy with its provision. They identified mathematics as a long-standing weak subject, but this is now improving. They particularly praise the enthusiastic teaching, and the very good leadership of the headteacher and senior management team. Most pupils are happy with the school; some in their first year were unable to identify a single aspect of the school they would wish to change. They benefit from links established with other schools, businesses and the wider community.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- raise the standard of literacy by encouraging pupils to read and write more in all subjects;
- increase pupils' aspirations through setting higher achievable targets and monitoring and guiding their progress;
- raise standards of attainment by the end of both key stages;
- improve attendance and punctuality;
- provide better accommodation for drama and physical education;
- improve behaviour management in some classes;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a course in ICT for pupils in Year 9.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils have been underachieving throughout the school in recent years. In 2002, performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was well below average. About 50 per cent of pupils who took GCSE achieved five A* to C grades, but not all sat the examinations. When the average points scores of all pupils are considered, achievement overall that year was very low and standards well below average. In 2003, performance at Key Stage 3 was considerably better and calculations of the value added to pupils' education shows that they have made much better progress. Although GCSE results were similarly low, achievement of pupils of this age showed significant improvement during the inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- GCSE results in science, geography and English literature are above average.
- Pupils achieve well in the practical subjects of art and design and design and technology.
- Achievement in some subjects has improved as a result of changing the syllabus.
- Previous underachievement has been halted and standards overall are starting to rise, but many pupils in Year 11 still have low aspiration.
- Standards of literacy are below average at both key stages.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	44 (66)	66 (64)
mathematics	49 (62)	67 (66)
science	52 (70)	66 (66)

There were 73 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	44 (41)	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	68 (82)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	94 (89)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	32.0	39.8

There were 62 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. In 2002, standards achieved in National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds were well below average for English, mathematics and science. In 2003, these improved and, although national comparisons for that year are not yet available, when the average points score is compared with that of 2002, English is average and mathematics and science are below average. This improvement is reflected in the standards of work seen in the current Year 10 as opposed to Year 11 who were the 2002 14-year-olds.

2. Year 10 pupils are not only achieving at a higher level, but are also much better motivated and have higher self-esteem and aspirations than those in Year 11. This is because Year 11 pupils not only achieved less well at Key Stage 3, but also has a succession of temporary and supply teachers when they were in Year 10, following the retirement and long-term sickness of many long-serving staff and the difficulty in finding good temporary teachers before newly-appointed permanent staff took up their posts.
3. Higher expectations of pupils' achievement in Key Stage 4 since the changes made by the new headteacher have also resulted in all pupils being entered for GCSE examinations rather than a substantial number being entered for basic literacy and numeracy tests. This has made new demands on pupils in Year 11, especially with the amount of written work they are required to do, which has in turn elicited negative attitudes. In English lessons, for example, pupils' achievement is often unsatisfactory or poor in Year 11 because of pupils' low aspirations and lack of interest in academic work. Pupils – older ones in particular – do achieve better in practical subjects rather than those in which they have to write a good deal.
4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily overall. Those with physical impairment or learning difficulties achieve well. This is because they are well motivated, receive good support and benefit from individual learning programmes where these are necessary. Achievement for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is not always so positive, although there are some good systems in place to support them. The effects of sanctions such as the isolation room have not been analysed enough to judge their impact on achievement.
5. Historically, achievement in Key Stage 3 has been better than that in Key Stage 4, being close to the national average until 2001, when results fell and then declined even further in 2002. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school also fluctuates, since the school is in the catchment area of two grammar schools in Salisbury and comprehensive schools in neighbouring Hampshire. Attainment on entry has historically been below average; pupils in the current Year 9 were well below average when they entered in Year 7; those in Year 8 were better, and those in the current Year 7 are now very close to average, so there is every indication that standards at Key Stage 3 will improve as Year 8 and Year 7 progress up the school.
6. In Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils achieving the national benchmark of five A* to C grades was average in 2002, though the average points scored by pupils in their eight best examinations was below average. In 2003, there was deterioration with the average points score well below average in comparison to 2002 national figures. However, only the higher ability pupils in the year group took the examination in 2002; the whole group took GCSE in 2003, so the lower points score reflects the whole ability range. The current Year 11 look set to improve slightly on the 2003 results, mainly because of the efforts being made by staff in giving extra help during breaks and lunchtimes, as well as the planned revision classes. In mathematics, there is much to catch up on; standards have been well below average for years. Parents have also identified this shortfall, but the new mathematics department is working very hard to attack the problem and pupils are now achieving well. In English, teachers have had to overcome the Year 11 pupils' negative attitudes to work and low self-esteem. This was also observed in some other subjects. In ICT, for example, several pupils did not feel they would get a GCSE grade.
7. In Year 10, pupils' better attitudes to learning coupled with their better performance at Key Stage 3 are producing higher standards all round. They are achieving much better and already the effect of the new leadership of the school and departments is being felt. In geography, for example, GCSE results in 2003 improved dramatically because of a change of syllabus and staff. New teachers have also been responsible for greater motivation and aspirations seen in other subjects, too, such as mathematics, religious education and music, where achievement has not been good in the past.

8. The current Year 9 has made good progress since September. Pupils are now approaching average in English although a significant proportion has weak literacy which is hampering progress in history, for example. Progress in Key Stage 3 as a whole is, nevertheless, inconsistent. Year 8 pupils had many temporary teachers last year and in several lessons their attitudes and behaviour were seen to hamper progress. Year 7, however, has had a good start. Pupils' good achievement is testament to a very good induction and a stable staff who motivate them well. They are maintaining their promise of improved attainment of pupils, though department figures show that traveller pupils have not always succeeded in achieving examination grades. This is to do with absences at critical times of year and the below average literacy of several pupils. They were seen to be coping satisfactorily in class; several had made great strides in literacy recently through well-focused support and guidance.
9. Past records of analysis by the local education authority show that there has been significant all-round underachievement for years, especially in Key Stage 4 where insufficient value has been added to pupils' education between Year 9 and Year 11. No further specific analyses of the performance of different groups of pupils have been made, except for boys and girls, between whom there is little difference. In 2003 there has been an improvement in standards, despite the disruption of teaching in the last academic year. This shows the school is improving and the high standard of leadership and staffing are indicative of a very good capacity to improve standards further. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen, and reached their lowest point prior to the appointment of the current headteacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Overall, the standard of behaviour is satisfactory. All the component aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are at least satisfactory. The level of attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show positive attitudes to many subjects.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- In some lessons, some pupils disrupt other pupils' learning.
- Pupils have confidence in the new School Council.

Commentary

10. The complimentary judgments of pupils' attitudes and behaviour made in the last inspection report are still apposite. Pupils enjoy most of their subjects and are generally happy at school. They get on well with each other both when they are at work in lessons, and socially. There is no conflict between groups of pupils and no culture of bullying; pupils and parents are confident that any instances are well handled. The school is working hard to ensure that pupils understand how bullying is to be avoided and occurrences minimised. Most of the time most pupils behave well, but there are some examples of immature behaviour, especially by older boys. Nevertheless, pupils treat other people and their school and its resources with care and respect; the sanction of permanent exclusion has not been required in the last year.
11. In lessons, most pupils are attentive and concentrate on their work. They get on well with teachers and are confident that if they ask for help they will receive the assistance they need. Generally, pupils work well individually or cooperatively and are not easily distracted unless the work becomes undemanding. Some pupils allow their attention to wander or their interest to wane; this can lead to disruptions either from the miscreants themselves or because teachers have to divert their attention from teaching to managing them. Pupils are generally happy with the regime at the school, especially recent developments such as the school council, which provide extra opportunities for them to develop as responsible independent adults. They value their teachers but would like some to be more strict or precise in managing behaviour.

12. Pupils with special educational needs generally show good attitudes to their work. This is often because of a high level of guidance by competent support staff that helps pupils access their work and minimises their frustration. Other pupils show positive attitudes to pupils with special needs because, with this support, their own progress is not impeded. However, pupils recognise that the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils sometimes disrupts the learning of the whole class. Traveller pupils generally fit into the school community well and some have achieved positions of responsibility.
13. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall and is promoted best in subjects where it is explicitly recognised in planning, especially religious education. Their sense of social responsibility develops well; many are active participants in charitable activities, in which they follow the good role models provided by staff. Some Year 10 pupils are involved in supporting Year 7 pupils, from which both benefit. Some work with primary schools and referee their sports competitions. Pupils develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. They are willing to debate and explore moral issues. They respect other people's beliefs and points of view. Pupils appreciate opportunities to expand their knowledge and understanding of the world beyond their school. Many go on school visits, for example to an outdoor adventure centre or to France. Their understanding of other cultures is improved since the last inspection, but opportunities are still missed in some subjects to expand and deepen pupils' appreciation of the whole range of experiences the world has to offer.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	10.2	School data	0.9
National data	7.8	National data	1.2

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

14. Most aspects of recording attendance are managed effectively by the school. Data are analysed to identify emerging problems of absence with specific families. These and any other unexplained absences are investigated by the school with the support of an educational welfare officer. Recent statistics show that the level of attendance compares favourably with some local schools and is gradually rising. However, the most recent published figures are well below the national average, so attendance is unsatisfactory. Both attendance and punctuality suffer from the unreliability of local buses. This supports a tradition of too easily accepting absence or unpunctuality as inevitable, and sometimes leads to delays at the beginning of lessons.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Parent / pupil preferred not to say

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
325	54	0
8	9	0
3	1	0
43	8	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements, except in the provision for ICT in Year 9. Teaching is satisfactory, with many good features and some areas for improvement

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with many good features. Teachers have good expertise and plan their lessons well with a wide variety of teaching methods and styles to motivate their pupils. In a few lessons, the pace is too slow and expectations too low, so pupils lose concentration and misbehave.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expertise and enthusiasm.
- Planning for a good variety of teaching methods and learning styles.
- Good teaching in most subjects at Key Stage 4.
- Low expectations of achievement and behaviour from a few teachers.
- Inconsistent teaching of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 82 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (1%)	12 (15%)	37 (45 %)	29 (35 %)	2(3 %)	1 (1%)	0 (0 %)

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

Commentary

15. Teaching is satisfactory overall with many good features. Over 60 per cent of the lessons seen were good or better. Teaching in most subjects is good in Key Stage 4. The school has had a significant staff turnover in the last four terms as many long-serving teachers have retired and been replaced. This has caused inevitable disruption because of the difficulty in finding good temporary teachers before the appointment of new permanent staff, but this is now over and new teachers are settling in well beside their longer-serving colleagues. The very good leadership of the new headteacher has proved to be a powerful unifying factor and put the school in a good position to move forward.
16. There is much good expertise amongst staff, which is being well used to secure pupils' acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils benefit from a selection of specialist teachers with knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. However, particular difficulties arise in English and literacy because the school has insufficient specialists. Teachers have undergone training in the appreciation of different learning styles and in most subjects good use of different methods, resources and activities were observed which motivated pupils and helped them succeed. In French, for example, a good range of creative activities, such as drama and games, helped pupils develop their language skills. In religious education, pupils respond well to musical introductions to lessons which set the scene and help develop thinking skills.

17. Teachers' lesson planning is generally good, though planning for individual pupils' needs is not consistent. The three-part lesson advocated by the National Strategy for improvement at Key Stage 3 is evident in most subjects, though in early stages in some. When used correctly for mathematics lessons, it was seen to stimulate learning in numeracy but also brought out the lack of concentration on this aspect in the past, since pupils' ability to recall multiplication tables was slower than expected, and less accurate, which resulted in below average mental computation.
18. For pupils with special educational needs, it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching because there is insufficient evidence. In the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were very good for a small group of pupils withdrawn to work on individual programmes. Within mainstream lessons, support staff contribute significantly to teaching and learning because of their very good knowledge of the needs of individuals and of how they learn best. Teachers sometimes rely heavily on the work of the support staff rather than supplying material to match pupils' differing ability levels. Staff are aware of and make use of information on Individual Education Plans. However, targets on these plans lack precision so are not yet effective enough in helping assess pupils' progress. In general, brighter pupils achieve the targets of which they are capable. The school has identified gifted or talented pupils in a draft policy, but does not consistently provide for them in lessons. Traveller pupils are given good individual support and generally achieve satisfactorily because of this, though prolonged absences have a damaging effect.
19. Teachers' development of basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT is not consistent. In history, good attention is paid to the development of literacy and in geography, oral ability develops well through pair and group work. In religious education, this is also the case, with emphasis on debate, but written work is not well developed. In general, many older pupils in particular have an aversion to writing and this affects their overall achievement, especially in written examinations. Although basic numeracy is below average, it is developed well in practical subjects, such as science, where instrumental readings are made accurately, and in design and technology, where pupils measure and cut joints with accuracy when making large storage units for GCSE projects.
20. Skills in ICT are developed well by teachers in some subjects; in art, for example, visual representations are frequently added to and manipulated to make interesting images. Development in all areas of the curriculum is patchy, however, largely because of inadequate access to existing computer facilities, but this will shortly be remedied when the current building programme is finished. Important parts of the curriculum, for example the provision for pupils to learn about computer-aided design and manufacture in design and technology, are not addressed because of a lack of basic resources in this area. However, these are due to be rectified when the new building is completed.
21. Relationships between teachers and pupils are a very positive feature of teaching and learning. All pupils are included in every activity. In practical subjects in particular, teachers allow pupils to take responsibility for their own learning whilst offering good guidance. Most pupils respond with a mature and sensible attitude, which results in good work and pupils knowing how well they are doing. Independent learning was an area for development in the last inspection and is starting to be more widespread in the school. Traveller pupils show eagerness to learn when motivated by lesson material, but some find it difficult to cope with written work.
22. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and all pupils work productively and with enjoyment. In some lessons, however, particularly where teachers let the pace slacken and challenge diminish, pupils misbehave; this adversely affects learning. In Year 11 English, teachers find it very hard to overcome the negative attitudes of some pupils and this results in some unsatisfactory learning, in spite of the best efforts of teachers who are effective in the rest of the school.

23. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers mark work regularly and make helpful comments to enable pupils to improve. In many subjects, work is marked according to National Curriculum levels, but sometimes, pupils do not know what levels they achieve or how to get to the next one. The change in emphasis from pastoral mentoring by year heads to academic mentoring by learning co-ordinators has put much more concentration on tracking pupils' progress throughout the school. The new system planned by an assistant head is very good and is already enabling pupils, teachers and parents to have higher aspirations for achievement.
24. Despite some parents' misgivings, the amount of homework teachers set is sufficient and, where pupils are conscientious in doing the homework and handing it in on time, it enhances pupils' learning. There are, however, a significant number of mainly older pupils who fail to hand in their homework and there are too few sanctions available to teachers to deal with this.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced, except in the provision of ICT in Year 9. Provision is good for extra-curricular games, performing arts and computer clubs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provides a broad range of opportunities that encourage every pupil's progress and achievement.
- Pupils benefit from an interesting range of learning opportunities in art, music and physical education.
- Extra-curricular activities are good in games and for the arts.
- Accommodation is in need of some improvement.
- ICT needs to be developed further to include Year 9.

Commentary

25. The new timetable in which the curriculum is planned to run over a two-week period, allows for greater flexibility and better use of time. In Year 7, a number of subjects are taught by the same teacher, which provides better personal support for pupils. Information and communication technology is taught as a discrete lesson in Years 7 and 8 but no provision is made in Year 9. Opportunities are given to all pupils to use ICT in other subjects throughout the curriculum, but not all get their National Curriculum entitlement. There is a good range of options available to pupils in Key Stage 4, including drama, music, art and design and design and technology subjects. The school now has higher expectations, so all courses lead to GCSE examinations. All pupils study French up to GCSE level. There is one vocational subject – applied science.
26. Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are not developed enough, as present opportunities for writing are often insufficient; more emphasis needs to be placed on thinking skills and independent learning. A "learning to learn" lesson has been introduced in Year 7 to tackle this issue.
27. Education for citizenship and personal, social and health education is not offered in separate subjects, but tutor periods, assemblies and dedicated days make a contribution. Planning is judged to be satisfactory, although the subjects could not be inspected owing to the unavailability of lessons on the timetable during that particular week. The curriculum is enriched to a satisfactory degree by visits, and good opportunities are available for pupils to participate in sports and the arts. There is a high participation rate in lunchtime activities but very few pupils stay after school, mainly because of travel arrangements.
28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school meets the requirements specified on Statements of Special Educational Needs and provides effective support in class and in individual learning programmes. Pupils with physical impairment are

ensured access to all areas of the curriculum by accommodation and resources that are adapted to meet their needs. However, the school has not yet considered adequately the likely impact of withdrawing pupils regularly from the same lessons or from assembly. The school is in the early stages of providing an adapted or alternative curriculum for some pupils displaying emotional or behavioural difficulties. This could prove effective in promoting positive behaviour and reducing time spent out of lessons. The school's provision for gifted and talented pupils is in early stages of development, though many of higher ability gain high grades, particularly at Key Stage 3. Provision for travellers is satisfactory.

29. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. The majority of teachers teach within their main subject area and have at least some teaching experience. Some are inexperienced, however, and teaching in areas where they are not specialists. Appropriately trained and qualified support and ancillary staff assist teachers and play a valuable role in the school. Provision for this is good.
30. The quality of accommodation, although judged to be satisfactory in some areas, is inadequate in drama, art and design, physical education, mathematics and textiles. There is a current building programme for better accommodation on site but this will not satisfy all areas. Resources are generally adequate with an impressive range of ICT facilities to support the curriculum. However, the ICT room is not yet meeting the demands of all subjects. A new library has been refurbished and is becoming an impressive resource to be used by all departments; its further access to ICT provides for more cross-curricular use.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, the school takes satisfactory care of its pupils. It provides good academic and pastoral care, and has developed systems to take account of pupils' views. A few procedures are not up to date.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction of pupils into Year 7 is very effective.
- There are good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Pupils are supported well in lessons.
- The updating of some aspects of care systems is incomplete.

Commentary

31. Primary school pupils who are to join the school are all visited before they start and appropriate information about them is gathered. They themselves have a good introductory visit to the school. There are very good systems for their induction and for continuing to monitor and support their progress. As a result, they settle quickly when they start at the school and feel happy and confident. Some pupils in their first year were unable to identify a single aspect of the school they would wish to change.
32. The small size of the school community encourages teachers to develop good relationships with pupils; pupils are known well by staff. Their academic and personal progress is tracked effectively but not consistently in all subjects. The 'tick/star/cross' system records achievements in an intelligible way, as it enables teachers, pupils and parents to monitor progress and to identify where intervention such as one-to-one mentoring would be useful. The role of the year heads has been changed: as learning co-ordinators they are now academic as well as pastoral mentors. The monitoring of pupils is particularly effective in Year 7. Pupils receive good support in lessons from teachers and from teaching assistants. They are helped to understand how well they are doing in lessons but the use of precise levels related to the National Curriculum is inconsistent and at an early stage of development in many subjects.

33. Pupils with special educational needs are guided well from the time they enter the school because their needs are usually known already through good liaison with feeder schools. Relationships between support staff and pupils are particularly strong and effective. Staff from other agencies, such as the Traveller Service or Pupil Support Service, provide good additional help for a number of pupils. All pupils with statements attend their reviews but they are not sufficiently involved in setting their own targets, especially those with behavioural difficulties.
34. Pupils are given appropriate guidance about many aspects of life through the personal, social and health education programme. This includes aspects of drugs and sex education and careers advice. Further help with life choices is provided by a Connexions officer, who visits the school weekly, so all pupils are able to have individual interviews. They have good opportunities to investigate colleges through visits and visitors. The programme of careers advice pupils receive is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory overall.
35. Health and safety considerations and risk assessments are integral to lessons, so pupils understand, for example, the need to warm up before physical exercise. There are adequate trained first aiders in the school, but there is no dedicated private area for treating sick or injured pupils. Systems for recording and dealing with accidents are sound. Some procedures and their documentation are not fully up to date, although the processes for ensuring this are in hand.
36. Interviews, questionnaires and observations show that pupils have confidence in the care and support they receive and are pleased with the increasing account that the school takes of their views. The School Council, which started this year, has been well received and provides a good and regular opportunity for pupils to communicate their views to staff and to play an active part in decision making. They appreciate this and feel their views are valued.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains a strong partnership with parents. Pupils benefit from links established with other schools, businesses and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are supportive of the school and its aims.
- A few parents are lax in ensuring their children are always in school when they should be.

Commentary

37. Parents' satisfaction with most aspects of the school starts with the arrangements that have been developed for inducting new pupils. Most parents are pleased with the way the school is managed and value the qualities of teachers, particularly their enthusiasm. They approve of the school's expectation that pupils should try hard and feel that their children make good progress. The school has the confidence of all communities, and parents, including travellers, are happy to send their children to Downton. They are pleased with the care and support their children receive. In return, they support the school well through the parents' association, which organises significant local events and provides valuable extra resources, such as music equipment. A significant minority of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting expressed some concerns about pupils' behaviour. A few parents would like more information about their children's progress but almost all are comfortable approaching the school.

38. Inspection evidence supports most of parents' views of the school. It is well led, for example, and some very good teaching was observed. Bullying was not found to be a major problem but there are occasions when behaviour is not managed well enough to avoid disruption. Parents' views are taken into account well and they are actively encouraged to participate in their children's education.
39. The school liaises well with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Their attendance at annual reviews of statements is high and they contribute to reviews of Individual Education Plans. They are kept closely informed about particularly good or unacceptable behaviour.
40. The information given to parents about the school and about the progress of their children is satisfactory overall. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and actions are in hand to ensure that all required information is included. Parents are kept well informed through interim and final reports, which are supplemented by termly newsletters and meetings to discuss particular topics. Many parents appreciated, for example, the opportunity to hear a visiting speaker explain how teenagers develop and how they can help them to learn. End-of-year reports are generally satisfactory. They include some very clear indications of pupils' personal development and their attainments in the subjects they study. However, too much comment is imprecise and there is inconsistency of advice on how to improve, much of which is too general to be really useful.
41. Good links are maintained with local primary schools but collaboration with secondary schools is less well developed, partly because of the different types of school in the area. There are satisfactory relationships with the colleges where many pupils continue their education. Pupils benefit from links with the wider community, which include the many businesses where pupils have work experience placements, visiting speakers, an artist in residence, and good support from various agencies.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by her senior staff. Management is effective and constantly striving to improve standards. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, senior colleagues and governors have created a clear vision for the school with a strong focus on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governing body is enthusiastic and energetic and well led.
- Heads of subjects and learning co-ordinators are working hard to improve standards across the school.
- There is an extensive school improvement plan but it lacks detailed targets for pupils' attainment.
- Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment information needs further development to help raise standards.

Commentary

42. Leadership and management are strengths of the school and are key factors in giving it a clear direction towards continuing improvement and raising standards of attainment. The headteacher has only been in post for four terms, but in this short time she has established a very clear vision for the school and appointed a number of good key staff, including a highly professional senior management team who all give good support in their designated areas of management. She has also set up what is already proving to be an effective self-evaluation system, and secured the support of colleagues, pupils, parents and members of the wider community for her plans.

43. The vision is wide ranging and reflected in the school development plan. This recognises the pivotal importance of developing teaching and learning and high aspirations for all pupils in realising the school's aim to drive up standards. It emphasises the role that specialist school status will have in supporting this and cementing the identity of the school. Additionally, it sets out the improvements that are required in the school buildings and infra-structure, and the ways in which the school will become the key centre for education within its community. The establishment of the governors' committee to bring together key partners to help the school achieve its goals is an innovative development. Whilst the school improvement plan is clear and sets out what needs to be done, when, how, and by whom, it would be strengthened by the inclusion of pupil attainment targets over a period of time for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.
44. Middle managers, a number of whom are recent appointments, form an increasingly effective group. They demonstrate good leadership and management skills. Subject leaders lead by example and regularly review their curriculum, teaching and learning approaches. They have drawn up improvement plans that reflect whole-school priorities. The re-designation of heads of year as learning co-ordinators places an appropriate emphasis on their role in raising standards. The development of a 'learning to learn' culture in Year 7 is one outcome of this change, some of which is already making an impact on pupils' aspirations. Along with the senior leadership team the middle managers form the leadership group, which meets regularly to discuss all issues related to pupil attainment, achievement and welfare. It is a vehicle through which they are helped to build their leadership capacity and are kept informed of, and influence, how different projects, tasks and developments are progressing. However, although the school has some good supporting data, the monitoring of teaching and learning and the setting of targets for pupils based on prior attainment to raise standards are patchy and need developing,
45. Communication with parents is good and regularly reinforces the school's belief that all pupils can succeed. In a recent letter to parents, for example, the headteacher emphasised the need for pupils to move out of their 'comfort zone' to try their best and be brave about new ideas, skills and information. She stressed the need for the best possible attendance for each child and urged parents to be robust in not keeping pupils away from school as a result of minor ailments. Parents were made aware of the creation of learning co-ordinators who will focus on the learning of each individual.
46. Leadership of special educational needs is satisfactory and management is good. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has other major responsibilities. However, she has already started training to improve her knowledge and has drawn up an improvement plan with a focus on teaching and learning. The appointment of a very good administration officer to manage the day-to-day running of special educational needs and to oversee teaching assistants has proved highly effective. Record keeping has been simplified by the installation of a computerised system so pupils can be tracked more efficiently; information for teachers, agencies or parents is more readily available. The knowledge, support and encouragement of the governor with responsibility for special educational needs are appreciated by staff.
47. The governance of the school is good. Governors are enthusiastic, energetic and well led. In appointing the new headteacher the governing body, with the help of the local education authority, carefully considered the future direction of the school and reflected its requirements in the job description. The headteacher's vision matches their expectations and thus forms the basis for a very productive partnership. The governors were also involved in the appointment of the three assistant heads and the general restructuring of the teaching and support staff. Minutes of the main meetings and of committees show that governors are well informed about what is happening in the school and influence it. They consider examination results and other statistical information relating to pupils' attainment and achievement and are involved in target setting. They now play an important role in considering and modifying the draft school improvement plan drawn up by the senior leadership team.

48. Financial decisions relating to this plan are made by the finance committee which regularly monitors school expenditure. The formation of the 'Blue Skies' committee is an innovative development linking the school with its wider community. Increasingly governors are fulfilling their dual role of support and challenge. Individual governors are attached to some subject areas and report to the staffing and curriculum committee. The governors' report to parents is an attractive, professionally printed document, which provides parents with a wide range of information about the school and the governors' responsibilities.
49. There is a strong commitment to the professional development of staff and a good system for management of staff performance that has been developed in a way that is ensuring acceptance and responsibility. Teaching and ancillary staff benefit from a range of training activities and the school is working towards Investors in People status. Professional development is linked to the school's aims and priorities and to the individual's personal needs. Performance management has been well established and is clearly contributing to overall improvement in the school.
50. The school has good systems for the induction and training of new staff including newly qualified and supply teachers. There is a clear and comprehensive staff handbook. The school mentors and supports new teachers well and, although it is not directly involved in initial teacher training at present, it does employ and mentor teachers in the graduate teacher programme.
51. The school has introduced effective new approaches to the recruitment and deployment of staff. There is a good balance between new and more experienced staff and deployment has been well managed.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1342284
Total expenditure	1324583
Expenditure per pupil	3400

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	54602
Balance carried forward to the next	72303

52. The school's finances are well managed. The governors receive clear up-to-date financial monitoring information from the bursar. Spending decisions made by the governors are clearly related to priorities for improvement and benefits for pupils. The school is systematically appointing support staff to undertake clerical and administrative tasks previously falling to teachers. Grants for capital expenditure have been well used to refurbish the library, including the provision of much needed computers, to refurbish the staffroom, to provide lockers for Years 7 and 11, and to modernise and refurbish the reception/entrance hall. A contribution of funds is being made to the building extension work that is currently taking place. Priorities have been set for future expenditure. The school has recently received a positive auditors' report from the local education authority and is acting on the few recommendations made. Due regard is paid to the principles of best value. The school hopes to balance its budget this year and next year. However, a small licensed deficit over a five-year period has been agreed with the local education authority should it prove necessary. The school gives sound value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the end of Year 9 achievement is good.
- Teaching is good in Key Stage 3.
- The curriculum has broadened to include drama in Key Stage 3, and GCSE drama and media studies.
- The change of teachers has severely affected standards, attitudes and achievement in Year 11.
- The attitude of older pupils to writing is often negative.
- Access to computers is limited so ICT skills are underdeveloped.

Commentary

53. In 2002, the downward trend in Key Stage 3 National Curriculum test results ceased, and results in 2003, though below average, improved. When compared to those of similar schools, standards were well above average. The proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades in English in 2002 was average, though it dipped below in 2003. All pupils obtained a grade, though few achieved A* and A grades. In English literature in 2002 and 2003, A*-C results were well above average and showed a similar pattern to those of English, though the number of entries was small.
54. Attainment in lessons of the current Year 11 does not match the above results. The prior attainment of these pupils as measured by standardised tests is lower. They have borne the brunt of a succession of temporary teachers. Many dislike writing and are reluctant to do so. Teachers find it very difficult to overcome their negative attitudes. However, Year 10 pupils of all abilities are co-operative and achieve well.
55. The attainment on entry of the current Year 9 was lower than that of the current Year 7, but having achieved well, they are now approaching average expectations. Pupils speak more confidently and most listen well. Reading is better than writing and most have at least adequate comprehension skills. Pupils are developing extended writing skills, most successfully in personal writing. Higher ability pupils compare short stories critically; those of lower ability make good progress in basic literacy skills.
56. Year 11 pupils explain answers clearly, but their ability to listen is underdeveloped. They understand straightforward texts but find poetry difficult. Writing is not sufficiently extensive, structured or grammatically accurate. However, some pupils try hard to produce work of a higher standard and succeed.
57. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 10, but unsatisfactory in Year 11 because teachers find it difficult to overcome some pupils' permanently uncooperative attitudes. In lessons, various teaching styles and behaviour management methods have been tried, and teachers are determined to continue their efforts. In class, support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is only available in some lessons. However, pupils seek out teachers in break and lunchtimes for extra help. Extra revision classes will be held later in the year. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to draw pupils into discussion, thus extending their learning effectively. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities for practical

expression, such as making model stage sets. Teachers use materials that relate to the pupils' own interests and experience. Homework is regularly set and well marked but there is some resistance to completing it. The attainment and achievement summaries at the end of units helpfully allow pupils to comment on their work and targets.

58. Despite all difficulties, leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department is well aware of pupils' potential. The provision of more GCSE options and some specialist drama in Key Stage 3 widens opportunities. Obviously, staffing difficulties have interrupted the revision of the schemes of work but this is urgent. Greater use of ICT will be possible when the library computers are fully operational. The comparison with the last inspection is difficult because the attainment of pupils on entry has fluctuated considerably but, with the exception of Year 11, teaching and learning remain good and pupils in Key Stage 3 are now more enthusiastic.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Commentary

59. Pupils' literacy is below average. Their ability to listen varies, depending on the lesson; it is better amongst younger pupils. Comprehension skills are adequate, and in most subjects, pupils' skill in writing is weak. They explain their answers with some use of technical words, but spelling and punctuation are often inaccurate, as in some ICT work. In history and geography lessons, teachers have successfully provided opportunities for extended writing. The turnover of teachers has prevented the application of the cross-curricular literacy policy from being consistent. Where teachers are focusing on key words, checking definitions, using starter sentences and writing frames, written work develops well. Though handwriting is usually legible, standards of presentation are not high.

Modern Foreign Languages

French

French is taught to pupils throughout the school, and all pupils in Key Stage 4 take GCSE.

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to French.
- Good teaching contributes positively to learning.
- The department is led by a committed, enthusiastic linguist, who has a clear vision for the subject.
- GCSE French results declined in 2003.
- Marking is not detailed and does not inform pupils how they can improve their work.
- The level of activities to meet the needs of different groups of pupils is insufficient.

Commentary

60. In 2002, GCSE results were above average and have been around the national average for the past few years. However, standards reached in 2003 were well below the national average, showing a decline. Based on 2003 Teacher Assessments, standards at the end of Year 9 in French were broadly in line with national expectations. The standard of work seen in lessons was in line with national expectations in Key Stage 3 and below in Key Stage 4.

61. Achievement is satisfactory, nevertheless. All pupils speak in class particularly well and have positive attitudes to French. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when the work is matched to their individual needs. Higher ability pupils make progress but there is little opportunity for them to extend their learning beyond the main classroom activity.
62. By the end of Year 9 pupils have experienced a range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. They repeat phrases and sentences after their teachers and most speak with good French accents. Higher ability pupils understand sentences spoken aloud and most reply with accuracy. They recognise and use the past tense and, in one Year 9 lesson, some pupils combined famous past events with some complicated dates on a timeline. Lower ability pupils acquire reasonable levels of vocabulary but poor retention hampers progress. By the end of Year 11, pupils are becoming more confident in the use of spoken and written French but a failure to learn basic grammar and vocabulary prevents significant progress being made. Their written work is well presented reflecting the positive attitudes they have to the study of French. They use their books and notes as reference material to support their learning, but begin conversations in class without prompts.
63. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with over three-quarters good or very good. In such lessons, teachers used challenging questions, made a crisp start to lessons and used a wide range of teaching methods. There are good relationships between teachers and their pupils as a result of the good classroom management. In addition, all lessons observed set clear aims, used a starter activity to focus pupils and summed up the lesson with a plenary session. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils used individual whiteboards to practise numbers in preparation for the introduction of the topic of time in French. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace is a little slow and some pupils are allowed to chat during the teacher's explanation. In all lessons observed, pupils developed their skills through a range of creative activities such as drama, pair work and games but there was little provision to meet the needs of individual pupils. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are supported in their learning with vocabulary lists and departmental booklets on the GCSE expectations and coursework guidelines. Although no ICT was seen during the inspection, the department has access to a suite of computers which it uses when appropriate.
64. Leadership is good from a committed linguist, who has a clear vision for the future direction of the department. She is a positive role model for both staff and pupils and this has led to the current positive attitudes to the learning of French. The departmental improvement plan contains appropriate targets for the future direction of the department. Schemes of work are in appropriate format and the department makes a significant contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy. The management of the department is developing effectively and the head of department has already developed systems for the monitoring of pupils' progress and target setting. These are not yet consistently applied across the department and some of the targets set for pupils are too general. Teaching is monitored within the department but formal departmental meetings are not sufficiently regular for the sharing of good practice. Marking across the department is regular but teachers do not give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve their written work and move to the next level. The department offers an annual visit to France for pupils in Year 9 and 10 and French and Russian 'taster' lessons are offered to primary school pupils during their visit to the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below national averages by the end of Key Stage 3 and well below by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Good department leadership and teamwork combine to raise standards.
- Teaching is good in both key stages.
- Insufficient attention is given to developing writing skills.
- The present accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

65. In 2003, the National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds showed below average standards. However, when compared with those of similar schools, results are above national averages when taking into account pupils' levels of attainment on entry. The standard of work seen during the inspection was around average at Key Stage 3, though subject to variations. In Year 7 work seen indicated that pupils are achieving well and are making good progress in lessons, often owing to effective classroom management and good support by a teaching assistant. Results in GCSE examinations have shown a downward trend and pupils have not achieved as well in mathematics as in their other subjects. Few pupils achieved the highest grades and results are well below national average. However, achievement looks set to improve and progress is more evident in recent work seen in Year 10. The pace of pupils' learning is now good with slight variations from class to class.
66. Teaching and learning are often good; some very good teaching was seen. All teachers are determined to raise achievement and develop a lively interest in mathematics. Good use of resources and effective teaching methods were seen to result in pupils being motivated to learn. In a lower ability Year 11 group a "function machine" was created to inspire pupils to develop an understanding of early algebra. This resulted in all pupils remaining focused throughout the lesson and consequently making significant strides in their learning. Learning is stimulated through regular use of ICT within the department. A Year 9 group were seen using Excel to develop their understanding of Pythagorean Triples.
67. The National Numeracy Strategy for improving standards at Key Stage 3 has been introduced to promote learning. The use of the three-part lesson is in its infancy but when used correctly it was seen to stimulate learning and encourage pupils to develop a sharper use of numerical skills. Pupils observed were slow in recalling table facts and mental calculations; moreover, they were not always accurate in their use of measurement and scale. In a Year 7 lesson, some pupils were joining points on a graph without the use of a ruler resulting in inaccurate drawings; others in the same group were producing inverted kites as a result of clear understanding and careful plotting. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class by teaching assistants who work with the teacher to establish an appropriate pace of learning. All teachers demonstrate a commitment to raising standards and support each other in developing a shared vision for the department. As a result, the head of department is able to lead effectively and is developing a strong department.
68. Small white boards are used at the beginning of most lessons to stimulate learning and give immediate feedback to the teacher. However, their use over a prolonged period of time can impede the development of writing. Work in some exercise books shows a lack of pride in presentation and is not corrected or consistently marked. Sometimes the work is brief and unfinished, indicating a lack of time given to complete a task. Homework is set but standards vary across year groups and from teacher to teacher. One boy in Year 7 handed to his teacher an extended piece of research completed at home, which indicated a high level of

interest for the subject. In the best lessons observed, due attention was given to literacy skills. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils were asked to match opposites as an introduction to inverses. These were written in their exercise books, thus developing good writing skills.

69. The head of department has been in post for less than two terms but has succeeded in establishing a well-planned curriculum at Key Stage 3 delivered by a dedicated team. Assessment data are used well to track progress. Target setting is in its early stages of development but is set to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their learning. Other strategies, including self-assessment, booster classes, clear lesson objectives, and better use of resources, have helped to improve achievement within the department.
70. Presently the accommodation is poor and does not allow teachers to share good practice or ideas. Teachers make the best use of display but it is uninspiring in its present position. Plans are in place to improve this situation and the department will soon benefit from a suite of rooms, which should support the promotion of the subject. Since the last inspection standards have declined but recent developments show the department has planned well to raise attainment and make progress in the future.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. All teachers are aware of what needs to be done to promote the use of numerical skills in their subject but this is in its early stages of development. An in-service training day in July was designed to improve numeracy across the curriculum. The mathematics department is attempting to raise awareness by giving challenges to pupils during the start of each lesson. The use of small white boards are effectively motivating pupils in both mathematics and other subjects. In French, pupils were observed successfully using this resource to revise number. In art and design, pupils solve construction problems using their knowledge of three dimensions, and in science pupils calculate velocity by manipulation of a formula. However, not all departments have planned the development of numeracy as well. A whole-school audit has taken place to promote numeracy fully across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results in 2002 were above average.
- Year 7 pupils are making good progress because teaching builds well on their understanding.
- Pupils are taught effective revision methods, and GCSE preparation is good.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and practical work underpins much of the learning.
- Leadership is good; the head of science is a good role model in the department.
- Pupils' explanation and reasoning skills are underdeveloped.
- Expectations for all pupils to be actively involved are too low in some lessons.
- Monitoring is not yet effective in securing consistently good teaching.

Commentary

72. Results in 2002 at the end of Key Stage 3 were below average when compared to those of all schools. However, compared to those of similar schools these results are very high. Overall, there has been a downward trend in performance over the three years to 2002. Analysis of the 2003 results indicates that this trend has been reversed and that the results are now improved. The 2002 GCSE results were well above average and show that pupils achieve well in examinations. The 2003 results at GCSE were also above average.

73. Pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment, and the current standards in Year 9 are similar. However, pupils have made at least satisfactory and sometimes good, progress. The school has concentrated on ensuring that pupils in Year 7 are given a good start and this has been successful. These pupils are currently making good progress and achieving well because good teaching is ensuring that they are well motivated and effectively challenged.
74. Current standards in Year 11 are broadly average. Pupils are on track to achieve GCSE grades in line with the national average. Results could be higher if pupils were to use the revision methods that have been well taught, and follow good teaching points made for answering questions in examinations.
75. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in both key stages. In Year 7, it is particularly effective. In one lesson, progress was good because the pupils' understanding of current flow around a circuit was developed well. By the end of the lesson most pupils spoke confidently about electricity as a flow of electrons and used readings on an ammeter to help explain changes in the circuit. Scientific concepts had been explained well; the pupils were interested and keen to learn. In nearly all lessons, as well as showing good subject knowledge, teachers plan well using a variety of activities to support learning. CD-ROMs were used effectively with groups of pupils to revise and extend learning about evaporation.
76. Where one lesson was unsatisfactory, expectations about what the pupils can do were too low. Work set was too easy, and the class waited for all pupils to finish before moving onto the next part. The learning of some pupils is, therefore, too slow. A few pupils act in an immature way or are just rude, and become disinterested very quickly. With the exception of the teaching in Year 7, the weakest element is the quality of questioning. Often questions are asked which require a single word answer, simple explanation or statement of fact, and too few require answers showing that pupils have analysed information and used this to explain their understanding at greater length. In addition, pupils are often reluctant to offer answers to questions and the teachers step in and answer for them.
77. Leadership is good. A number of effective developments have recently been put in place. These include the introduction of criteria for pupils to evaluate their own performance more effectively, and stronger systems to track progress so that pupils who are not making expected progress can be quickly identified and supported. The action plan is an effective tool to develop practice within the department. The head of science is a good role model and is actively working with the local education authority to develop the quality of provision. Good team spirit is illustrated by the fact that the department raises considerable sums of money from the sale of plants to buy additional equipment. Some monitoring of the teaching has taken place but it has not been effective in ensuring that teaching is consistently effective. Although observed teaching was not as strong as during the previous inspection, the school has maintained above average GCSE results and leadership in the department is improving the quality of provision. Improvement since the previous inspection has, therefore, been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory** because pupils in Year 9 are not given their full entitlement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 11 are below average.
- There is a good Key Stage 3 course, but this does not extend into Year 9.
- Progress is good in Year 10.
- Teachers are enthusiastic teachers with good expectations.
- ICT is not used enough across the curriculum.

Commentary

78. The school did not enter pupils for GCSE examinations before 2003; the results in the first examination were very poor – no pupil gained a grade higher than E. In the standardised Teacher Assessments for Key Stage 3, the results were above average, with 75 per cent of pupils gaining Level 5 or above. Since there is no taught ICT course in Year 9, however, the levels were awarded on the work done by a few departments, for example design and technology and art and design, and not across the whole curriculum.
79. Current work seen in Year 10 confirms that standards are average at this age, with pupils in the top set showing above average standards in their first projects. Most were designing a children's book with some interesting characters. A few gifted and talented pupils showed well above average ability in the design of web pages and 'slide' presentations. In a lower set, however, standards were below average in knowledge of bar-codes, showing the inconsistency of their Key Stage 3 provision, and keyboard skills were not well developed; many pupils are not able to touch-type.
80. Standards seen in the current Year 11 are well below average, but show signs of improvement over the 2003 GCSE results. Teaching has obviously been erratic because work in folders was not continuous, nor was progression in understanding seen. In one lesson, it was evident that less than one quarter of pupils are on track for A* to C grades. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Year 11, but satisfactory in Year 10.
81. No discrete ICT lessons or work samples were seen in Year 9, so there is insufficient evidence to judge standards. In Years 7 and 8, attainment is average and achievement satisfactory. Pupils acquire sound ICT skills in making a leaflet advertising their school. Pupils, especially girls, evaluated their poster designs at a mature level, suggesting improvements to the product, giving reasons why and showing how this could be done. Many design layouts were spoilt, however, by inattention to literacy. Sentence beginnings and proper nouns were not given a capital letter; some sentences had no verb and contained spelling mistakes.
82. Specialist teaching is good in both key stages; work deficiencies due to lack of consistent teaching last year in GCSE courses in Year 11 have been effectively identified and remedial action taken, so that some of the candidates are now on track for a grade between A and C in the current year. The quality of teaching is good, and teachers have good subject expertise. Those taking the Year 7/8 course – despite some being non-specialists – bring enthusiasm and good ICT skills which enable pupils to be motivated and learn well. The three-part lesson, in which objectives are made known to pupils at the beginning and reiterated at the end after a practical period, is well established and enables pupils to consolidate learning before moving on to new work.
83. Although the curriculum is good in Years 7 and 8 and all pupils take an appropriate half GCSE course in Key Stage 4, it is unsatisfactory overall because no course takes place in Year 9. Assessment is being carried out systematically at GCSE and starting to be so in Years 8 and 9.
84. Leadership of the subject is good. The temporary subject manager has good expertise and is improving achievement in all areas of the curriculum. He is ably supported by his line manager and together they have very good vision for further development of the subject. Management is satisfactory. New procedures for lesson planning and assessment are in place and their impact is beginning to be felt in pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the subject. This is further enhanced by the well-supported clubs taking place at lunchtime.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. This is unsatisfactory because ICT is not used enough in all subjects. It is good in art and design, where impressive pictures have been produced by enhancing photographic computer-aided design, and pupils are well motivated by animation workshops. It is also well used in mathematics in Key Stage 4, especially in data analysis. Provision is satisfactory in English, science and design and technology. However, several subjects have problems with access, including English and religious education. New music software is in school but not yet used, and physical education has just acquired a digital camera which has also not been used. Resources have, therefore, only recently improved to meet the key issues from the last inspection, but now the school has good expertise amongst staff, a building programme including a new ICT room – soon to be completed – and good capacity for further improvement.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has established a clear vision for the department.
- Fieldwork activities in all years provide opportunities for pupils to develop their enquiry, analytical and presentation skills.
- Pair and group work is regularly used to develop pupils' co-operative, decision making and oral skills.
- There is no statistically based target setting and monitoring to encourage and assist pupils to raise their standards.
- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research, data analysis and report writing are limited.

Commentary

86. Results in the 2002 GCSE examinations were well below the national average, with 29 per cent of pupils gaining A*-C grades. However, following the introduction of a new syllabus, results in 2003 showed a big improvement. Seventy-six per cent of pupils gained A*-C grades and results in geography were amongst the best in the school.
87. Currently in Year 9 standards are below average. Achievement, however, is satisfactory as pupils' attainment on entry to the school was below average. They enhance their knowledge and understanding of industry and industrial location and of the geography of Japan and Brazil, and gain a greater understanding of development issues. They demonstrate appropriate enquiry, analytical and presentation skills in carrying out local fieldwork related to the study of industry. Although higher ability pupils demonstrate a growing ability to account for patterns, there is a need to differentiate lesson activities further to encourage and enable them to attain the highest National Curriculum levels. There is no system of target setting and monitoring to help raise standards.
88. In Year 11 standards are below average but this reflects the prior attainment of the pupils; achievement is satisfactory. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of the water cycle, rivers and floods and relate this to local circumstances. They build on their fieldwork skills with a study of coastal features, land-use and economic activity around Hengistbury Head, Mudeford and Barton-on-Sea. Achievement in Year 10 is good, reflecting the prior attainment of these pupils. They are making good gains in knowledge and understanding of a range of development issues with particular reference to Brazil and India. They make good use of maps, diagrams and graphs to illustrate and enhance their work.

89. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but good in Key Stage 4. In Key Stage 3 - particularly in Years 8 and 9 - pupils' variable effort and concentration reduce the effectiveness of the teaching. Clear learning objectives are set at the start of all lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned and structured, with a variety of activities. The good relationships between pupils and teachers ensure a productive working environment, and good partnership between teachers and teaching assistants, when they are present, ensures that pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There are ample opportunities in lessons for pair and group work, which develop pupils' co-operative, decision making and oral skills. This was demonstrated well in a Year 10 lesson where pupils were considering the best location for a new housing development. Questioning and intervention by teachers ensures that pupils are supported and their thinking challenged. Homework is regularly set, effectively complements work in class and extends learning.
90. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The head of department, who has only recently joined the school, has a clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations. She has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the department and quickly saw the need to change the GCSE syllabus to ensure higher pupil attainment. The department improvement plan relates well to whole-school objectives and identifies the most productive lines of development. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and, although the use of ICT to facilitate learning and attainment is currently limited, there are clear plans to develop this when school resources are more accessible. Departmental spending is clearly linked to priorities for improvement, particularly in relation to providing up-to-date and relevant text books and other learning resources. The accommodation is satisfactory and is enhanced by good displays of pupils' work with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. There are good facilities for using video material. The department has its own digital camera, which is used by pupils, particularly on fieldwork trips. There are no dedicated ICT facilities in the department.
91. Good progress has been made in addressing the main issues raised in the last inspection. There is clearly work still to be done on developing the Key Stage 3 curriculum and schemes of work and the department handbook. Equally, to further raise pupils' attainment, there is a need for the department to develop a system of target setting and monitoring, based on aptitude tests and statistics of prior attainment.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national average in Year 11 and results at GCSE were well above in 2003.
- Standards are below the national average in Year 9.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The department is well led and managed.
- Good use is made of visits to historical sites.
- ICT skills are used well, although computers are not available for use in all classrooms.

Commentary

92. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below average, and written work is well below because of the weaknesses in literacy of many pupils. However, individual research is often good, resulting, for example, in very impressive Year 8 work on life in the seventeenth century and Year 9 work on aspects of trench warfare.
93. Numbers taking history at GCSE have been low; there were 13 candidates last year. The trend at GCSE at A*-C grades has been above average and it was well above in 2003 when all

pupils achieved at least a C grade and almost a third an A* or A grade. Standards in the current Year 11 are above average and there are some pupils who merit the highest grades at GCSE. Boys achieve as well as girls and their ability to explain their ideas is often impressive.

94. The good quality of teaching ensures that most pupils achieve as they should and many achieve well. Good attitudes and behaviour in class also contribute to pupils' success. The subject is growing in popularity at GCSE because pupils are aware of the quality of teaching and overall provision. Teaching has clear strengths. Planning is focused on the need to improve standards in literacy and to promote skills and understanding as well as knowledge. There is a real focus on independence in learning, although tasks are not always matched to the needs of all pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to achieve well. Higher ability pupils clearly achieve well at GCSE. Such pupils in Years 10 and 11 speak with confidence about the economic policies of Stalin and the ideological causes of the Cold War because these topics have been taught well. However, analysis of results shows that some pupils need to improve the quality of their coursework.
95. Work is carefully marked and pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs and groups, and to evaluate and review their own work. However, assessment of standards at the end of Year 9 is not sufficiently accurate in identifying what pupils have achieved. Each lesson provides a variety of experiences and, although some teachers are not specialists, they all have an appropriate level of knowledge. Learning is enhanced by frequent use of computers, although not all classrooms have appropriate facilities. The high quality of displays makes an important contribution to learning by celebrating achievement. Pupils clearly enjoy activities in class, visits and project work.
96. Management and leadership are good, particularly in support for non-specialist teachers, the development of resources, monitoring and planning. There is a clear emphasis on promoting high standards. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory in raising standards and increasing the popularity of the subjects at GCSE.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new head of department is raising the profile of the subject and increasing the motivation of the pupils.
- The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A range of interesting teaching strategies has been introduced.
- Homework and marking are inconsistent at this stage.
- There is good emphasis on pupils learning *from* religion, but not enough emphasis is being put on learning *about* religion.

Commentary

97. Pupils make only slow progress through Key Stage 3. Their work is below average by the end of Year 9 but their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 7. All pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils find it difficult to use information effectively to back up their opinions with sound reasons. Absence slows progress and some pupils have low concentration and motivation.
98. In recent times only very small numbers of pupils have taken the GCSE examination but their results have been good, and above the national average for passes at grades A*-C and A*-G.

All pupils in Key Stage 4 are now following the short course for GCSE. Standards are below average for pupils in Year 11 but much closer to average for pupils in Year 10.

99. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school, with a number of good features. Pupils respond well to the introduction of music to enhance learning at the start of lessons and the regular use of video and other visual images. Many pupils have made significant strides in work which is designed to develop their thinking skills. Teachers are working hard to overcome the negative feelings some pupils have towards religious education. Pupils are encouraged to develop oral communication skills by discussion and debate of the many controversial issues covered in the syllabus. Religious education is having an impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. However, the pace of learning is slow and not enough written work is being done in books to drive standards upwards. More attention needs to be given to learning about the world faiths and homework should be set more frequently and marked more regularly. At present, ICT is not used to enhance learning in religious education.
100. The leadership of the recently appointed head of department is good. He is ambitious for his pupils and for the subject. He has vision and enthusiasm. Management is satisfactory. There is much to do and appropriate priorities have been set. The department needs to continue to develop assessment procedures to help pupils understand more fully the progress they are making. Much has been done in the short time that the head of department has been in post. There has been satisfactory progress in recent months and the department has the capacity to improve and move forward.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is largely good and there is some very good and excellent teaching.
- Learning is enhanced by good use of practical applications, and this benefits the wide ability range of the pupils.
- Currently, GCSE graphics is not offered and this detracts from the potential quality of design sheets in all areas of the subject.
- The use of CAD and CAM needs considerable further development.
- National Curriculum levels and guidance on how to improve are not always adequately communicated to pupils.

Commentary

101. The department covers work in resistant materials, food technology and textiles in all years, with a child development GCSE option in Key Stage 4. Pupils' achievement is overall satisfactory in Key Stage 3, and pupils across the wide attainment range are working to their individual capabilities.
102. Generally, pupils follow the design process well when designing and making products, and by the end of Year 9 standards are broadly in line with national expectation. Year 7 pupils showed above expected standards when working in textiles. They worked confidently and extremely well when designing and making decorative cushions. They selected appropriate fabrics and coloured threads and were very proficient at machine embroidering the front of their cushions with original patterns. These pupils also showed great enthusiasm in making acrylic phone stands. They use hand and power tools effectively and safely, and were very eager to develop their skills, knowledge, and understanding of the subject. The well-finished balancing toys made by Year 8 pupils also demonstrated good application and productivity. However, below

expected understanding of the theory of motion and knowledge of mechanical movements was evident in the response of a group of Year 9 boys when evaluating mechanical toys for younger children and their findings were not adequately recorded.

103. In recent years, GCSE results have been close to the national average, and represent satisfactory to good achievement, but the number of A* to C grades achieved overall in the subject in 2003 was well below the national average in recent years, mainly due to a drop in the grades for resistant materials. Predictions are for better results in 2004.
104. In Year 10, pupils learn about 'target markets' and 'user groups' in the context of designing and making products, and develop design briefs and specifications. The standard of work in progress and in folders is very variable. The best work communicates ideas effectively through the use of accurate isometric drawings, whereas less successful work is marred by poor freehand sketching and untidy dimensioning. Few pupils use original corporate image in the layout of their design sheets. Apart from a small number of pupils who use ICT well, the standard of graphical presentation is below average.
105. The department does not currently offer graphics as a GCSE option, and consequently graphic design principles are not systematically taught in either key stage. However, Year 11 pupils show ambition and originality when designing and making large storage units for CDs and books. They measure and cut joints accurately and the standard of finish is high. There is also a wide range of attainment in child development. Most pupils worked well and made good progress during a lesson on making a 'mock up' for a young child's educational book. They recalled types of books for pre-school children, but the below average literacy skills of some pupils constrained their progress. Nevertheless, the department makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through the many curricular links with environmental, social and moral considerations promoted through designing and manufacturing products.
106. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory and there is some very good and excellent teaching. Teachers have good command of their subject specialisms and this promotes interest and good learning patterns. Lessons are well planned to cover National Curriculum and examination requirements, and the aims and objectives of assignments are clearly communicated to pupils. Questions and answers are used effectively to guide and reinforce learning. Demonstrations are given at appropriate times in practical sessions, and this allows lessons to proceed at a good pace. In the very best lessons, very good class management, together with varied methods that challenge and inspire, results in excellent learning. However, National Curriculum levels are not used enough in lessons, and level descriptors not referred to often enough and communicated to pupils. This would provide them with further guidance on how to improve their standard of work.
107. Leadership and management of the department are good. The head of department has very clear ideas of how the subject needs to develop. Good working relationships are established with all pupils, with well-organised procedures for conduct in the workshops, kitchen and classrooms. Development plans include the development of accommodation and resources for graphics, and the further development of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture, as currently these two important areas of the National Curriculum are underdeveloped. Practical work areas and machinery are well managed, and safety factors are well addressed, but currently there is no technician support. Departmental improvement since the last inspection is generally satisfactory.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in all years across a wide attainment range is good.
- Attainment is rising in all years.
- Teaching is generally very good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very positive and the department makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The development of all resources is needed to meet the growing needs of the school, and to raise standards further.

Commentary

108. Art and design work covers a wide range of aspects of the subject, with good opportunities for pupils to study the work of well-known artists and art movements. They do practical work in a variety of two- and three-dimensional media, including computer-aided design and sculpture. Pupils' achievement is good in all years. Across the wide attainment range, progress is overall good and work seen in progress and in folders indicates that many pupils show strong commitment to the subject.
109. Pupils are keen to work hard, to be creative, and to develop their skills. They take great pride in their achievements, and are working up to the limits of their individual capabilities. Year 9 pupils, for example, working on a 'Jekyll and Hyde' project, were learning about positive and negative images and the use of complementary colours to create strong contrast. The self-portraits that they have distorted using digital image manipulation software are strikingly original and expressive. By the end of Year 9, standards overall are in line with national expectation.
110. In recent years, GCSE results have been good, with more A* and A grades than the national average. The number of A* to C grades was similar to the national average for all schools, and above the average for similar schools. Predictions are for even better results in 2004. These high standards are reflected in large paintings and relief sculptures based on studies of African art and culture by current Year 11 pupils. These images are rich in pattern quality and the colour combinations are emotionally expressive. Year 10 pupils understand how tessellations work, and produce lively tessellations of their own after studying printed fabrics to identify types of repeat. The department makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through visits, links with the community, artists in residence, and local art workshops, for example at Salisbury Cathedral.
111. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and largely very good. In the best lessons, very good command of the subject promotes interest and confidence. Such lessons are characterised by lively introductions and demonstrations, with good use of visual aids and questions and answers that reinforce learning and help ongoing assessment. Although National Curriculum levels are used extensively for assessing pupils' attainment across Key Stage 3, level descriptors are insufficiently communicated to pupils in lessons. Key Stage 4 examination courses are carefully planned to meet all the necessary requirements and assessment criteria, and very good working relationships are established with pupils.
112. Leadership and management of the department are good, with some very good features, such as the development of the use of computer-aided design and its integration with art theory. There is a clear vision of how the department needs to develop, and a strong sense of purpose to raise attainment and to keep abreast of educational developments in the subject. However,

there is some room for improvement in the areas of monitoring performance data, and the development of further links with local secondary schools to enhance the quality and accuracy of Key Stage 3 assessment and moderation.

113. Currently, the accommodation for the subject is inadequate. The one large room has a stimulating environment, but other non-specialist rooms have few facilities and very little display space. The use of ICT and CAD is very good, but for whole classes, resources are insufficient. Progress since the last inspection is good overall. The quality of teaching has improved generally, and pupils' attainment is improving. Numbers taking the subject are growing, and the cultural and historical sides of the subject are now well developed.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is dynamic, improving music provision that has been unsatisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are purposeful and enthusiastic.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress and benefit from new resources.
- Assessment and pupil self-evaluation are underdeveloped.
- A lack of music technology resources and the present limited accommodation restrict the development of the curriculum.

Commentary

114. Standards in Key Stage 3 as reflected by the 2003 end of key stage assessments were difficult to ratify because of an absence of past records. However, evidence of the background knowledge of pupils in Year 10 at the beginning of this year from the new subject leader suggests that standards were poor.
115. In the 2003 GCSE examinations, standards and achievement were very poor in music. This reflected weak teaching, which had not addressed the requirements of the curriculum or enabled pupils to acquire specific skills or the necessary knowledge and understanding.
116. In lessons observed, standards were in line with expectation for the Key Stage 3 in aspects of work seen. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory, and some achievement is good. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, a concentration on the development of composing skills enabled pupils to develop musically effective percussion pieces in groups and use graphic notation well.
117. In aspects of the subject observed in Key Stage 4, standards were satisfactory. However, it was not possible to evaluate performing standards of pupils in Year 11. Achievement is good, particularly in Year 11 where pupils are working with good application to acquire skills and knowledge, some of which should have been taught last year. In a listening and composing assignment linked to a film music unit, pupils worked with concentration on listening and evaluation tasks. They made pertinent observations, which demonstrated good understanding of the relationship between musical details of film scores and dramatic contexts, and specialist vocabulary. Pupils approach planning a linked composition analytically, managing group discussion well and completing the task within the time available. In Year 10, pupils concentrated well on rehearsal for a first individual performance assessment. Pupils' behaviour in music is good.
118. In lessons observed, there was no significant variation in the achievement or response of specific groups of pupils. Experienced and more able musicians in both key stages have the opportunity to use their more-developed skills and wider experience through open-ended

assignments. Pupils with special educational needs demonstrate positive achievement as a result of teacher intervention and diagnostic support, for example through additional visual prompts when working with a keyboard. The GCSE group in Year 11 is unusual in its gender balance with only one girl in a group with 15 boys. In both key stages, pupils respond enthusiastically to energetic and skilled teaching. In Key Stage 4, pupils are strongly motivated to learn.

119. Teaching and Learning in Key Stage 3 are at least satisfactory, with good teaching and learning observed in a Year 7 lesson. In Key Stage 4, teaching and learning are good. Lessons start crisply with clearly expressed learning intentions. In both key stages, pupils respond positively to dynamic and motivating teaching in which the teacher has well-developed musical skills to demonstrate and participate with pupils in making music, and to modify materials where necessary. In lessons observed, pupils spent maximum time engaged in practical activity. In a Key Stage 4 lesson, materials were particularly well prepared, using a combination of video clips and live performance to develop aural perception and understanding, and providing a stimulating basis for the development of the next composition.
120. In both key stages, because prior learning has been weak, teaching in the short term requires more specific use of scaffolding to support learning activities, ensuring that pupils know how to proceed and how work can be improved. A draft scheme of work exists, which is under review to ensure that, when finalised, it meets the needs of pupils in the school. Assessment is underdeveloped and no past departmental records exist to support pupil tracking in music. Learning would be enhanced by greater use of self-evaluation.
121. Leadership and management in music are strong, following the appointment of a new subject leader. The vision of the department is to widen access to music. An audit of the subject has enabled an action plan to be written, which is realistic in phasing developments, but not yet fully costed. More specific collaboration between arts subjects is developing. To stimulate pupils' response and learning, a first venture is a whole-school production of 'Bugsy Malone' next summer. Expansion of purely musical extra-curricular activities is under way. The local education authority is supporting the school in planning developments including a review of instrumental provision.
122. Despite the recent acquisition of keyboards, television, video and a mini-disk recorder, the department is still inadequately resourced, particularly in listening materials, printed music and music technology, to support the range of required activities. Currently, music is taught in a single terrapin. This creates particular difficulties for the management of group-work in performing and composing. Some of the immediate problems will be resolved when new accommodation is complete. Since September, pupils have had the opportunity to attend concerts, including a visit to the Albert Hall, and to perform at school events. Such activities are playing a significant part in attracting pupils to music.
123. Progress since the last inspection has been uneven. Standards and the quality of provision have not been maintained, but are now improving rapidly.

Drama

Commentary

124. Two lessons were seen; teaching was good in both. Year 8 pupils were seen to have a good knowledge of technical terms and concepts. Year 10 pupils showed close to average skill, despite their lack of background. They find the academic parts of the course (keeping drama diaries) difficult. Accommodation is poor because there is no dedicated teaching space and the hall is limited in equipment and by its other uses. Pupils are enthusiastic. The production of 'Bugsy Malone' in rehearsal, involving all teachers of dance, drama and music, is well supported by the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils display positive attitudes and relationships are good.
- Good breadth and balance in curricular opportunities at both key stages include a varied extra-curricular programme.
- The new head of department has high standards and a vision which supports that of the headteacher.
- Assessment for learning is weak.
- The use of ICT is weak, especially with GCSE pupils.

Commentary

125. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. At Key Stage 4 standards are satisfactory. The number of pupils taking GCSE is small. Standards have been above average in recent years, though they were lower in 2003 than in previous years. Predictions for 2004 and 2005 are better. Teachers hold interviews with pupils in both Year 10 and Year 11 to set targets and encourage them to rise to the challenge.
126. Standards in Key Stage 3 are average with most pupils working at national expectation. Some were seen above, such as in Year 7 badminton where three boys showed great control and accuracy in use of the overhead drop and underhand clear, and several pupils in Year 8 gymnastics show flair and originality in their balances and good understanding of body tension. Year 7 girls attending extra-curricular netball exhibited good footwork and good vision in seeing other players to pass to. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, identified in lesson planning, and well supported by teachers.
127. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives communicated to pupils. Each lesson has an element of fitness, and whilst most emphasise skill acquisition, selecting and applying these skills and evaluating performance are also included. Pupils are given opportunities for independence in warm-ups, working alone, with a partner or in leading groups. Organisation is clear and well managed, although occasionally too great a reliance is placed on pupils' independent learning when skills have not been embedded, as seen in some group work in badminton. Teachers have high standards and expectations of behaviour and incidents of poor behaviour, as seen in Year 8 girls' rugby, are resolved in line with school policy, causing least interference with the learning of others. Pupils learn best when the teacher provides ongoing support and re-emphasises teaching points. However, assessment is not thorough, and differentiation, by task as well as outcome, is not great enough to stretch the more able.
128. The head of department is new in post, but not new to the school and, although the department is small, has the support of enthusiastic non-specialists, whom he supports adequately. He has a clear vision and has identified strengths and weaknesses, developing an action plan with budget costings. The newly qualified teacher brings a refreshingly new perspective and some promising expertise in ICT, though this is an area for the department to develop, especially to promote the increase in personal performance.
129. The department provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for motivated and able pupils who play in inter-school matches, attendance at which is good. Despite the small numbers involved, the school has had considerable success at local and county level in tennis, rugby and netball. Staff give willingly of their time to support these activities, which provide pupils with a sense of community and promote their self-esteem. Access to off-site facilities in

Year 11 for golf and skiing and at the local leisure centre provide additional curricular breadth. The use of external coaches for rugby and tennis helps to raise standards. Involvement with the school sport co-ordinator programme has led to better links with ten primary schools, and improved standards in Year 7 on entry to the school.

130. The department has made satisfactory progress since last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

During the inspection no discrete lessons of citizenship were observed because of the nature of the timetable. Judgements are therefore limited to discussions with pupils, scrutiny of plans and delivery of aspects of citizenship across the curriculum.

Provision in citizenship is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A scheme of work for citizenship is in place.
- Pupils in Year 11 have found the whole-day sessions stimulating and relevant.

Commentary

131. Citizenship in the school is planned and delivered in three specific ways: during tutorial sessions, through all subjects of the curriculum and in timetabled whole-day events. Planning for whole-day events is good, and Year 11 pupils said that the recent day covering aspects of employment was particularly successful.
132. The various elements of citizenship are successfully covered in curriculum areas. In physical education, for example, pupils in Key Stage 4 organised a football tournament with Year 7. In religious education, discussions have considered basic democracy and voting rights.
133. The school has carried out a self-evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, identifying further training needs to ensure consistency of delivery. The subject is effectively managed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).