

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**BISHOP BELL (CE) MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTING  
SPECIALIST SCHOOL**

Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114613

Headteacher: Mr T Boatwright

Lead inspector: Brian Evans

Dates of inspection: 13 - 16 October 2003

Inspection number: 258801

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 840

School address: Priory Road

Eastbourne

East Sussex

Postcode: BN23 7EJ

Telephone number: (01323) 465400

Fax number: (01323) 465465

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J D Godby

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The Bishop Bell Church of England Mathematics and Computing specialist school has 840 boys and girls (11-16) on roll and is located in Eastbourne, East Sussex. It has Investors in People accreditation and received the School Achievement Award in 2003. Recently it has also been awarded the Football Association Charter Award. As the only Church of England secondary school in East Sussex pupils may be admitted from any part of the county, although most live in the area around the school. The school is oversubscribed and has strong links with the local community and churches. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. Most pupils live on the local housing estate. There are few pupils from ethnic minority groups or who have English as an additional language. The number of pupils entering or leaving school other than at normal times is low. There are more boys than girls on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There are an average number of pupils on the special educational needs register, 15 of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need. The majority of these pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties or experience difficulties with literacy.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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32219	Nicholas Smith	Team inspector	Music
	Ivor Rushworth	Team inspector	Art and design
22491	Lorraine Small	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology
7926	James Bowden	Team inspector	Physical education Special educational needs
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**Bishop Bell CE is a good school** that gives good value for money. Its Christian mission is apparent in the daily life of the school. It has a number of very good features. Standards are rising and pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. The headteacher, governors, senior managers and staff provide good leadership and management. They identify clear, effective strategies for continuing to meet the academic and personal needs of all pupils. Management systems are efficient and are well designed to overcome barriers to raising standards.

### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- The headteacher, supported well by his deputy heads and assistant headteachers, has a clear vision for developing the school and provides excellent leadership.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and history.
- There is a strong ethos for learning and pupils have good attitudes to school.
- Standards in science and in design and technology are not high enough.
- The school has very good links with the local community.
- National Curriculum requirements for citizenship are not met.

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

The school was last inspected in January 1998. It has made good progress in responding to the key issues identified in the last report. Standards have risen and pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good and improved significantly. The senior management team have clearly defined roles and are very effectively led by the headteacher. Good pastoral leadership enables tutors to support well the personal and academic development of pupils. School policies on target-setting and assessment are still in the early stages of implementation. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good. There are clearer links between staff with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

*Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Achievement is good.** Overall, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average but there is evidence of a rise in attainment profile in recent years. By the end of Year 11, standards are in line with the national average and pupils achieve well. The overall trend over the past five years in GCSE examination results has been above the national average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through Years 10 and 11 compared to schools with similar intakes. In 2003, nearly all pupils achieved at least one GCSE A\*-G grade and the proportion achieving five or more A\* to G was well above average. Mathematics results are well above average and pupils achieve very well. Pupils' application of ICT skills in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Science standards are weaker than in English and mathematics and progress over time has been unsatisfactory because of staffing difficulties. These are now resolved and the school is fully staffed. Standards in design and technology are satisfactory but pupils do not apply design processes fully enough. The school met their challenging target for GCSE average points score per pupil in 2003.

By the end of Year 9, standards are in line with the national expectations and pupils achieve well. In national tests at the end of Year 9, the overall trend in 1998 to 2002 has been above the national average. However, the 2003 test results showed a dip in the average points score for English and science due in part to long term staffing illness. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and standards are well above average. Overall, dissemination between teachers of good practice in teaching and learning and effective implementation of a well thought out literacy strategy have led to higher pupil achievement. Numeracy skills are above average. Girls achieve better than boys although the gap is narrowing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well.

**Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** There is a strong, positive ethos in the school based on its Christian mission. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons and around the school are good. Attendance is in line with the national average; unauthorised absences are below average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.**

Teaching has improved because strategies in the school improvement plan for monitoring and supporting good classroom practice have been implemented well. The approach is underpinned by a well organised and appropriate in-service training programme. Pupils are well motivated and have well developed independent learning skills which enable them to achieve well. Nearly all lesson plans emphasise the matching of tasks and activities to pupils' attainment levels. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons observed, the level of challenge in the work set was pitched inappropriately. In Years 7 to 9 teaching is good including a number of excellent or very good lessons. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are good overall and no teaching was unsatisfactory. Key skills in literacy and ICT are taught well and are important factors in pupils' ability to sustain concentration and support one other in their learning. Pupils' numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics but there is limited monitoring across subjects. The library is popular and contributes well to pupils' learning. The curriculum, including an extensive extra-curricular programme, is good in most respects but unsatisfactory overall because the National Curriculum requirements for citizenship are not met. Other than citizenship, the curriculum is structured well to meet the personal and academic needs of all pupils and the school makes imaginative use of resources within its wider community.

Assessment data are used effectively by a number of teachers and especially in mathematics. However, implementation of the newly agreed assessment strategy is patchy and in its early stages in a number of subjects. The school cares very well for its pupils and gives them very good support and guidance. The school communicates successfully with parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.

Since his appointment the school's image in the local community has risen to the stage that it is now oversubscribed. The senior management team is working well together. Management systems are good and include a strong emphasis on effective self-evaluation procedures. Recently illness of heads of subject – for example, in science – has been a barrier to raising standards further but these are now overcome. The school improvement plan is a good working document. The governors carry out their financial and legal responsibilities efficiently but the National Curriculum requirements in citizenship are not met. Overall, they contribute to the further development of the school in an informed and supportive way. For example, they contributed to the Bishop Bell's successful accreditation as a specialist school.

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

Parents' views are positive. They believe that the school is well run and that their sons and daughters make good progress. Pupils believe that the school listens to their views. Parents and pupils affirm strongly that all forms of harassment are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise standards in science and design and technology;
- share successful practice in raising boys' standards among all subject teachers;
- implement fully the policy on assessment so that teachers use assessment data more consistently in all subjects to inform pupils, including those with special educational needs, of what they need to do to improve their academic performance;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- implement the National Curriculum requirements for citizenship.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects**

Pupils achieve well and standards are in line with those nationally.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught well and have contributed particularly to the recent marked improvement in standards in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and history.
- In science and in design and technology achievement over time is unsatisfactory.

#### **Commentary**

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	33 (32)	33 (33)
mathematics	35 (31)	35 (34)
science	32 (30)	33 (33)

*There were 159 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. The test results in English, mathematics and science in 2002 were average compared to those nationally and above average for similar schools. Comparative figures for 2003 were not available at the time of the inspection but the school's analysis shows a dip in results in English and science but mathematics standards continuing to rise. Overall the trend in test results is above that nationally. Inspection evidence confirms this generally positive trend. The sharing of good practice in teaching and learning, booster classes, the teaching of basic skills and projects on gifted and talented and a greater range of learning resources are major elements in raising achievement levels. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs across all years and most subjects is good although the school's monitoring of provision for pupils with special educational needs is only satisfactory.

##### ***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	45	50 (48)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	93	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	97	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best 8 subjects)	41.1	39.8

*There were 151 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The overall trend in GCSE examination results has been broadly in line with that nationally. In 2003 school again achieved their GCSE targets agreed with the local education authority. The school is on course to meet this year's target which is close to the national average. The average points score per pupil was well above the average for schools with similar intakes. Inspection evidence shows that standards are in line with the national average and that pupils of all attainment levels achieve well. Girls perform better than boys but the gap is narrowing. Boys

achieve well where teaching and learning strategies are adapted to both their needs as, for example, in geography. Strong curriculum leadership in mathematics has enhanced pupils' achievement. Successful strategies include elements such as 'booster' classes in partnership with the local sixth form college. Standards in science and in design and technology have not been as high as in other subjects. The school is working hard to overcome recent difficulties caused by staffing illness and recruitment problems and pupils achieve well in lessons but have some leeway to make up the backlog of learning caused by staff disruption. Standards in citizenship are variable because there is no overall scheme of work for the subject.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

The pupils have very good attitudes to school and want to learn and to be involved. They show high levels of self-discipline in and out of the classroom. Attendance is good. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very positive views of the school. They want to be involved and enjoy being part of the school's community.
- Attitudes in lessons are very good in many subjects.
- The pupils behave well in and out of lessons. This is very effectively supported by high expectations and procedures.
- There are very good, mutually supportive relationships across the school.
- Attendance rates are good and supported by very good procedures.

### **Commentary**

3. There has been a good improvement in this aspect; the school community has successfully built upon the good start identified in the previous inspection. The pupils like coming to this school. They are happy and enjoy what the school has to offer them. Pupils throughout the school strive to show commitment; this is very well acknowledged through the Achiever Award Scheme that has very worthwhile rewards attached to it. High levels of commitment are shown by the oldest pupils, with more than thirty per cent of them applying to become prefects, showing a considerable number wish to 'make a difference' in school by being involved.
4. Pupils work hard in most lessons and want to do well. They show very good attitudes in mathematics, which reflects well on its specialist school status and also in other subjects. For instance in an excellent Year 8 history lesson, the pupils all showed very high levels of enthusiasm and independence in their work on using portraits to develop skills of interpretation. This was because the teacher had made an excellent choice of resources, setting very high expectations in every task undertaken. The very good attitudes extend beyond the classroom. Pupils rise well, for instance, to unexpected challenges, such as the choir stepping in to replace one that had pulled out of an event at the last minute. Assemblies for year groups are particularly well received by the pupils, because the content has been well planned to reflect their lives and interests. Thus, pupils fully participated in one about love, race, hurt and death that used the words of the number one hit of the day, and listened with great focus and attention to another about friendship.
5. In lessons the attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are very good and are no different from those of other pupils. In booster classes in the learning support department pupils behave well and are keen to learn and make progress. In the Youth Award Scheme lessons, while pupils have satisfactory attitudes overall, they lack initiative and depend too much on teachers. Where pupils with special educational needs receive extra support from teaching assistants (TAs) in normal lessons, other pupils take this for granted and they themselves often ask for help. Older pupils with statements of special educational need are

supportive of the range of help they have received from the learning support department throughout their time in school.

6. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school day is good; it contributes positively to the calm atmosphere and reflects the high levels of self-discipline that are encouraged and promoted in school. Although the response to the pupils' questionnaire suggested that behaviour might be a concern, discussions with pupils throughout the school did not support this, nor did evidence from the inspection. Movement between lessons is conducted in a smooth manner, with pupils maintaining a good level of self-control when there are occasional hold ups. Behaviour in lessons is generally good. However, there are rare occasions when the pupils do not behave as well as they are expected to. This is sometimes due to teaching that lacks pace and effective management of pupils, but in one instance was due to the determination of a small group of boys to disrupt, despite the teacher's best endeavours. All pupils are very clear about the sanctions used by the school and that these are rigorously applied. Thus the boys involved in the one instance seen were dealt with swiftly. The school has a rate of exclusion that is relatively high. However, the rigorous use of the school's sanctions contributes to this and, for last year, was because of a spate of vandalism from a particular group of pupils. The school has effective procedures to re-integrate pupils.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	782	150	3
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	2	0

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

7. Pupils responded in their questionnaires that there is bullying occasionally in the school but all those spoken to agreed that it is not a major concern; furthermore, they categorically assured inspectors that it is handled firmly and quickly.
8. A very strong characteristic of the school is the sense of belonging and pride, shown through the pupils' neat appearance, their friendliness, politeness and developing confidence. A further very positive contribution to the school's ethos is the very good relationships that develop throughout the school. The pupils say there is always someone to whom they can turn to for help and support, secure in the knowledge that all staff endeavour to do their best for them. This means they are able to concentrate on their learning and enjoying their time in school. The very good relationships between pupils means that they work together effectively when required to and develop supportive friendships in and out of the classroom.
9. Attendance continues to rise with the most recent figures better than those given. The school has rigorous and consistently used procedures to identify reasons for absences. It follows up any concerns thoroughly and discourages the taking of holidays during term time. In this it has enjoyed a high level of success with the amount of holiday taken reduced by a half.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 - 2003 (%)***

Authorised attendance	
School data	92.8
National data	91.0

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	1.2

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

10. Spiritual development is very good. It is fostered in daily assemblies which are well-prepared and thoughtful and usually enhanced by music at the beginning and end. Spiritual development is fostered in other areas of the curriculum. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Students respond positively to a clear code of conduct. They treat others with respect and take responsibility for themselves and others. Most subjects of the curriculum explore moral issues - for example, there are opportunities to discuss moral issues in the humanities subjects. Pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn to understand their own culture and prepare for a multi-cultural society. For example, in geography there are opportunities to understand European and African culture. Appreciation of the art, drama, music and creativity of people of different cultures is encouraged and the key beliefs and practices of the six main world faiths are studied in religious education. In history, students learn to appreciate how other people in other times and cultures may have felt.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. Much of the curriculum is broad and balanced but there is poor provision for citizenship. The quality of care and links with parents and the community enhance the provision.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and are responsible for pupils' good achievement. Assessment is satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond positively to the high expectations set for them in their work.
- The use of assessment data by teachers is at an early stage of development although good practice already exists in a number of departments.

### Commentary

11. The good teaching is the result of a series of initiatives introduced by the headteacher and senior staff which build on good practice within the school. Newly acquired status as a specialist mathematics and computing school has further broadened teachers' perspectives on the use of ICT. Pupils use ICT to develop their communication skills and to make presentations on a number of issues. In subjects such as mathematics, history and modern foreign languages interactive whiteboards successfully motivate pupils' learning and build on their good ICT skills. The overall strategy for improving pupils' learning is increasingly successful over time and gives teachers a clear framework within which to constantly evaluate their teaching skills. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by their willingness to respond positively to the high expectations set for them in their work. In the best practice – for example, in mathematics - assessment data is carefully used to monitor pupils' progress and to identify relative weaknesses in achievement in specific areas of their work.
12. Teachers are good role models and set high expectations for their pupils within a relaxed but purposeful learning environment. Pupils contribute a great deal to the success of many lessons, as they arrive ready to work and concentrate very hard. They are attentive, interested and are eager learners.

13. In lessons, teachers generally know the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. However, the dissemination of pupils' individual educational plans (IEPs) is not always effective. Teachers are therefore not always able to plan their lessons to meet the needs of these pupils well. Teachers have, however, useful pen portraits of Year 7 pupils identified as having special educational needs. The quality of teaching and learning in lower sets in science, geography and history lessons is very good. Teaching assistants provide effective help and support to pupils with special educational needs in timetabled lessons.
14. The table below highlights the fact that over seven in every ten lessons observed during the inspection were graded as good or better. There were no significant differences between the proportions of good teaching in Years 7 to 11. Lessons that were satisfactory and the three unsatisfactory lessons were characterised by inappropriate expectations or lack of pace and pupils thus made less progress. In good lessons pupils make good progress and showed good achievement patterns over time. In just over four in every ten lessons teaching was very good or excellent and pupils made much better than expected progress and achievement very high. Good, sometimes very good, teaching overall is true of all subjects except design and technology.

***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 105 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (4%)	24 (23%)	47 (45 %)	27 (26%)	3 (3%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

15. Assessment procedures are good and used well to track progress in mathematics, art and physical education: they are satisfactory in the remaining subjects. They are unsatisfactory in ICT, design and technology and music. Consequently the use of assessment in planning to meet pupils' needs varies in its effectiveness.
16. At the beginning of the school year the new assessment co-ordinator established a centralised system of recording and target setting against which department targets can be compared and pupils' progress across subjects monitored. However, this has not yet been in force long enough to have had any significant impact on pupils' learning. Pupils have a general idea of how well they are doing but their knowledge of what they have to do to improve varies across subjects and teachers. In art, for example, pupils' monitoring sheets are good and identify what they need to do and in mathematics the most effective marking of work is constructive and helpful. In ICT, however marking of pupils' work is limited, with little to help pupils to improve. Assessment for learning has been identified as an area for further development. However, overall assessment has improved since the last inspection.

**The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory overall because, although in all other respects the curriculum is good, the requirements for the National Curriculum in citizenship are not met. The curriculum is enriched very well by extra curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Other than for citizenship, the curriculum generally provides a broad range of appropriate opportunities that encourage pupils' progress and achievement.
- Imaginative curriculum planning has created greater flexibility of choice for the pupils.
- There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good quality resources support the curriculum well.

## **Commentary**

17. The curriculum serves the majority of pupils well and reflects an innovative approach within the school's Beacon activities in line with its specialist mathematics and computing status. There is a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. In Years 10 and 11 there is a good balance between core subjects and options. Gifted pupils are given good opportunities to join 'fast track' groups in mathematics and languages when AS courses can be started in Year 11. Additional support classes are provided in literacy and numeracy for lower attaining pupils. There is a coherent programme of personal, social and health education including careers education. However, there is no scheme of work or planning to ensure that all strands of the citizenship curriculum are taught.
18. Extra-curricular activities provide a variety of enrichment activities for the pupils. There is a high participation rate and some of the activities are run by its post-16 trainees. The music department offers a range of opportunities for performance both in the school and in the wider community. Participation in sport is high with a large number of teams as well as additional clubs such as trampolining and dance. The wide range of opportunities available at the school has enhanced learning and supported the positive ethos in the school.
19. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meets the needs of the curriculum well. Resources are good with an impressive range of ICT facilities to support the curriculum. The library contributes well to pupils' learning and is well resourced with a large selection of books, ICT resources and study areas. The school gives a high priority to ensuring that all subjects have specialist teachers in post. The number of support staff is satisfactory.
20. Overall, curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. Pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to the school curriculum. The school's ethos of inclusion and support for those pupils with special educational needs has a positive impact on the social development and learning experience of these pupils as well as that of all other pupils in the school. Appropriate grouping arrangements, together with small group withdrawal sessions in the learning support department, mean that pupils with special educational needs are able to access the full curriculum on offer. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils. Teaching assistants are enthusiastic and committed to working with pupils with special educational needs. They have a wide range of experience and they attend appropriate courses to enhance their professional development. Resources in the study support department, including ICT hardware and software, are sufficient to support pupils with special educational needs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

There are good arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. The advice and guidance given to the pupils is good overall, as are the school's arrangements to involve the pupils in its work.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong pastoral support systems within a Christian ethos are effectively meeting the needs of pupils.
- There are good, appreciated induction and transfer arrangements from the primary schools.
- The school council is an effective forum to take the pupils' views in to account.
- The quality of IEPs is inconsistent because not all refer to the stages as recommended by the new Code of Practice for special needs.

## **Commentary**

21. The strong Christian ethos of care pervades the work of the school. Very good relationships develop amongst the pupils and with the staff in school. These, together with high quality

pastoral support and care, help to ensure that the pupils grow in confidence and security and are able to concentrate on their learning. Policies and procedures relating to welfare and child protection are well considered and implemented; the school has recently improved its health and safety procedures with positive results. The needs of individual pupils are well served, with a number of initiatives available to support those pupils experiencing difficulties. This includes the inclusion team that works through various well planned systems to help the pupils to cope and gain the most from their time in school. The school works with outside agencies when it can, including over attendance, if necessary. Staff provide effective pastoral and academic support and guidance for the pupils, the latter through, particularly, a system of twice yearly academic tutoring sessions. These pinpoint areas that need to be worked on so that pupils can work towards their potential.

22. Both parents and the pupils are enthusiastic about the procedures that make the move from the primary schools to The Bishop Bell smooth. A series of meetings that involve teachers, pupils and parents at different times and in different situations help to ensure that the pupils become familiar with the school, parents feel reassured about the step being taken and the school has the information it requires to do its best for all pupils. A particular strength is the early identification of any pupil who may experience difficulty, for any reason, in making the change; these pupils are then given additional support to help them settle in their new surroundings. New pupils particularly like being in school a day before the rest of the school returns. The result of this good provision is evident from the enthusiastic comments of the Year 7 pupils.
23. The school listens to what its pupils have to say. The school council is an effective forum for taking all pupils' views into account, because the structure ensures there is time for each class to discuss issues with its elected representatives before the year and subsequent full council meetings and to feedback on the outcomes. The pupils are also consulted through regular questionnaires; this includes ones on bullying and what they like and want improved in school. The school tells the pupils the outcome of their representations so they know they have a full part in the school community.
24. The learning support department has effective relationships with outside specialist agencies – this enhances further the quality of support and guidance for those pupils with special educational needs. Annual reviews are effective and support those pupils with statements of special educational need as they move through the school. Pupils' views are taken into account. The special educational needs coordinator draws effectively on a range of assessment data in order to enable her to identify those pupils who need support and place them appropriately on the register of pupils with special educational needs.
25. Most pupils on the school action plus and above list of pupils have IEPs and are reviewed on a regular basis. Targets are subsequently modified or changed. However, the quality of IEPs is inconsistent because not all refer to the stages as recommended by the new Code of Practice for special needs. Targets set are generally clear, concise and are discussed with parents and carers at termly meetings.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Links with parents and with other schools and colleges are good. The school has very good links with the local community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have positive views of the school and especially about the good communication.
- The school finds it difficult to get parents to come to meetings.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents, through the questionnaire and the meeting prior to the inspection, show a good level of satisfaction with the school. The parents had a few concerns about behaviour, but during the inspection behaviour was judged to be good. Parents at the meeting particularly commented on the way the school seeks to consult with them through regular questionnaires. The views expressed are taken into account well when drawing up the school development plan; a meeting is also arranged to keep parents informed about this. Parents like the way communication is promoted. The weekly newsletter is a lively mix of reviews, reports, information and involvement. The diary, the pupils' 'handbook' to the school, is a particularly helpful way by which parents are kept informed and involved, because its use is regularly monitored by teachers. Information about how parents can help their children organise their time to meet coursework deadlines was provided after parents expressed concerns.
27. Despite organising a range of meetings at different times of the day – academic tutoring interviews, parents' evenings, information evenings and consultation afternoons - the attendance at these remains stubbornly less than the school wants. It makes good use of these the opportunity to talk to the parents who do attend and is currently seeking other ways of consulting with parents. Parents and carers are invited to and attend annual reviews of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. Their views are recorded; hence they are fully involved and informed as to their child's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review process. The school has good links with partner primary schools, and the special educational needs coordinator has the opportunity to attend annual reviews in Year 6 for those pupils about to start at Bishop Bell.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives excellent leadership. The governing body gives good service to the school, but governance is unsatisfactory overall because statutory requirements are not fully met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school improvement plan is a good working document which effectively focuses the work of governors and managers on improving the quality of education.
- The school evaluates its performance well and takes action to address subsequent weaknesses.

### **Commentary**

28. The headteacher's excellent leadership is enabling the school to make good progress towards realising his vision of a high achieving school that meets the needs of all pupils. This is shared by governors, staff and parents. Pupils express pride in their school. A well-constructed school development plan is giving staff at all levels of responsibility the opportunity to improve their management skills and further raise standards. On his appointment just over seven years ago the school was not held in high regard by the local community. The impressive progress under his leadership and its image within the local community is now a very positive one and the school is oversubscribed. Strategies for addressing the a number of issues still outstanding – for example, full implementation of the national curriculum for citizenship - are being addressed convincingly through the school improvement plan
29. The school's systems for reaching decisions, devolving responsibility and ensuring good communication are good. The senior management group work well as a team and ensure that school policies are implemented. The quality of leadership and management in subject areas is good overall. It is very good in mathematics but weaker in science and in design and technology. The senior pastoral manager leads heads of year and tutors well with benefit for both the personal and academic development of all pupils. Performance management systems are effective and supportive.

30. The governing body brings a wide range of experience and expertise to the school. For example, the school's successful application to become a specialist mathematics and computing school involved extensive input from governors with appropriate expertise. The governors support the headteacher and staff well in extending the range of projects and initiatives which are proving beneficial to pupils' learning. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities except for ensuring the teaching of citizenship in the school curriculum – this is a major weakness and is recognised by governors as a high and immediate priority. The governing body's procedures for strategic planning, monitoring the quality of education and financial management and control are very good.
31. The business manager and finance officer are very efficient, use management information systems effectively and advise governors on the correct use of specific funds such as those for pupils with special educational needs. Audit reports show good financial control. Governors apply the key principles of best value effectively for the benefit of staff and pupils and these are confirmed by the rising standards in the school. For example, the school's specialist status was achieved through careful consultation with all parties and focused on further improving the quality of teaching and learning in all subjects.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2447112	Balance from previous year	-48411
Total expenditure	2446780	Balance carried forward to the next	-48079
Expenditure per pupil	3050		

32. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice for special educational needs and statutory requirements are met. The key issue of a lack of special educational needs policy raised at the previous inspection has been addressed. Leadership and management of the learning support department are only satisfactory. There are, for example, no formalised links with subject departments. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide the required support for pupils with statements of special educational need. This provides the breadth and level of support required for these pupils. The deployment of qualified support teachers is generally good but there are occasions when they could be used more efficiently – for example, in a bottom set English lesson, where numbers were small two pupils were sent to work with a support teacher in another room. The school has recognised the weaker aspects of its provision for pupils with special educational needs and is making good progress in resolving them.

## **LINKS WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

The quality of the school's work with its local community is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's specialist status has given effective impetus to its work with the wider community.
- Links with the local police force are particularly strong.
- Work with partner primary schools is very good. Current plans to establish links with African schools would enhance this provision.
- The school has worked very hard to establish good links with local churches.
- There is scope for more curriculum subjects to develop this aspect of their provision.

### **Commentary**

33. The school has very good links with the local community. The reputation of the school is considerably enhanced by this provision. As a mathematics and computing school, there are very effective links that create opportunities and increased participation in this area. A primary-trained teacher, for example, works very effectively with vulnerable Year 7 pupils in several subjects of the curriculum, and there are regular mathematics clubs and joint activities with local primary schools and also with local colleges. The school has developed a unique scheme to train ex-pupils as ICT technicians who will work in local primary schools and also for local businesses. Although the scheme is currently very small, there are very firm plans to expand and develop it.
34. There are strong links with local churches which considerably enhance community links. A local church, for example, makes use of school premises to hold its services. There are chaplains attached to each year group in the school, and the head teacher speaks regularly at local churches. The school benefits from visits from a variety of Christian organisations including dance and sporting groups and a Canadian group who provide some of the sex education programme. The school is currently planning to develop closer links with schools in Botswana and Uganda.
35. The community programme benefits considerably from being able to utilise the skills, energy and talents of a school intervention officer provided by the local police force. Funding is provided by the Eastbourne Crime Reduction Partnership, the local council, the local education authority and by the 6 schools involved in the scheme. As a result of the scheme, crime detection rates have risen significantly and anti-social behaviour, both inside and outside the school, reduced. An effective street warden scheme has helped to reduce anti-social behaviour outside the school gates. As a consequence, pupils feel safer.
36. Other links with the local community include the use of school facilities by adult education; a weekly Internet café supported by a former pupil who is now employed as a technician; classes in information technology for parents and a re-sit mathematics class for former Year 11 pupils who failed to get a C grade in GCSE. Several subjects have established a range of links with local schools. There is a trampoline club for local primary school children, for example, and modern foreign language teachers work with several local primary schools. Pupils in music have performed at local fairs, churches, hospitals, shopping centres and concerts. There is scope for a wider range of subjects to further develop the range of community links.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

##### **English**

Provision in English is **good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and try hard in their work.
- Most pupils achieve well during their time at the school.
- Best practice in assessment and target setting could be further developed.
- In some classes, homework is not set regularly.

##### **Commentary**

37. Year 9 test results in 2002 were above the national average and above average for similar schools. This represents very good progress for most pupils, since standards in English are below average when they join the school. Girls performed better than boys. The difference was greater than seen nationally. Within the school, results were better in mathematics, but not as good in science. Standards have improved consistently since the time of the last inspection, though the 2003 results were lower than in recent years. This was the first year of a new test format, and pupils may not have been prepared as well to deal with test requirements. Work seen during the inspection confirms that achievement is good by the end of Year 9. GCSE examination results in 2002 for both English and English literature were in line with national averages. Almost all pupils are entered for both examinations. Girls again out-performed boys, with significantly better results in literature. Results in 2003 were more variable. The proportion gaining higher grade passes in English was lower this year, though results in English literature improved considerably. Staffing problems, which disrupted the pattern of teaching and preparation for some classes, may account for this. GCSE coursework seen during the inspection showed that pupils are able to produce above average work, when more time is allowed to complete it and to revise efforts. Taking this into account, achievement by the end of Year 11 is satisfactory overall, though better for girls than boys.
38. In Years 7 to 9, speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils are willing to make constructive contributions to discussions in a range of contexts, including whole class, paired and small group work. Drama activities are an integral part of English lessons and help to develop confidence. Reading is also good. The great majority of pupils are independent readers by the end of Year 9. For this age group, regular library lessons encourage wider reading. Written work is set and marked regularly, with appropriate opportunities for more extended writing. Pupils make a conscientious effort to write fully and develop essays in detail. Most take care to present their written work neatly and carefully. But, for middle and lower attaining pupils, errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation remain a significant problem, marring overall standards.
39. In Years 10 and 11, relevant skills are consolidated and developed satisfactorily. Most pupils put forward ideas confidently in discussion and justify opinions well. Drama is offered as a separate subject at GCSE. Pupils in one Year 10 drama lesson observed showed some flair in improvised role-play on conflict between parents and children. Written work is good. In particular, extended personal and creative writing is well structured and developed. Higher attaining pupils write intelligently about literature studied. Essays are usually developed in sufficient depth, with good use of textual detail to substantiate arguments. More could be done

to encourage wider reading at this level, however. There are also not enough opportunities to study literature texts in greater depth at home. GCSE coursework is well presented but technical accuracy remains a problem for many. Access to ICT equipment is limited during lesson time, and there are inconsistencies of approach between classes. There could be further development here, to help pupils use new technology more effectively to improve literacy skills.

40. Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers manage pupils well in most classes, and constructive relationships are created. Teachers know their subject well and lessons are suitably varied, with a range of methods used to engage pupils effectively in learning. They are also prepared to give additional personal help and guidance where it is needed, both after school and in booster classes. The timing and pace of lessons were not always well judged, however. In some, starter activities were allowed to over-run, and were not always well matched to the learning needs of pupils. In others, too many activities were planned, so that effort was rushed and assimilation of ideas was limited. The end of the lesson often suffered and there was insufficient time to reflect on key points and evaluate learning in final plenary sessions. Work could also be better adapted to the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly in lower attaining groups. But, where they are allocated to lessons, teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs. They help the smooth running of the lesson and interact well with individual pupils.
41. Overall, pupils' learning is good. Most pupils are conscientious and try hard to improve their work. The department recognises the need to help them further by ensuring that all understand the process of assessment as fully as possible. This includes using National Curriculum level and examination grade criteria more specifically to inform lessons and feedback on written work. Further development of individual targets for improved attainment would also focus pupils' efforts more clearly and improve evaluation of their own achievement.
42. Leadership and management of English in the school is satisfactory overall. There are clear strengths in encouraging team working and the sharing of best practice amongst staff. A programme of lesson observations, and regular monitoring of work set, is well established. Staffing difficulties over the past year are now resolved. A full team of qualified specialists is now in post. Schemes of work have been revised and updated since the time of the last inspection, though further development here and in departmental policies generally, remains desirable to ensure consistency of approach, for example in providing for pupils with special educational needs and establishing clear expectations for the best use of homework. However, there has been good improvement in overall standards of attainment and in teaching since the last inspection.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

43. Good strategies to promote literacy skills are found in a range of subjects, though practice is not consistent across the curriculum. After a year's gap, a new literacy co-ordinator has been appointed this term. Her priority is to conduct an audit of best practice and to evaluate the success of efforts to date. Standards are above average overall, but there is clearly much scope for further improvement, in particular in the technical accuracy of written work. Not all teachers correct errors consistently.
44. Effective practice to promote good standards of speaking and listening was seen in many subjects, especially through sharing ideas in informal group discussions. But more emphasis could be given to presentation skills, for example in pupils' reports to the whole class in final plenary sessions. Reading skills are also well developed through coming to terms with a variety of texts, and the use of well structured and differentiated work sheets, particularly in history and geography. Internet research is used constructively in design and technology, geography and art. Pupils write regularly for different purposes. Factual note-making and analytical report writing are required in most subjects. They also have greater opportunities to produce more extended writing in English, design and technology, geography and in some science lessons

than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching of grammar and use of dictionaries features strongly in French and English. Key words for subjects are also displayed in many classrooms. Teachers emphasise them at the beginning of lessons, but their use is not always reinforced as the lesson continues. Writing frames, to help pupils develop and structure written work effectively, are used to good effect in English, history and geography.

## **Modern foreign languages**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching has greatly improved to include a variety of enjoyable activities, which promote active language learning.
- The Key Stage 3 Modern Languages strategy has been integrated well into lessons – pupils enjoy the quick-fire starter activities, understand the purpose of the lesson and benefit from an effective plenary session at the end.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and have developed very good relationships. Most pupils achieve well as a result.
- Pupils need to be made more aware of their level of attainment and to understand exactly what they have to do to improve.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in Spanish needs to develop in order to cope with the future demands of teaching pupils to GCSE level.

### **Commentary**

45. Teacher assessments show that standards in French at the end of Year 9 are in line with national expectations. Attainment in French observed in lessons reflects this, with pupils at the start of Year 9 able to understand and produce dialogues of three or four exchanges on different ailments, for example. The fluency and confidence of their spoken French however, is limited. Spanish has been introduced as a 'taster' to able pupils in Years 8 and 9, with a view to continuing to GCSE level. Standards are average for pupils studying the subject for a similar length of time. GCSE results in French have been broadly in line with the national average in recent years. The percentage of pupils entered is, however, lower than the national average. In 2002, boys and girls achieved comparable GCSE grades but in 2003, a change of examination board saw the gap between boys' and girls' results increase significantly, with girls performing much better. Work seen varied from relatively basic and inaccurate French, to extended pieces of written coursework, which used both formal and informal language. These high attaining pupils showed accuracy and fluency in their use of a variety of tenses, although they lacked the confidence to use tenses in their spoken French. In 2003, the results in German were below average and it is now no longer offered. There is currently no Spanish taught in Year 10 and the attainment of pupils in the Year 11 Spanish beginners' class, not entered for GCSE, is very wide.
46. In 2003, pupils who were below average overall on entry to the school, reached average standards in French by the end of Year 9, which represents good achievement. Year 11 pupils who had attained average standards by the end of Year 9, achieved average grades in GCSE French. Achievement is therefore satisfactory. Year 10 pupils, for example, can construct simple phrases about their house and understand descriptions of different types of accommodation. Pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress, as they are usually taught in small sets with pupils of similar ability. However, some who find themselves in groups of more mixed ability do not achieve as well as they might, were materials more closely matched to their needs.
47. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers are following the guidance of the modern languages strategy with effective use of starter activities to focus attention and a range of strategies including games, songs and information gap activities to engage pupils' interest.

Teachers always state their teaching objectives at the beginnings of lessons and systematically refer to them at the end, which helps pupils to understand why and what they are learning. Teachers show good subject knowledge in French and most use it extensively in the classroom, which provides a consistently fluent and accurate model for pupils to emulate. Teachers' subject knowledge in Spanish is less secure but an imaginative and enthusiastic approach nevertheless motivates pupils to communicate. All lessons are well prepared but the planning does not always take into account the needs of different groups of pupils. The pace of lessons is generally brisk and teachers make good use of short deadlines to keep pupils focussed on their work. They make effective use of resources to present and practise new language imaginatively and vary their classroom organisation to keep pupils on their toes. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged to explain grammatical patterns and to recall language without the need for written prompts. For example, in a very good Year 7 French lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to first practise and then elicit basic greetings. The written prompts were gradually removed forcing pupils to recall more and more of the key phrases, until by the end of the lesson, most could perform a short dialogue from memory. During the inspection week a significant amount of homework was set: the tasks were well chosen to provide continuity and consolidation of pupils' learning in class. Pupils' literacy skills are well developed in their use of dictionaries and grammatical terminology, as are their ICT skills, through use of the Internet for research and email to communicate with France. Pupils' numeracy skills are less well developed.

48. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and need further development to raise pupils' awareness of their attainment level and to set targets. Greater use of assessment information to inform planning and closer monitoring of pupils' understanding in lessons would help to raise achievement further. As Spanish expands, teachers' subject knowledge will need to develop in order to cope with the demands of teaching pupils to GCSE standard.
49. The department is well led. This good leadership leads to a largely cohesive department that works together effectively as a team. The head of department monitors teaching and schemes of work have been updated. The department is fully committed to the expansion of Spanish and is developing an innovative scheme to teach French in the main feeder primary school.
50. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have risen and there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes have improved as a result. The department has benefited from considerable investment and now enjoys a suite of well-equipped rooms and a good supply of new books. These have had a good impact on standards.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well overall, although in some lessons the work is not appropriate for the full range of ability.
- Identified groups of pupils receive effective support that enables them to improve attainment and achievement.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils are aware of their overall progress because of good assessment and tracking.
- Leadership and management are very good and the cohesive team of teachers is committed to raising standards even further.
- The effective use of interactive white boards enhances learning well.
- The support for mathematical skills in other subjects is not systematically planned.

## **Commentary**

51. GCSE results and National Curriculum test results in Year 9 have been above and well above average respectively for the last two years. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when they were below the national average.
52. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well overall. Standards reached by current pupils in Year 9 are well above average. Pupils in this year group entered the school with slightly below average standards and their achievement overall is very good. The improved scheme of work for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and its effective implementation by teachers have contributed to this high standard of achievement. Pupils in the current Year 11 entered Year 10 with well above average standards and the majority of pupils continue to perform at this high level in Year 11, making satisfactory progress overall. However, the school has identified a minority of Year 11 pupils whose approach to work is now causing concern. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is not as strong as in Years 7 to 9. The department is effective in identifying and responding very well to the needs of various groups of pupils, however, and this also contributes to the very good achievement overall. Good examples of this are the weekly master classes for high attainers in each year group, booster and springboard groups and the provision of an extra lower set in Years 7, 8 and 9 very effectively taught by a primary specialist. A significant proportion of pupils sit GCSE mathematics in November of Year 11 and GCSE statistics at the end of Year 11.
53. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and teach the basic skills well. They rehearse and consolidate pupils' prior learning effectively by starting each lesson with ten questions covering a range of topics. New concepts are explained clearly and pupils questioned well in order to ascertain clear understanding before they embark on individual tasks. In a minority of less effective lessons, however, teachers do not structure the development of a topic appropriately and pupils have difficulty following their explanations. Sometimes work set is not appropriate for the range of pupils in the class. In these lessons motivation is lowered and learning is impaired. Pupils generally respond well in lessons, however and very good relationships between teachers and pupils have a good impact on learning. Collaborative work in pairs or small groups enhances pupils' social development well.
54. The provision and effective use of interactive white boards in all classrooms has a positive effect on learning. As well as improving the pace of lessons and the presentation of work, most teachers encourage individual pupils to develop their information technology skills by using the boards in their explanations to the rest of the class. This, the use of graphical calculators and some whole class lessons in the computer room ensure that, at present, requirements are covered at least satisfactorily. The support of the subject by information and communication technology, however, is planned to improve in the near future with the provision of a mathematics department computer room. The development of literacy skills is satisfactory overall, although opportunities to extend speaking skills are sometimes missed in review sessions.
55. The assessment and tracking of pupils' attainment is thorough and pupils are set appropriate targets. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and there is a clear expectation that written work should be logically and neatly presented. The quality of marking, while providing teachers with relevant assessment information does in some instances does not provide pupils with sufficient information to further their learning. Leadership and management are very good and have led to higher standards and an improvement in teaching and learning from satisfactory to good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. There is no overall plan to ensure that pupils have the mathematical skills needed to access work in other curriculum areas or to ensure that opportunities to improve their numeracy are not

missed. There is good practice evident in a number of departments and the head of the mathematics department has already identified this as an area for development. The mathematics, geography and ICT departments have collaborated to do a joint piece of work on populations and science and physical education make use of, and consolidate pupils' skills in data handling and graphical analysis. The history department has identified areas where numeracy skills can be used and these are applied well, for example, the use of Roman numerals in sums and calculating the volume of an air raid shelter. However there are occasions where pupils' mathematical skills and the demands of another subject are not well matched, as in the use of formulae in an ICT lesson on spreadsheets.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

- Lessons are well prepared with a range of activities to keep pupils on task and the overall quality of teaching is good.
- Staff, under the leadership of the current head of department, work well together. They share good practice and are committed to raising attainment.
- Attainment in 2002 GCSE examinations was below average and achievement was unsatisfactory. Strategies are required to ensure that all pupils reach expected levels.
- Management is improving but has been, overall, unsatisfactory. Systems and procedures need refining.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT.

### Commentary

57. Standards in Year 9 are above the national expectation. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are below the national average. Year 9 test results over the past three years have been in line with, or a little higher than, the national average. Achievement is good. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 already have a good grasp of scientific principles. They work in a sensible way exemplified by the maturity with which they approached the topic of human reproduction.
58. Current pupils in Year 11 are achieving satisfactorily. Higher attaining pupils are achieving well. They have a sound grasp of simple genetics, of the reactions of acids and bases and carry out good investigations. Lower attaining pupils have poor recall in several areas of the curriculum. In previous years the department experienced staff absence through illness which affected the continuity of teaching and achievement. In 2002 the GCSE examination results in the separate sciences physics, chemistry and biology, as well as double award science have been below the national average. Results for 2003 are similar to those of the previous year.
59. The quality of teaching and learning in science is now good overall and this explains why achievement has improved in Years 10 and 11. Lessons, which teachers prepare very thoroughly, contain a good range of activities and are taught with good pace. When this is accompanied by the enthusiasm shown by most pupils, achievement is good. Teaching and learning benefit from the implementation of the school's well thought out Key Stage 3 Strategy. In a very good lesson on inheritance of genetic disorders, pupils moved rapidly from one activity to the next. Expectation was high, resources were well used and progress was good as a result. Where teaching is less effective either the tasks which pupils have to perform are not explained clearly enough or they are given insufficient time to complete them. Pupils' work is marked regularly, usually with informative comments telling them what they have to do to improve. Insufficient use is currently being made of ICT partly due to a lack of readily accessible facilities.
60. The second in the department is currently the acting head of science. Her leadership is good and teachers are united in their effort to raise standards. Schemes of work require further revision and the system for recording and retrieving assessment information needs refining. Frequent formal and informal meetings ensure that good practice is being shared. The

department has responded to the last inspection report and satisfactory improvement has taken place. Teaching is now good overall. Attainment and achievement in Years 7 to 9 have improved and are now above average. Standards in Years 10 and 11 remain below average. Management is improving but it is, in general, unsatisfactory. Systems and procedures need refining

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved by pupils at the end Year 11 are above average.
- Good teaching combined with good relationships, leads to an environment that enhances good learning.
- Very good resources and accommodation support learning very well.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of marking, assessment and target setting needs to be improved.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs should be developed in order to provide work more suited to pupils' individual needs.

### Commentary

61. The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 are broadly in line with the national average. The GCSE results in 2002 were well above the national average. Although results dropped slightly in 2003 achievement by all pupils is good. Girls achieve better grades than the boys. Overall, pupils perform better in ICT than they do in other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils enter Year 7 with below average standards so they make good progress during their time in the school. In specialist ICT lessons, pupils in Year 7 and 8 reach the expected standard in the skills of desktop publishing, using specialist software to present information to an audience and use the Internet to research information. In Year 9 pupils increase their skills and develop good knowledge of spreadsheets and databases and use electronic forms of communication. In Years 10 and 11, pupils extend their knowledge in these skills and work closely to the examination marking criteria to complete their coursework assignments. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of the teachers and show good attitudes to their work.
62. The quality of teaching in ICT lessons is good overall. Two very good lessons were seen during the inspection. In all lessons observed, the very good accommodation, resources and good relationships between pupils and their teachers create very good conditions for learning. Teachers encourage co-operation in lessons and this leads to good behaviour and positive attitudes. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, which enables them to support all pupils effectively as a group and as individuals. Pupils are actively involved in a range of well planned tasks and as a result all pupils learn effectively. However, teachers use only a limited range of strategies to meet the learning needs of pupils who have special educational needs. The teaching extends pupils use of technical language well. Good attention is given to developing skills in numeracy, which is evident mainly when pupils use spreadsheets. In Years 10 and 11, teachers structure the work well, which enables pupils to follow the guidelines of the examination mark scheme well and as a result they gain good marks for each section of the work. Teachers encourage pupils to work independently and provide additional support for them during lunch time and after school to ensure all pupils achieve well.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear vision for the subject, supported by a team of teachers with a shared commitment to maintaining and improving standards. There has been very good improvement in the standard of accommodation and resources and standards have risen from below average to above average by the end of Year

11. Although there is an assessment system in place, there is a need to improve the marking, links to the national curriculum and target setting procedures to enable the department to make better use of more reliable data. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

64. The use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory and is improving because of the headteacher's excellent leadership. In the majority of subjects work is planned and pupils are given the opportunity to apply a range of skills. For example, in English pupils use computers to draft and re-draft their work, present information using specialist software and good use is made of the video to present images, to stimulate creative writing and to support work in drama. In mathematics and science, pupils are taught to use spreadsheets when they log and process the data they produce. These skills as well as computer control technology and computer aided designing are developed in design and technology. However, resources for computer aided manufacturing are not yet provided in school. ICT is used for presenting information and for research in a number of subjects such as geography, history, religious education, design and technology, science, modern foreign languages and physical education. Although there is some use of ICT in art which enable pupils to research their work. It is not yet used effectively as a creative tool.
65. The level of resources is very good overall and teachers are increasing their use of ICT to support pupils' learning. Good use of interactive whiteboards was seen in all areas where they were available to staff and this has had a good impact on both teaching and learning. The ratio of pupils to computers in the school is better than the national average.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of geography that lead to some very good planning and organisation of lessons.
- The attitudes of the pupils to their learning are very good.
- The good leadership and management of the department have delivered very effective improvement since the last inspection.
- A comprehensive range of fieldwork activities has helped to interest pupils in the study of geography.
- Improved access to ICT facilities would enable the good practices seen in the homework to be reinforced in the lessons.

#### **Commentary**

66. Overall standards are in line with national expectations and pupils made good progress from below average standards on entry to the end of Year 9. The GCSE examination A\* to C results in 2002 were below average; however, the 2003 results showed a marked improvement. Overall, pupils achieve well by the end of Year 11. Both boys and girls did better than was anticipated and pupils did well when compared to their grades in many other subjects. Present standards in Years 10 and 11 are average in geography with good achievement.
67. The quality of teaching and learning are good in all years. Lessons are characterised by teachers' very good subject knowledge and very well planned and organised delivery. Teachers use varied strategies to make learning interesting for pupils. There is an emphasis on the use of and interpretation of map skills. Pupils in Year 7 have a good grasp of landforms and land

use. Pupils are confident in the handling of statistical data and they are encouraged to draw effective conclusions from this data. Both specialist rooms are fairly small and there is limited space to handle the large maps. The lessons begin effectively with short starter activities that stress the key phrases and the whole class activity at the end ensures that pupils understand what they have learnt. The department has collaborated with an external consultant to strengthen boys' engagement in lessons, to develop more paired work and to improve pupils' motivation. This has been a very successful strategy and has contributed to improved teaching supporting much improved pupils' learning. All groups make good progress in lessons as the material and activities are well matched to their capabilities. For example, a low attaining Year 7 class developed a very good understanding of where Eastbourne is in relation to the world and also what are the main physical features of the town.

68. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear vision focused on further improvement and this is reflected in the comprehensive improvement plan. The schemes of work for all years have been updated and a strong potential contribution to citizenship identified. Improvement is very good and the major issues of the last inspection have been carefully addressed. In particular teaching and learning have considerably improved and these have strengthened the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils which are now strength of the department.

## **History**

Provision in history is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the national average at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Teachers make excellent use of a very wide range of resources.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching.
- The quality of leadership is good and provides a clear vision.
- In order to further raise standards, the department should review its strategies for teaching the use of historical sources.
- There is scope to target pupils on the GCSE examination C/D grade borderline.

## **Commentary**

69. Results in the GCSE examination were just above average in 2002 and those for 2003 show a continuation of this trend. When pupils enter the school, standards are below average. Standards are above average by the end of Year 9, representing very good achievement. This applies to pupils throughout the ability range. Pupils write well with increasing confidence. This can be seen, for example, in their work on factory conditions. Standards in historical interpretation are a particular strength. By the end of Year 11, pupils opting to take history at GCSE attain above average standards and achieve well. Pupils write well as a result of the support they receive from teachers.
70. Teaching and learning are good in all years. A substantial amount of teaching is very good and occasionally it is excellent. A particular strength of the department is the way in which teachers use resources such as historical portraits to help pupils understand that people interpret history differently. As a consequence, pupils make rapid gains in their understanding and also develop an enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and a higher than average proportion opt to take the subject in the GCSE examination. The pace of learning is always brisk and clear teaching and learning objectives are met. Teachers make very good use of questions to engage pupils' interest and also to check and reinforce their understanding. This was evident, for example, in a lower set Year 7 lesson where the teacher was helping pupils to understand how historians make use of sources of evidence to make conclusions. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave and pupils

react very positively to these. In order to further raise standards, the department should review its strategies for teaching pupils to analyse historical sources. There is also scope to target pupils who are on the C/D borderline. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs very effectively so that all are able to achieve at least, and often better, than might be expected. Teachers make very good use of resources such as the interactive white board.

71. The new head of department has made a very good start. Leadership so far has been very good with clear vision and direction. Management is strong and planning is exemplary. The departmental file on numeracy, for example, contains activities on Roman sums and on measuring the dimensions of an air-raid shelter. There are similar files for literacy, citizenship and information technology. The next stage should be an analysis of standards and achievement. Teachers work very well as a team and there is clear evidence of the sharing of both good practice and concerns. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Provision is greatly enhanced by the resources produced by the department. These are of a very high standard.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

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

#### Strengths and weaknesses

- Very good resources and accommodation create a very good learning environment.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils are having a good impact on learning.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their work.
- Pupils do not apply the full design process to their GCSE coursework.
- Marking, assessment and target setting is underdeveloped.
- The range of strategies used with pupils with special educational needs is insufficient.

#### Commentary

72. GCSE examination results were well below average in 2002 and in 2003 they show slight improvement. There is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Within the technology subjects, pupils gained better results in resistant materials. Overall, however, pupils achieve less well in design and technology than they do in other subjects.
73. By the end of Years 9 and 11, standards are below average. Year 9 pupils design and make products in a good range of materials and master a range of formal drawing and sketching skills. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement as pupils join the school with below average standards. Their numeracy skills are below average and pupils show only a limited range of writing skills. Year 11 pupils work with interest and learn to apply the process of designing. However, they are not secure in following the full process, in particular not showing how their research has influenced their designing. As a result they lose valuable marks for their coursework. Well-developed graphics skills help pupils to enhance the quality and presentation of their work in all material areas. All pupils show satisfactory achievement in Years 10 and 11.
74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some good and very good lessons were seen during the inspection. In Years 7 to 9, lessons consist of a good range of activities which helps to maintain the active interest of pupils, and provides the challenge for them to master the practical skills they encounter. Very good accommodation and range of resources as well as good relationships in the classroom create a very good learning environment. At this stage however, there is a lack of rigour to broaden and strengthen pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy. The range of strategies used with pupils who have special educational needs also requires further development. Pupils benefit well from specialist teaching. This was particularly

evident in a Year 9 electronics lesson where pupils were designing and making an electronic circuit for a timer. The teacher provided a good basic structure to enable pupils to work at their own pace and underpinned the practical tasks with the relevant theory. This resulted in a very enthusiastic, well-motivated group, with many pupils expressing their enjoyment of the work. In Years 10 and 11, pupils increase their skills in making although as a result of staffing difficulties, the quality of practical work in the groups affected has suffered. However, pupils need to follow the examination mark criteria more closely in order to secure the full range of marks for each section of their coursework. Teachers provide good individual support for pupils and as a result pupils achieve satisfactorily. The use of ICT to raise standards further is underdeveloped as a result of the low number of computers in the new technology computer room.

75. Both leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The head of department has established good working relationships amongst staff particularly through a period of staffing difficulties and the refurbishment of the department. There is satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. However, marking and assessment is underdeveloped and more use could be made of data analysis to target work more precisely to pupils' needs, and to evaluate the impact of what is provided.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- GCSE examination results are above average at the highest grades. Pupils achieve high standards in painting and relate their work well to contemporary art.
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good and enables all pupils to achieve well. Visual resources are used effectively so that pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of art and design.
- Pupils have good attitudes in art and design, enjoy their lessons and behave very well. They reflect on their own and others' learning and this helps them to improve the standard of their work and achieve good results.
- Learning is well planned to promote pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- The department should make better use of assessment information in setting targets for improvement.
- There are inadequate opportunities for the creative use of ICT.

### **Commentary**

76. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are above average. In 2002 GCSE examinations results at both A\* to C and at the highest grades are above the national average. Results at GCSE A\* to C in 2003 fell to the national average but improved in the highest grades. The current Year 11 pupils should achieve similar or higher standards next year and are achieving well. Year 10 pupils achieve well and produce impressive study sheets inspired by the theme of art and society. In Year 11 the research into self portraiture by the highest achieving pupils is very good, with much work of a highly personal nature making good connections to the work of many modern artists. Sketchbooks are used well for a variety of purposes and many are lively documents of the processes and experiments that they have undertaken. The Internet is well used for research on art but there is limited evidence of ICT being used for creative purposes.
77. Many pupils enter the school with underdeveloped art and design skills but by the end of Year 9 they achieve well to reach the national expectation. Some pupils exceed this and achieve above average standards. At the start of Year 7 teachers assess skills in drawing, painting and knowledge of the subject in an initial project and this gives them information on entry from

which to plan. In Year 8 pupils learn about Aboriginal culture, make highly expressive paintings inspired by the Expressionist artists and improve their observational drawing skills in still life using charcoal and chalk. In Year 9 pupils work collaboratively to design CD Covers building on ideas learnt from contemporary graphics, using fragments of patterns and shapes selected by others to create effective and exciting designs. In Years 7 to 9 attention needs to be given to a more systematic teaching of drawing skills.

78. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is consistently very good and well matched to the demands of the GCSE examinations. At Key Stage 3, teaching is satisfactory overall with many good features. One lesson was unsatisfactory due to significant numbers of pupils being distracted when teaching was focused elsewhere. In most lessons a variety of teaching strategies and learning resources are very well employed so that pupils engage in their work effectively and achieve high standards. Teachers create a positive ethos, generally manage pupils' behaviour well and as a consequence learning is enjoyable and purposeful. Assessment involves pupils effectively in evaluating their own and others' learning through individual and group discussion but statistical data is not used to help set targets. The quality of display is very high and contributes effectively to learning.
79. The department enjoys energetic and enthusiastic leadership and teachers work well as a team. Leadership and management are good. The schemes of work are well thought out and there is a sound plan for the development of the subject. The emphasis in many units of work on issues and values in society and the way that artists have explored these offers relevance and challenge to which most pupils respond imaginatively and reflectively in discussion and annotation. This process makes a good contribution to their moral, social, cultural and literacy development. Standards in art and design since the last inspection remain positive and pupils continue to achieve well. Progress in improving the provision for ICT in the subject is barely satisfactory and remains to be addressed.

## **Music**

Provision for music is **good**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are enthusiastic learners.
- Standards in Years 7 to 9 have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Extra-curricular provision is good.
- Pupils' application of ICT in Years 7 to 9 is limited.

### **Commentary**

80. Standards are above average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11. The difference in standards is mainly due to staffing difficulties which included a period when no head of department was in post. Boys and girls of all aptitudes are now achieving well. Pupils show good skills in performing in ensembles from written music and in improvisations.
81. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have good subject knowledge. Teachers use assessment data well in Years 7 to 9 and this is a major contributory factor to the good progress made by pupils. However, assessment procedures in Years 10 and 11 are not consistently rigorous and a number of pupils are not always aware of what they must do to improve their work. Provision for talented musicians is good and a wide range of opportunities is provided for them to extend their expertise. However, pupils have limited opportunities to apply their ICT and this aspect of the curriculum is weak especially in Years 7 to 9.

82. Some lessons were inspirational. A Year 7 class participated very enthusiastically to an excellent vocal question and answer exercise. Year 8 pupils developed good performing and composition skills and responded well to different styles of teaching. Year 9 pupils performed exceptional blues and melodic sequences.
83. Music is an important feature in the school and in the wider community. A large number of pupils participate in extra-curricular activities. The choirs, band, steel pans and hand bell groups have had an impressive list of engagements within the local community. The choir has toured abroad. A large number of pupils receive instrumental tuition.
84. Good leadership and management, the enthusiasm and commitment of teaching staff and good support from senior managers, are raising standards in music. The department has made good progress since the last inspection.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good quality teaching and learning results in good progress in lessons and good achievement by pupils at the end of Year 9 and Year 11.
- Improving standards in GCSE – provisional results for 2003 show the proportion of pupils with A\* to C grade passes doubled from 2002.
- Leadership is effective but the quality of management is less so because there are no formal responsibilities for staff in the department other than that of head of department.
- Very good extra curricular provision extends pupils' learning and, as a result, individuals and teams achieve well.

### **Commentary**

85. Results in the GCSE examination were below the national average in 2002. Provisional results in 2003, however, show a considerable improvement in the proportion of A\* to C grades. There were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in 2002.
86. By the end of Year 9 standards are average for the majority of pupils. In table tennis, boys have made good progress in the short time they have taken the activity. The more able use a range of strokes and add spin appropriately. The use of footwork is not yet developed well for many hence the quality of their play is not yet as strong as it could be. In basketball, girls' standards are good. Individual skills are secure for the majority and, in small-sided games, the more capable use the lay-up shot effectively. All pupils have a secure understanding of the principles and procedures of warm-up and are developing their skills and techniques well. Achievement by the end of Year 9 is good for all groups of pupils because good quality teaching has improved their standards, which on entry were below what was expected for their age. By the end of Year 11 standards are good, particularly in health related fitness work. Pupils coach one another effectively and ensure correct techniques are being used. Hence the quality of their performance is improved. In Year 11, GCSE pupils have produced some good quality personal exercise plans and have a secure knowledge and understanding of sports related anatomy and physiology. Individual pupils from across all years have achieved representative honours at district level in association football and at district and county level in basketball. The under-12 netball and under-16 association football teams are district champions. The under-16 girls' basketball squad are south east England champions and the under-14 girls' team were recent national finalists. This success is remarkable when considering the lack quality indoor accommodation for basketball.
87. The quality of teaching and learning are good across all years and result in good progress in all lessons. Teachers have a very good command of the activities being taught. The good quality

teaching is typified by pace, purpose, progression and challenge. There is consistent insistence on high standards of behaviour and pupils are involved in their learning through pair, group work and, in the best practice, through peer evaluation. In a Year 11 GCSE health related fitness lessons, for example, pupils were involved in teaching their peers the importance of correct technique to improve performance. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, which helps create a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. All groups of pupils are therefore able to make good progress in their learning. Teachers circulate well in lessons and their effective use of praise and constructive criticism makes pupils aware of their capabilities. The quality of marking of GCSE theory work is inconsistent and pupils are not always being clearly told what they need to do to make further progress. However, pupils are involved in target setting for the GCSE course.

88. Leadership is effective and provides a good vision and sense of purpose for the subject. All pupils follow accredited courses in Year 11 and all Year 10 pupils now follow a GCSE course. However, the limited range and quality of indoor accommodation restricts the range of activities that can be offered. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

### **Dance**

89. The proportion of pupils attaining A\* to C grade passes in GCSE dance in 2002 was in line with the national average. Provision results in 2003 show a considerable increase in A\* to C grade passes. Three lessons were observed, one in Year 11 and two in Year 9. The quality of teaching and learning are good and, as a result, all pupils make good progress. There are very good links with the PE department and assessment is shared effectively.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Personal, social and health education**

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Personal, social and health education has a high profile in the school. The programme has been further developed since the last inspection and is now taught by form tutors as a separate subject in all years. The scheme of work is lively and relevant for the pupils. There are good links with outside organisations, such as the Fire Service, the police and the local authority. The course meets statutory requirements and deals sensitively with such issues as self awareness, bodily changes, relationships, sex education, alcohol and drug awareness. Teaching is satisfactory, although it can be very good, depending on the quality of relationships between teacher and pupils. Overall, pupils respond well. Personal and social education makes a good contribution to the overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Citizenship**

The provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject does not meet the National Curriculum requirements.
- No subject scheme of work or subject improvement plans are in place and the omission of these planning tools have led to a serious lack of rigour and emphasis in teaching the subject.
- There are a wide range of community linked activities that have the potential for making a good contribution to a planned and organised citizenship curriculum.

### **Commentary**

90. Currently citizenship is delivered through the personal, social and health education programme. There is only slight evidence of any citizenship activities in most years, with the possible exception of Year 10 where a human rights and citizenship unit is delivered. It is therefore difficult to judge the standards in these years. No lessons were seen during the inspection and no written work was available for scrutiny. As the majority of pupils are not currently following a recognisable or substantial citizenship curriculum, their achievement is unsatisfactory.
91. No teaching and learning was observed during the inspection. A limited monitoring or evaluation of teaching or learning is in place to assess the development of the subject. Initial planning took place in 2001/2002 but this has not been followed up. Heads of year are not aware of their curriculum responsibilities in the delivery of the citizenship units. Consequently delivery is very uneven, for example, with a satisfactory human rights unit in Year 10 but with only three hours a year covering three topics in Year 9. Initially it was anticipated that subject contributions were to be included in the curriculum; however this has not taken place. The recent re-mapping exercise may identify further areas for development into an enhanced curriculum. The school encourages pupils to raise funds, for schools in Africa, and this issue was discussed in a Year 10 tutor group during the inspection. There is potential for incorporating this work into the citizenship scheme. Similarly there are active year councils supporting the school council and this electoral participation is a useful introduction to considering the wider electoral processes. The school has much to do to translate the earlier planning into an effective delivery of citizenship. At present the relationship between the three strands of the curriculum are not clear.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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