

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

**Edington & Shapwick School**

Bridgwater

LEA area : Somerset

Unique Reference Number : 123929

Joint Headteachers : Mr D C Walker

Mr J P Whittock

Reporting inspector : Mr L W Lewis

T11971

Dates of inspection : 13 - 17 October 1997

Under OFSTED contract number: 401171

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

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## Information about the school

Name of School : Edington & Shapwick

Type of school : Special

Type of control : Independent

Age range of pupils : 8 to 17

Gender of pupils : Mixed

Names of Joint Headteachers : Mr D C Walker and Mr J P Whittock

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Name of Proprietor : Mr D Atkinson

Local Education Authority Area : Somerset

School Register Number : 123929

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Mr Philip Garnham Team Inspector	Science; Design & Technology; Special Educational Needs	
Mr Graham Matthews Team Inspector	Music; Religious Education	Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development
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## **Main findings**

- 1 Edington and Shapwick School is a good school, providing a wide range of opportunities for developing the academic, physical and social needs of boys and girls, aged 8 to 17 years, with specific learning difficulties.

### **Educational Standards Achieved**

- 2 Judgements on pupils' attainment across the school are based on National Curriculum Tests in English, mathematics and science, where they were taken, lesson observation, a scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussion with them to assess their knowledge and understanding. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are significantly below the national average. It is an outstanding achievement of the school that examination results at the age of 16 compare favourably with national averages. Attainment, therefore, is satisfactory overall; it understandably remains lower in English at age 16, but is good in both mathematics and science.
- 3 The progress pupils make is good, particularly at Key Stage 4, where it is very good. Progress is satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons and in 44 per cent of these it is good and in 7 per cent it is very good and well reflects the quality of teaching in these lessons. The good rate of progress results from extensive diagnostic testing of language and numeracy, with subsequent remediation work enhancing the learning across the curriculum.
- 4 Progress in English is good. In speaking and listening pupils make good progress in expressing their ideas clearly and participate in group discussions with confidence. In reading, progress is good in accuracy, fluency and comprehension. In writing, all pupils improve in their spelling and handwriting skills. For some pupils with the most severe difficulties, progress is understandably slow and attainment is low.
- 5 In mathematics, progress is good and at Key Stage 4 it is very good. Most pupils enter the school with attainment levels well below average and quickly improve. Techniques are regularly re-inforced, using a variety of approaches, particularly in Years 9 to 11, and significantly contribute to progress. Pupils in Years 5 to 6 become increasingly confident using concrete techniques, progressing to paper and pencil calculations.
- 6 Progress in science is good at Key Stage 4 and satisfactory at both Key Stages 2 and 3. Manipulative skills are good and practical accuracy develops well and becomes more precise, but investigative skills are less well developed. Pupils with higher prior attainment make good progress but lower prior attainers make unsatisfactory progress in single science.
- 7 At present the school is not meeting requirements for the end of Key Stage 2 national tests and reporting results to parents with comparative data. Progress in art, geography, history and physical education is good, reflecting the high quality of the teaching in these subjects. In design technology and French progress is satisfactory, although it is unsatisfactory in the former at Key Stage 4. Progress in information technology is good in Years 9 to 11, with good use of spreadsheets, but little opportunity of using control devices. In Years 4 to 8 progress is satisfactory, with pupils able to demonstrate basic computer skills. Progress in music is limited by the lack of a planned whole school music curriculum. In religious education satisfactory progress is made in Year 9, but elsewhere it is limited by the lack of a planned curriculum.
- 8 Pupils make very good progress in their personal, social and health development, improving their social and independence skills as they progress through the school. Good standards are achieved on leaving school and pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education or employment.

### **Quality of Education**

- 9 The curriculum provided at Edington and Shapwick School meets statutory requirements in all subjects except design technology, where the curriculum is narrow and lacking in breadth and the use of materials. Music is only taught to Year 9 pupils and does not cover the Programmes of Study. In physical education, dance is not offered at Key Stage 2. French is being re-established in the curriculum, but is currently not offered to pupils in Year 10. Religious education is taught only at Year 9, and is not working to an agreed syllabus. There is a good school curriculum policy but subject policies and schemes of work vary in quality. A good range of subjects is offered as options for GCSE in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is well balanced at secondary level, with additional time allocated to English and the development of literacy skills. Pupils' personal, social and health education programme offers good opportunities for personal guidance. Arrangements for the provision of sex education and drugs education is given good and adequate attention. Careers education receives high priority and offers well planned provision. There are good links with the careers service and with local business, which provides pupils with valuable and interesting work placements. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of visiting speakers. Links with local schools, and between sites, are not well developed, but there are good links with a local college of education. All pupils have good access to the curriculum, and day pupils benefit from the structured provision for homework and after-school activities. This provision is extensive, both of recreational pastimes and of activities to address learners' specific difficulties with sequencing and motor control.
- 10 The quality of teaching is sound or better in 93 per cent of lessons with 48 per cent of these being good and 20 per cent very good. In only one per cent of lessons was the teaching poor. The strength of the teaching lies in the close relationships that teachers establish with their pupils. They share their expectations with pupils, help them to progress in their learning and provide care and support for them in their lessons. The workmanlike atmosphere of the learning environment is very much in keeping with the ethos of the school. Teachers are well qualified and have a very good knowledge and understanding of both the subjects and the special educational needs of the pupils they teach. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic. They plan effectively and use a range of appropriate strategies which match objectives to pupils' learning needs. Resources are well used and there is good use of information technology in English, although in general it is not used well in other subjects. Homework/preparation is effectively used to reinforce learning, and that done at school is supervised by pastoral staff and offers the advantage of using the school library and computers.
- 11 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Their positive response to the school environment, and to their lessons is a particular strength. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy almost all of their lessons. The behaviour of pupils is very good. They understand school rules and routines and respond to them. Pupils are polite and well mannered, treating visitors with confidence and courtesy. Their behaviour in lessons contributes positively to achievement. Relationships are a strength of the school and excellent throughout. Pupils feel able to express themselves confidently, listen attentively and respect the opinions, values and beliefs of others. Attendance in lessons is very good. Pupils arrive punctually for the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. The attendance and punctuality of pupils make a positive contribution to attainment and progress.

### **Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

- 12 The school successfully promotes the moral and social development of its pupils, but the development of spiritual and cultural aspects is only satisfactory.
- 13 Spiritual development is promoted through good quality assemblies at both sites, which include a collective act of worship. Year 4 to 8 pupils attend assemblies of very good quality in the adjacent parish church, experiencing music, hymn singing and prayer which reinforce shared values. Pupils in Years 9 to 11 experience good assemblies and participate in prayer. Subjects such as science, history and geography contribute to spiritual education, but this aspect is not well developed in other curriculum areas.
- 14 Pupils' moral development is very well promoted and they have a clear understanding of right and

wrong. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and provide positive role models, emphasising care, concern and respect for one another and for property.

- 15 Pupils work co-operatively and work collaboratively in class and in team games. They support each other and are well mannered and courteous.
- 16 A wide range of extra-curricular activities provide many opportunities for cultural development through visits locally and further afield, for example, an art visit to Turkey. Other cultures are explored in subjects such as history and geography, but an appreciation of other cultures is not well provided for in all curriculum areas.

### **Management and Efficiency**

- 17 The school is led by two joint headteachers with specific and separate roles for the curriculum and for pastoral matters. Parents have a clear understanding of these responsibilities. Pupils are happy and well supported by dedicated, hard working staff within an enriching learning environment. The very positive ethos generated reflects well the high attainment and progress of pupils across the school. Both headteachers have a significant teaching commitment, but plan their time well between sites, ensuring their availability to staff. Staff speak positively about the leadership at the school.
- 18 The emphasis on staff collaboration in identifying pupils' needs, and communicating results to colleagues in order to plan appropriately for pupils' specific learning difficulties is a strength highly valued by parents. Subject co-ordinators manage their responsibilities well to ensure improving standards. Management of subjects across sites, however, is less successful, since there are few opportunities for subject, curriculum development or whole school meetings.
- 19 There is insufficient documentation on school and subject development planning, which is a weakness. Staff do not have job descriptions, and there is no formal appraisal to identify specific training needs. Time is not allocated to staff to fulfil their responsibilities properly. Senior management meetings have a narrow focus, with no agendas or minutes. The proprietors play an active role in the running of the school, and meet regularly with the joint headteachers, especially on matters of finance, staffing and accommodation. They spend considerable time ensuring that planning permission is granted to enable further accommodation to be provided. Planning permission has recently been given to develop the stable block as a performing arts centre.
- 20 Appropriate support is offered to pupils by visiting specialists, including speech and occupational therapists and an educational psychologist. The school is not complying with statutory requirements for statemented pupils in regard to the provision of a modern foreign language in Year 10, music, information technology and physical education (done at Key Stage 2) and the provision of religious education for all pupils.
- 21 The school is well staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced teachers, many of whom have qualifications in teaching pupils with specific learning difficulties. Staff have good access to professional development opportunities, but these are not always targeted on curriculum development or the school's needs. Induction arrangements for new, newly qualified teachers are very good.
- 22 The overall accommodation is satisfactory, although some teaching areas are cramped when larger numbers are taught, but specialist subjects are well catered for at secondary level. Plans are in hand for further improvements to include a performing arts centre, which will also provide space for assemblies; the dining area at Shapwick is cramped. There are good outdoor facilities and a very good sports hall. Resources are good and teachers are imaginative and resourceful in producing effective learning materials. Information technology resources are good throughout the school.
- 23 The school's fees are very reasonable and expenditure of £9,402 per pupil is similarly reasonable. The good educational and boarding provision is well used. The lack of medium and long term

development plans is a weakness in financial planning over the longer term, except for accommodation needs. Staff are not involved in whole school development planning, and do not contribute effectively to the financial planning process. The use of a large number of part-time teachers, over half the total, affects the quality of longer term planning. In addition, the absence of job descriptions results in insecurity, a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities and, combined with the part-time nature of many posts, staff development is not always effective. Learning resources are well used, but information technology is not exploited fully across the curriculum.

- 24 The day-to-day financial control is very good, rigorously monitored by a part-time bursar, ensuring the school keeps within its allocated budget. There is no formal system, however, to evaluate the cost effectiveness of major spending decisions. Administrative staff effectively support management and staff, and daily administration works well.
- 25 Given the low standards of attainment on entry, the good standards achieved on leaving, the good progress made, the good quality of education provided and the very reasonable unit cost for a school of this type and size, the school gives good value for money.

### **Key issues for action**

- 26 To raise further the standards of attainment, improve pupils' progress and the quality of education provided, the school's management and staff should:
  - ensure that the school fully meets National Curriculum requirements:
    - in music by making provision for all pupils in Years 4 to 9;
    - ensure that a modern foreign language is taken by pupils entering Year 10;
    - in design and technology by increasing the range of contexts and the use of materials;
    - in physical education by providing dance at Key Stage 2;
    - and provide religious education for all pupils;
  - meet statutory requirements for end of Key Stage 2 national tests and report to parents with comparative data;
  - provide opportunities for regular curriculum development meetings to improve continuity and progression between the two schools and within each;
  - improve longer term development planning, and enable staff to be involved in the process;
  - implement fully the pay policy by providing job descriptions for all teachers (and other staff) in order to clarify roles and responsibilities;
  - establish and implement a staff appraisal policy, to identify and meet staff development needs in accordance with the priorities identified in the school development plan.

## **Introduction**

### **Characteristics of the school**

- 27 Edington and Shapwick School is an independent boarding and day school for boys and girls aged 8 to 17 years with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The school is situated on two sites in the villages of Edington (Years 4 to 8) and Shapwick (Years 9 to 17) in rural mid-Somerset. It takes pupils from the United Kingdom and a small number from overseas. There are 167 pupils on roll (130 boys and 37 girls) of whom 47 (40 boys and 7 girls) attend on a day basis. Most pupils are white, although three come from homes where English is not the first language. Ninety-one of the pupils have a statement of special educational need and have severe language deficiency, despite average or above capability. At entry, pupils' attainment is well below national age expectations. Most of the statemented pupils are supported by local education authorities with the remainder being funded by their parents.
- 28 The main academic aim of the school is to ensure that pupils achieve the qualifications needed for chosen careers, and to maintain an ethos in which each individual can be happy, secure, valued and fulfilled through their educational, personal and social development.
- 29 The school is staffed by 13 full-time teachers, including the headteacher, and 17 part-time teachers (equivalent to 8.6 full-time). There are also 11 care staff who, with 3 of the teachers, support the boarding provision.

**Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2

for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1996	10	5	15

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	1	1	4
	Girls	0	2	3
	Total	1	3	7
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	7	20	47
	National (SPLD)	3	7	14

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	1	2	3
	Girls	0	2	3
	Total	1	4	6
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	7	27	40
	National			

**Attainment at Key Stage 3<sup>2</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3

for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	27	4	31

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys		8	7
	Girls		0	0
	Total	National Curriculum papers not received for English in 1997	8	7
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School		26	23
	National		6	13
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School		10	3
	National		3	1

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	6	16	12

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

at NC Level 5 or above	Girls	1	0	1
	Total	7	16	13
Percentage at NC level 5 or above	School	23	52	42
	National			
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	3	23	13
	National			

**Attainment at Key Stage 4<sup>3</sup>**

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest  
reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1997	18	3	21

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	2	18	18
	Girls	1	3	3
	Total	3	21	21
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	14	100	100
	National (SPLD)			

**Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions)  
missed through absence for the latest  
complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised Absence	School	1
	National comparative data	
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	

**Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age)  
during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	1
Permanent	0

**Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	24
Satisfactory or better	93
Less than satisfactory	7

<sup>3</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

#### **Attainment and progress**

- 31 Pupils did not take the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum Tests in 1997 and were not sent Key stage 3 English Tests, although those for mathematics and science were taken. For the purpose of judging attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, and for English at the end of Key Stage 3, inspectors have scrutinised teachers' records and pupils' work and in lesson observations, have considered pupils' understanding of concepts, and the standard of work being achieved.
- 32 Pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school, are below the national average and are poor. Base-line assessment in English and mathematics indicates the severity of the literacy and numeracy difficulties of the intake. It is an outstanding achievement of the school that examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 are above national averages. Attainment across the school is satisfactory. It is poor on entry to the school and is good or very good at Key Stage 4. GCSE results show a consistent trend over the past three years. Pupils achieving 5+ A-C grades rose from 21 per cent in 1995 to 23 per cent in 1996. In 1997, 14 per cent of pupils gained 5+ A-C grades and 100 per cent achieved 5+ A-G grades. Percentages for 1995 and 1996 included Year 12 pupils who were re-sitting examinations. The 1997 figure is for Year 11 pupils only. Those achieving 5+ A-G grades rose from 89 per cent in 1995 to 95 per cent in 1996.
- 33 In comparison with the 1996 National Curriculum Tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science, pupils' achievements are well above national figures for similar types of school. Similarly, at Key Stage 3, those achieving at Levels 5 and 6 in mathematics and science were well above national figures for other specific learning difficulties schools. No English test papers for Key Stage 3 were received by the school.
- 34 Progress is satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons and in 44 per cent of these it is good and in 7 per cent it is very good and reflects the quality of teaching in these lessons; the 8 per cent of lessons in which progress is unsatisfactory closely matches those where teaching is also unsatisfactory. The good rate of progress results from the extensive diagnostic testing of language and numeracy, with the subsequent remediation work enhancing the learning across the curriculum.
- 35 Progress in English is good. In speaking and listening, pupils make good progress in expressing their ideas clearly and participate in group discussions with confidence. In reading, progress is good in accuracy, fluency and comprehension. There is an increasing interest in books and in reading for information and entertainment. Pupils enjoy fiction, non-fiction and poetry and approach GCSE with optimism and confidence. Progress in writing is good, with all pupils making improvements in spelling and handwriting. There is also good progress in pupils' ability to use these skills to express and elaborate an idea through poetry and prose. Nevertheless, pupils continue to experience difficulties with both spelling and handwriting.
- 36 The progress made in mathematics is very good. Progress is good throughout Key Stages 2 and 3 and it is very good throughout Key Stage 4. Most pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below average and they quickly begin to improve. The regular re-visiting of techniques, in a variety of contexts, make a significant contribution to progress in numeracy at the Edington site. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 become increasingly confident in using concrete techniques such as Dienes blocks and Cuisinaire rods, moving on to abstract layouts to calculate subtractions and divisions using pen and paper. The provision of a 'fast track' group in Year 10 promotes rapid acquisition of knowledge and skills in key areas such as Pythagoras' theorem and trigonometry.
- 37 At Key Stages 2 and 3 progress in science is satisfactory and at Key Stage 4 it is good.

Manipulative skills are good and practical accuracy develops and becomes more precise. Investigative skills are less well developed and there is a lack of confidence and understanding at Key Stage 2. Pupils with higher prior attainment make good progress, but those with lower prior attainment, taking single science, make unsatisfactory progress with a lack of continuity in the learning.

- 38 Progress in art is good. Pupils at the Edington site acquire skills and understanding of art processes whilst at Shapwick, especially in Years 10 and 11, they use these to produce fine art of a high standard. In design technology, progress is satisfactory for pupils in Years 4 to 9 where they are able to use a range of tools and evaluate their work. In Years 10 and 11, however, progress is unsatisfactory in designing and presenting work using good quality technique. Progress in geography is good, being most evident in Years 8 to 11, although in fieldwork activities in Years 10 and 11 it is very good. Schemes of work enable pupils to acquire knowledge of places and an understanding of geographical processes and skills which are effectively used. Progress in Years 4 to 7 varies between classes, with the continuity of learning less well assured.
- 39 In history progress is good. Pupils develop their understanding of chronology, make gains in their knowledge and understanding of why people acted as they did and why events happened. Older pupils are able to hypothesize and use source materials to draw conclusions. Progress in information technology is good in Years 9 to 11 and satisfactory in Years 4 to 8. Pupils are able to perform the basic computer skills of loading and saving, to and from disk, and accessing programs from within Windows 95. They demonstrate good use of spreadsheets, but have little experience of using control devices. In French, in Years 7, 8 and 9 progress is satisfactory in the understanding and response to the spoken language. Progress of the one pupil in Year 11 is good.
- 40 Music, in the one lesson which was timetabled (Year 9), progress was satisfactory and reflects the lack of a planned whole school music curriculum. Progress in physical education is good throughout the school in team games, athletics and cross-country running. Pupils with co-ordination difficulties are not progressing incrementally through clearly defined targets. In religious education progress in Year 9 is satisfactory with pupils beginning to reflect on their own beliefs and views held by others. Elsewhere progress is limited by the lack of a planned curriculum taught in earlier years.

### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- 41 Attitudes to learning are very good. The positive response of pupils to the school environment, and to their lessons, is a particular strength. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and keen to do well. They enjoy almost all their lessons, listen attentively and respond appropriately to instructions, although there is occasional frustration if these are unclear or work is not sufficiently challenging. Pupils usually focus well on tasks set, although some begin to lose concentration towards the end of lessons, but this improves as they move through the school. They are interested in their progress, respond well to targets set for them and to the high expectations of their teachers. Planning for independent work is sometimes limited; where opportunities occur pupils respond well. There is a positive work ethic in the school.
- 42 The quality of behaviour is very good. School rules and routines are clearly understood and pupils respond accordingly. They are polite and well mannered, treating visitors with confidence and courtesy. Behaviour in lessons contributes positively to achievement. Movement about the site is very orderly. School premises and equipment are treated with respect. The school values responsible behaviour and pupils respond well to the system of rewards. Sanctions are effective in dealing with everyday problems. Where behaviour causes concern an individual approach is adopted, involving parents where appropriate. Exclusion is used only as a last resort and the procedures for exclusion have recently been formalised. In the last school year there was one fixed term exclusion. Pupils are confident they will not be bullied. Incidents between them are few and usually of a minor nature; they are always taken seriously by staff and dealt with promptly.

- 43 Relationships are a strength of the school and excellent throughout. Staff and pupils demonstrate respect and consideration for each other, enabling constructive relationships to develop. Pupils feel able to express their views confidently, listen attentively to each other and respect the opinions, values and beliefs of other people. They are able to work well together. The high quality of relationships extends to the boarding provision where tolerance, respect and mutual support is evident.
- 44 Extra-curricular activities, such as debating, develop confidence in expressing views and opinions. Pupils gain understanding of life and work beyond school through such activities as community service, work experience, surveys, Duke of Edinburgh Award and visits to the magistrates court. Year 12 is presently rehearsing a Christmas concert for elderly people in the community. Across all age groups, pupils effectively discharge responsibilities for everyday routines, for example, preparing for and clearing up from meals. The ethos is one of care and concern for others and pupils respond well to this. Prefects exercise supervisory and disciplinary duties sensibly and with confidence. Pupils enjoy and value residential experiences and the exploration of social issues through their personal and social education programme. The personal development of pupils throughout the school is very good.

### **Attendance**

- 45 During the week of inspection attendance in lessons was observed to be very good. Pupils arrive punctually for the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. Their movement between classrooms is accomplished in a purposeful manner. Lessons begin on time. Recording of attendance for the last reporting year was largely informal and no accurate figures are available. The attendance policy which was introduced at the beginning of the current school year is not yet consistently applied. The attendance and punctuality of pupils make a positive contribution to attainment and progress.

### **Quality of education provided**

#### **Teaching**

- 46 The quality of teaching is good with a very small number of lessons having shortcomings. The strength of the teaching lies in the close relationships that teachers establish with their pupils. They share their expectations with pupils, help them to progress in their learning and provide care and support for them in their lessons. The ambience created in the learning environment is very much in keeping with the ethos of the school.
- 47 Teachers are well qualified and have a very good knowledge and understanding of both the subjects and the special educational needs of the pupils they teach. Teachers are confident and enthusiastic and their expectations of pupil behaviour is excellent. They plan effectively and use a range of appropriate strategies which match objectives to pupils' learning needs. Resources are well used in general and there is good use of information technology in English, although in general it is not used well in other subjects. The lack of specific targets in the individual education plans make it difficult for teachers to use assessment which is focused on pupils' learning needs. Homework preparation is effectively used to reinforce learning, and that done at school is supervised by pastoral staff and offers the advantage of using the school library and computers.
- 48 The quality of teaching in English is good and at times it is inspirational. It is well supported by the excellent base-line assessment and the high quality use of 'Word Attack' for remediation. Teachers' love of their subject is conveyed to the pupils, many of whom have an initial aversion to the printed word, and they develop an interest in books and in reading. Pupils' work is displayed in all classrooms, but the presentation of the displays is often poor and does not reflect celebrations of the considerable individual achievements.

- 49 In mathematics, the quality of teaching across the school is mostly good, often very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers often demonstrate a very positive combination of good business-like discipline and a caring approach, especially when talking through targets of the week with young pupils. Good use is made of questioning to bring a large number of pupils into discussion and check understanding. Teachers often make appropriate references to real-life situations such as cutting up a piece of wood for division, but do not make sufficient use of historical context to bring the subject to life, for example, when referring to Pythagoras and Pascal. Some teachers do not make sufficient use of information on prior attainment as in one Year 10 lesson where there was no knowledge of Key Stage 3 test outcomes. There are long sections of unmarked work in some exercise books.
- 50 The quality of teaching in science is good. It is sound at Key Stage 2 and good in both Key Stages 3 and 4. In the latter, teaching is characterised by a good command of the subject. Lessons are well planned and methods and organisation are particularly appropriate for pupils with specific learning difficulties. There is an emphasis on oral work and presentations. Questioning is very good and there is good rapport with the pupils. The teaching of Attainment Target 2 in biology, especially at Key Stage 4, is less effective, with inappropriate pace and challenge for the most able at Key Stages 3 and 4.
- 51 The teaching of art is very good. Time is spent illustrating the properties of new resources prior to investigating a range of techniques for their application or use. In design technology, teaching is sound and it is good at Key Stages 2 and 3. Here clear objectives are set and prompt intervention and appropriate questioning ensures pupil progression. The good rapport established promotes interest and enthusiasm for the subject, which is supported by good assessment and formative marking. A weak command of the subject is, on occasion, leading to a lack of confidence and appropriate intervention. At Key Stage 4, unclear objectives and expectations for learning, understanding and skills result in slow progress being made. Teaching in geography is good throughout. Lessons are characterised by clear objectives, good exposition, careful questioning and an obvious enthusiasm and passion for the subject. History teaching is very good across the school, and especially so in Years 8 to 11/12, where all the teaching is delivered by a specialist teacher and in a Year 6 class, taught by an enthusiast for the subject. In these lessons, teachers make effective use of artefacts and resources, for example, tape recording and letters about the Globe Theatre in Year 6, and original maps of Shapwick village following a visit to the Somerset Records Office. The quality of teaching in information technology is good. High expectations are set for the pupils with constant, positive feedback, and answers to questions which are given in a clear and understandable manner which acknowledge their particular learning difficulties.
- 52 Teaching in French is good. Lessons are very well planned and provide opportunities to follow taped material and a range of games activities to promote and consolidate vocabulary. However, there is little use of role play to develop conversation, although information technology through CD ROM is planned, but is not yet available. Only one lesson of music is timetabled, but the quality of teaching of singing observed is good. Lessons proceed at a good pace and are structured to provide choice. The quality of teaching in physical education is good, and sometimes very good, in Years 9 to 11, but is unsatisfactory, and occasionally poor, in Years 4 to 8. In the better lessons, teachers demonstrate good coaching skills, give clear instructions and review and evaluate performance. At the Edington site a gymnastics lesson followed an inappropriate activity which resulted in a loss of control and behaviour. Teachers' assessment and recording of pupils individual progress is unsatisfactory and planning for progression, particularly in the junior school is weak. Religious education teaching is sound, but in some lessons the teaching style limits the contribution pupils can make. Little use is made of artefacts and other resources, for example, photographs and maps to help extend pupils' thinking and understanding.

## **The curriculum and assessment**

- 53 The curriculum provided at Edington and Shapwick school meets statutory requirements in English,  
Edington & Shapwick School

mathematics, science, geography, history and art. French is being re-established in the curriculum, but currently is not offered to pupils in Year 10. The subjects that do not meet statutory requirements are design technology, information technology, music and physical education. The design technology curriculum is narrow and lacking in a wide range of contexts and use of materials. In information technology, pupils are not receiving their entitlement at Key Stages 2 and 3. Music is taught only to Year 9 pupils and does not cover all the Programmes of Study. In physical education, dance is not offered at Key Stage 2. Religious education is taught only at Year 9. There is a good school curriculum policy. However, the quality of subject policies and schemes of work is not consistent cross the curriculum. A good range of subjects is offered as options for GCSE study in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum is well balanced at secondary level, with appropriate additional time given to English and the development of literacy skills, which are well used by pupils across a range of curriculum areas. The lack of confidence of a significant minority of teachers also means that information technology is insufficiently used to support pupils' specific learning difficulties across the curriculum. Subject co-ordination between the two sites is not well developed in many subjects.

- 54 The main focus of provision for pupils in Year 12 is the improvement of grades gained for previous GCSE examinations. pupils also spend one day of each week at a local college of further education following a range of courses. Some Year 12 pupils require an additional year of examination course work following intensive help for their language retardation.
- 55 There is a school policy on assessment setting out useful principles for practice. The use and usefulness of assessment varies considerably between subjects. English, geography, art and mathematics are good examples of subjects which use assessment to design individual programmes of work and inform curriculum planning. Subject reports to parents tend to focus on work covered and pupils' responses, rather than pupils' achievements. All pupils have well documented individual education plans, but in most cases there is insufficient detail to provide specific curriculum guidance. Annual reviews which are instigated by local authorities take place, but there are some statements where reviews are not requested by authorities and these are not undertaken by the school. There are satisfactory arrangements for Key Stage 3 national tests, but Key Stage 2 tests did not take place in 1997. Arrangements for the setting of homework/preparation are very good, with access for the boarders to the library and information technology. Supervision of these sessions is also very good.
- 56 The provision for personal, social and health education is good, and adequate attention is given to a range of important issues including, sex education, inter-personal relationships, drugs education and careers. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of visiting speakers. Links with local schools and between sites are not well developed, but there are good links with a local college of further education.
- 57 All pupils have good access to the curriculum, and most day-pupils benefit both from the structured provision for homework preparation and from the after-school activities. These extra- curricular activities are excellent, providing recreational pastimes and activities to address learners' specific difficulties with sequencing and motor control. During the week of the inspection, eighteen activities were provided which included badminton, mah-jong, caving, rugby, cross-country running and classic films. A further seven activities were provided, for which pupils had to pay, such as American line dancing, dry slope skiing and piano lessons.
- 58 Careers guidance is included within the personal, social and health education programme which benefits from contributions from a range of visiting speakers. There are good links with the careers service and with local businesses, which provide pupils with some valuable and interesting work placements, both locally and near their own homes. Pupils are actively encouraged to widen their experience through holiday jobs.

### **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 59 The school successfully promotes the moral and social development of pupils. The opportunities for cultural and spiritual development are not as well developed, and while there are some opportunities for spiritual and cultural development, these are more limited.
- 60 Spiritual development is promoted through school assemblies which include a collective act of worship. At the Edington site assemblies are of very good quality and are held in the local parish church. Music, hymn singing and prayer reinforce shared values and help pupils to reflect on a particular theme, which during the week of the inspection was 'friendship'. At Shapwick assemblies are good and in the assembly on 'caring', pupils fully participated in prayer and listened attentively. However, the hall does not provide a conducive atmosphere as it is very crowded when all pupils are gathered together. School assemblies promote a strong sense of community and of belonging.
- 61 Science makes a significant contribution to pupils spiritual development and teachers engage pupils in developing a sense of curiosity and wonder for the environment and the world around them. In history and geography, some reference is made to other religions, but religious education is taught only in Year 9 where pupils are provided with the opportunity to explore their inner feelings. Spiritual development is not effectively promoted or planned for throughout the whole curriculum.
- 62 Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, in a school where the emphasis is on rewards for positive attitudes. In history, for example, the effects of the enclosures on the poor is used to help pupils investigate the reasons behind people's behaviour in the past and to explore the issue of right and wrong. They know the school's rules and what will happen if they make the choice to break them. Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave towards one another, and the positive role models provided by teaching and care staff promote the moral development of pupils. In personal and social education lessons, pupils discuss issues sensibly and without embarrassment. Opportunities are provided for visits to be made to a local magistrates' court to listen to cases and to discuss them. Behaviour is very good and pupils show respect for each other and for property. In design and technology lessons, for example, pupils work safely, and show respect for each other, the equipment and the resources being used.
- 63 In lessons, pupils can work co-operatively with one another. In physical education, for example, team games are taught in a way which encourages collaboration and team spirit and a great emphasis is made on fair play. Pupils feel that they have someone to talk to if they have a problem. They can make their views known through the School Council and pupils are happy with the way the school responds to the issues which they raise. Pupils like and support each other. They listen to each other and they are interested in what others have to say. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. In the dining room at lunchtime good manners are evident and pupils engage one another in social conversation. Pupils take turns as monitors at breakfast, lunch and dinner times and do their chores willingly and well. The school enhances pupils' confidence and self esteem. Pupils like coming to school.
- 64 At weekends residential pupils can go swimming, to the cinema, cycling, go out for walks in groups and sometimes they attend the family service at church. Pupils recently raised a sum of money for genetic research through a 'Jeans for Genes' activity. Sixth form pupils have been involved in community service at a residential home for the elderly and are currently rehearsing a play to present there at Christmas. In some lessons, pupils learn about past civilisations and cultures, for example, in history through studies of the Romans, Greeks and Egyptians, although opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness and an appreciation of other cultures are not well provided for across the whole curriculum. Although Christian festivals are celebrated by the school, few opportunities are provided which enable pupils to experience the diversity of other cultures or which inform them about the multi-cultural nature of society.

### **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

- 65 Arrangements for the health, safety, well-being and protection of pupils are good overall. The Edington & Shapwick School

excellent relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Staff know and understand their pupils very well indeed, and this strengthens the quality of both informal support and feedback on progress. A range of support services makes appropriate contributions to the work of the school. Pupils are able to discuss their achievements with confidence and know the targets on their individual education plans. Some of these targets are imprecise and do not support planning effectively. There is insufficient subject co-ordination to ensure effective continuity and progression when pupils transfer to Shapwick. Opportunities to extend pupils' self confidence through a range of activities and responsibilities are planned well. The personal, health and social education programme provides good opportunities for personal guidance. Careers education receives high priority and offers well planned provision.

- 66 The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Expectations are high and pupils value the encouragement they receive in all aspects of their life and work at the school. Sanctions are well understood and consistently applied. Where there is cause for concern staff monitor behaviour carefully and involve parents appropriately. There are comprehensive anti-bullying guidelines. Procedures set out in the attendance policy are not consistently followed and registers are not completed as required. Reasons for absence are always sought. There is an appropriate child protection policy and a designated teacher responsible. The number of staff trained in child protection reflects the residential nature of the school very well.
- 67 The school has a health and safety policy and a member of staff has been recently trained in risk assessment. This has not yet been implemented across the school and some areas of risk require attention. For example, in the design technology room, guards are missing from machines, a four phase power supply is below a defective window and the power supply is not locked off when not in use. These, and other points, were notified to the school during the week of inspection. Health and safety issues in boarding houses are kept under constant review by house-parents. All electrical and physical education equipment is checked annually by outside contractors. There is an appropriate number of staff with current first aid qualifications. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and prescribed medicines are appropriate in the boarding houses. There are effective arrangements for communicating first aid information between the boarding houses and the school. First aid boxes held in the school contain items which are not permitted, for example, paracetamol. The school is checked by a fire officer each year whose recommendations are implemented. Fire extinguishers are checked annually and fire alarms tested weekly. Practice evacuations of the premises are held each half term.

### **Partnership with parents and the community**

- 68 The effectiveness of the schools' partnership with its parents is satisfactory. House-parents maintain appropriate contact with the parents of pupils who are resident. They share the problems which occur and the successes celebrated. A regular newsletter provides information about everyday events, and the school ensures that boarding pupils write home regularly. In the Autumn and Summer terms parents receive brief reports. Those issued in the Spring term set out clearly what pupils have studied and their response to the work. The provision of information about what pupils know, understand and can do is reported less consistently. Parents do not receive national comparisons for end of key stage test results. Some other items of statutory information are not routinely communicated, for example, the prospectus does not include information on the complaints procedure, the content and organisation of sex education, details of religious education and collective worship and end of key stage results. Parents generally feel happy with the range of information they receive from the school, but a few would like improved responses to issues raised.
- 69 Pupils are drawn from a large area, many living a considerable distance from the school, making active involvement on a regular basis difficult. They feel staff know their children well and are approachable. They are encouraged to play an active role in annual reviews and discuss targets set. A small number of parents feel that the school could do more to involve them. Care is taken on entry to ensure that homework set does not damage self-esteem. Subsequently there are high

expectations and pupils usually complete the work during the 'prep' period after school. Holiday work is set to ensure that skills acquired are practised and retained. There is a parents' day at the end of each term where staff are available for discussion. Parents are particularly pleased with raised self-esteem, improved confidence and the progress that their children make.

- 70 Boarding pupils attend local churches for family service on Sundays. Members of the church are available for pupils who would like to talk to someone outside the school community. At the Edington site the school has a Guy Fawkes event each year for the village. Older pupils join in village activities, do community service, conduct surveys, go on work experience and do field work. Aspects of the personal, health and social education programme are supported by the community police, a local magistrate and the school nurse. Local businesses contribute to the annual 'work' week. Pupils are currently rehearsing a concert for older members of the community at Christmas. The school's links with its community make a good contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

## **The management and efficiency of the school**

### **Leadership and management**

- 71 The school is led by joint headteachers, each with specific and quite separate roles. One takes responsibility for the curriculum whilst the other deals with pastoral matters. Parents and pupils have a clear understanding of the responsibilities of both and there is no confusion when they need to discuss curriculum or pastoral matters. Pupils are very happy and well supported by dedicated, hard working teaching and care staff, within an enriching educational environment.
- 72 There is a strong emphasis on staff collaboration, first by identifying pupil needs through base-line assessment and then communicating results to colleagues, enabling teaching to be based on a knowledge and understanding of pupils' specific learning difficulties. This is a strength which is highly valued by parents. The joint headteachers both have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. Subject co-ordinators manage their responsibilities well to ensure that standards are improving. However, this is not evident across sites, where in some subjects they work as separate establishments. Few opportunities are available for joint meetings when staff from the two sites can discuss issues as a whole school. Subject documentation is in most cases good. There is a recently produced staff handbook which gives a good overview of procedures in a succinct alphabetic format. Although management and leadership are sound, there are weaknesses, in a lack of documentation, especially in school and subject development planning. The involvement of staff in development planning is not strong, and there is insufficient information in the current planning to identify priorities and to set targets. Not all staff have job descriptions and there is no formal appraisal system to identify specific training needs. Time is not allocated to staff to enable them to do their jobs properly, an example being the reviewing of pupils which was fitted into a morning break. There is a lack of formalised staff, curriculum development and co-ordinators' meetings. Senior management meetings have a narrow focus with no agenda, where policy and planning matters are discussed with other senior staff, and no minutes are kept.
- 73 There is no formal method of monitoring and evaluating teaching, although the headteacher (curriculum) is fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses at both sites. There is no governing body, but the proprietors play an active role in the running of the school. One of them is time-tabled to hear weaker readers on a weekly basis and another, with responsibility for financial control, visits weekly to discuss and exchange information on buildings and finance with the joint headteachers. These meetings are not always minuted, but are regarded as an important means of exchanging information. Shapwick Manor, being a listed building, poses many planning problems on which the proprietors spend considerable time. Meetings between the joint headteachers and the proprietors, which are minuted, give a good indication of the depth of debate on staffing matters and the planning to extend facilities through the building adaptation programme.

- 74 There is a very positive ethos which reflects the high attainment and progress across the school.

Attitudes are very good and relationships are excellent. The joint headteachers oversee the implementation and promotion of equal opportunities and high achievement for all pupils. Appropriate support is offered to pupils with particular special needs, at both sites, by visiting speech and occupational therapists and an educational psychologist. Although the school complies with the relevant legislation with regard to equality of opportunity, it is not offering French in Year 10 and religious education to all years; this is acknowledged by the school and will be addressed. National Curriculum requirements are not being fully met in music, information technology, design technology and physical education.

## **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

### **Staffing**

- 75 The school is well staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. The staff work very hard, reflecting their commitment to the school. Many teachers have appropriate special educational needs qualifications and have a clear understanding of the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties. The school is well served by the speech therapist and by visiting specialists.
- 76 Teachers do not have job descriptions and there are no current arrangements for appraisal. All staff have good access to professional development and take good advantage of available courses, but these are not always specific to curriculum development or the needs of the school. Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers are very good, and teachers newly appointed to the school are well supported by all staff.

### **Accommodation**

- 77 Accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms are neat and tidy and suitable for small teaching groups. Teaching areas are sometimes cramped when larger numbers of pupils are being taught. Specialist bases at the Shapwick site are appropriate to the needs of the curriculum; the Church Farm building provides a good art base and accommodation for geography. The renovation of the remainder of the Church Farm site, together with the planned development of the stable block to create a performing arts centre, and the boys changing facilities being built at Edington will enhance the quality of accommodation the school provides. Shapwick Manor provides inadequate accommodation for assemblies; the school is addressing this and assemblies will be held in the performing arts centre when it is completed. The Shapwick dining room is sometimes cramped. Libraries on both sites are centrally situated and provide suitable accommodation for study. Outdoor facilities and areas for pupils to use during breaks and lunch times are good. The quality of display varies and pupils' work is not always well presented in displays. Very good quality display is evident in some classrooms and the dining room at the Edington site. There is inadequate storage space in some areas of the school.

### **Resources**

- 78 Resources throughout the school are good. Teachers in many curriculum areas are imaginative and resourceful in producing effective learning materials and acquiring resources from a wide range of sources, recognising that text books are not always appropriate to the needs of all pupils. Both libraries are frequently used by pupils, but the range of books is limited and they are not well presented. Information technology resources throughout the school are good and are currently being developed to support the curriculum.

## **The efficiency of the school**

- 79 There are 167 pupils on roll and of these 91 have statements of special educational need and are funded by their local education authority. One hundred and twenty are boarders and the rest attend Edington & Shapwick School

daily. The annual fees for boarding are £10,452 at Edington and £11,091 at Shapwick and for day pupils £7,173 at Edington and £7,530 at Shapwick. These fees are low compared with other similar schools. The expenditure per pupil is £9,402. The educational and boarding provision is good, is well used, and there are plans to improve the accommodation further.

- 80 Development planning is at an early stage, and the areas for development which have been identified in the short term lack detail and have not been costed in the plan. The accommodation needs of the school, however, are being planned for and costs are identified. There is no longer term development plan which addresses curriculum and staff development needs or the resources required to support the work of staff. An example of this is the need for staff training in information technology in order to exploit fully the computers recently purchased at a cost of £20,000. Subject co-ordinators have their own views on the development of their curriculum area, but plans are not always formally recorded and they tend to plan in isolation. At present staff are not involved in whole school development planning and are not effectively contributing to the financial planning process. The use of a large number of part-time teachers, more than half the total, also affects the quality of longer term planning. Subject co-ordinators have insufficient non-contact time to develop and monitor provision across all years and, in particular, across the two sites.
- 81 All staff are mostly deployed efficiently and effectively, and good use is made of teachers' strengths. However, the use of part-time staff has an effect on the allocation of responsibilities and appropriate expectations. There are no job descriptions and consequently roles and responsibilities are unclear. Responsibilities are sometimes taken on to fill a gap in the system, but without a clear brief of what is expected. A result is often a feeling of insecurity on the part of staff and a lack of clarity in terms of expectations on the part of management. The lack of job descriptions places unnecessary stress on staff who, in consequence, are not always used in the most effective and efficient way. Education support staff are not employed to assist in the preparation of teaching materials and resources, in particular in science and practical subjects, which makes extra demands on teachers who are often involved in after school activities or residential duties if employed on a permanent contract. Learning resources and the accommodation are well used, but information technology is not exploited fully across the curriculum, often as a result of the lack of confidence or expertise of teachers. Individual pupils, however, make good use of information technology to support their specific learning difficulties, especially in the presentation of their work.
- 82 The day-to-day financial control is very good. The part-time bursar rigorously monitors all expenditure and ensures the school keeps within its allocated budget. This rigour is matched by a determination to provide high quality education at a reasonable cost. There is no formal system, however, to evaluate the cost effectiveness of major spending decisions. The administrative staff effectively support management and teachers, by dealing with orders, reception duties, correspondence, pupil reviews and pupils' transport arrangements. The daily administration is good.
- 83 Given the low standards of attainment on entry, the good standards achieved on leaving, the good progress made, the good quality of education provided and the very reasonable unit cost for a school of this type and size, the school gives good value for money.

## **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### **English, mathematics and science**

#### **English**

- 84 Attainment at the end of all key stages is good, given the specific difficulties with literacy experienced by these pupils.
- 85 In speaking and listening, pupils make good progress in expressing ideas clearly and participate in group discussions with confidence. They show good understanding of literature texts and ask intelligent and perceptive questions. They are able to relate events in literature to their own experiences, and show sensitivity to their own feelings and those of other people. This work is well supported by the speech and language therapist who works with pupils experiencing the greatest difficulties.
- 86 On entry to the school pupils' ability in reading is very low and they have often developed very poor attitudes to reading as a result of earlier failures. Progress in reading comprehension, accuracy and fluency is good, although attainment for a few pupils with severe problems remains low. Many pupils take an increasing interest in books and in reading for information and entertainment. They are able to enjoy fiction, non-fiction and poetry. However, the presentation of books in the libraries on both sites takes poor account of the difficulties which closely packed books, with minimal labelling guidance, might present to pupils with specific learning difficulties. The English literature option at Key Stage 4 is popular and well attended. Pupils approach their GCSE subjects in English with optimism and confidence.
- 87 In writing, all pupils make good improvements in spelling and handwriting, though for a few pupils with the severest difficulties, progress is very slow and attainment remains at the lower end of national norms. The use of computers for literacy skills development is good, but poor for a wider range of purposes. Most pupils develop the ability to express and elaborate on ideas through both poetry and prose writing. The standard of many classroom displays does not fully reflect or celebrate the often quite considerable achievements of the pupils.
- 88 Key Stage 2 national tests were not taken in 1997 and Key Stage 3 test papers in English were not received by the school. In GCSE examinations in 1997, 59 per cent of pupils achieved grades A-C in English literature and 12 per cent in English language. Pupils make good use of their increasing literacy skills in a wide range of other curriculum areas, for example, in the study of original sources in history. Excellent examples of linking reading and writing to the teaching of art at Edington was a feature of the lessons. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are widely used to promote understanding through quality questioning and discussion.
- 89 At all key stages, pupils demonstrate good progress in attitudes, behaviour and personal development compared with their point-of-entry to the school when they are frequently demoralised, insecure and lacking in self-esteem.
- 90 Behaviour in lessons is very good. They are courteous to one another, their teachers, and other adults. Care is taken of personal and school property. Pupils work well collaboratively, and are supportive of one another's efforts and understanding of one another's difficulties.
- 91 Pupils are interested in their work which they undertake with care and sustained concentration. They are increasingly confident to ignore their mistakes and produce an initial draft of work based on ideas. They are subsequently able to correct the majority of mistakes themselves.
- 92 With the development of their literacy skills, pupils are able to develop their capacity for independent personal study. A very positive attitude is shown towards the setting of homework.

Pupils are all very appreciative of the work that the school does in helping them to overcome their difficulties and are pleased with the progress that they have made.

- 93 The quality of teaching is good. All teachers are committed to improving pupils' achievement. They have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and these are conveyed in a positive and supportive manner. Teachers have very good knowledge of National Curriculum English, and teachers' love of their subject is conveyed to the pupils. Teachers also have a very good understanding of the needs of learners with specific learning difficulties and appropriate methods and materials are very well used to respond to those difficulties. A satisfactory start has been made on policies and schemes of work for the teaching of literacy skills and the delivery of the National Curriculum. The need to co-ordinate these across both sites has been recognised. Initial and on-going assessment and monitoring of achievement and progress are very good and ensure a close match between programmes of work and individual pupil's difficulties. The need for increased precision in the setting of objectives for individual education plans has been recognised.
- 94 Teachers in the department set very high professional standards and are unstinting of their time and commitment to the pupils. However, the co-ordination of English between the two sites is poor. Insufficient time is allocated for departmental meetings, given the key role of English in the whole curriculum and the nature of the pupils' difficulties. The large number of part-time staff employed to teach the subject is unhelpful to effective liaison, co-ordination and subject planning.

## Mathematics

- 95 The attainment of pupils in mathematics is good by the time pupils reach age 16, but below national averages elsewhere. GCSE results were above national averages in 1996 and improved in 1997. Girls' attainment at GCSE is significantly better than boys. A smaller portion of pupils achieve the highest grades than those nationally. Results achieved in national tests are below national averages at age 14 and well below national averages at Key Stage 2. There is no co-ordinated approach to ensuring high standards of numeracy across the curriculum from Year 9, resulting in low standards.
- 96 Progress is good throughout Key Stages 2 and 3 and very good throughout Key Stage 4. Many pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below average and quickly begin to improve. Improvements are then sustained and accelerated in preparation for GCSE. The regular re-visiting of techniques in a variety of approaches makes a significant approach to progress in numeracy during Years 4 to 8. A strong and appropriate emphasis on understanding concepts rather than learning by rule is an important contributor to success in Years 10 and 11. The provision of a 'fast track' group in Year 10 successfully promotes rapid acquisition of knowledge and application of techniques: overall, a strong ethos of promoting self-esteem and building confidence has a very positive effect on improving learning and raising attainment.
- 97 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. All lessons are characterised by a positive working atmosphere. Pupils settle to work very quickly and sustain an industrious pace throughout lessons. They listen attentively and make articulate contributions to discussion. Almost all pupils are very enthusiastic and many express enjoyment in the subject. Levels of confidence and self-esteem are often high. A few pupils who are new to the school display low levels of self-esteem, but this is usually overcome quickly as they settle. A very small number of pupils occasionally lose interest when lesson introductions are too lengthy. Overall, pupils have a very good respect for their teachers, and very good working relationships with each other.
- 98 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers often demonstrate a very positive combination of good, business-like discipline and a caring approach. Planning is usually thorough and provides a diverse variety of experience to maintain interest. Teachers often make appropriate references to real life situations, for example, cutting up a piece of wood for division, but do not make sufficient use of historical context to bring the subject to life, for example, when referring to Pythagoras or Pascal. Many teachers take great care to develop language and understanding of concepts, through

a progressive change of emphasis from concrete to abstract. Examples include use of Cuisenaire rods for division and use of pieces of pasta to demonstrate ratio. On a small number of occasions, teachers fail to notice the pupil who lacks concentration. On a very small number of occasions, the teachers' lack of competence and subject command leads to a confusing presentation or ineffective support. A particular strength is the energy and enthusiasm of teachers, which has a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The curriculum is broad and balanced, except in Key Stage 2 where there are some gaps. Access to the curriculum is good, especially in providing opportunities to re-visit and develop skills without repetition of materials, but there are too few opportunities to use information technology.

- 99 There is insufficient liaison between the two heads of department, too few formal meetings of all teachers of mathematics and no formal monitoring of teaching. This results in insufficient building on prior knowledge when pupils transfer sites, sudden changes in developing numeracy, and too little discussion of policies and practice, with a consequent lack of confidence in some teachers. There are no arrangements for appraisal, and under-developed linking of teachers' needs to in-service training and development planning.
- 100 Accommodation is good and generally used well, except that there are too few examples of pupils' work in some rooms. There is a good supply of resources which are used regularly and effectively.

## Science

- 101 The overall attainment of most pupils by the age of 16 is above national expectations. Pupils perform well in GCSE examinations, for example, 67 per cent achieved grades A-C, and have developed good investigative skills. All pupils make sound progress in science. By the age of 11, pupils are able to name various organs of the body and explain why a circuit can be switched on and off. By the age of 14, they can explain how and why condensation and evaporation takes place and give examples. By the age of 16, pupils can test their ideas controlling more than one variable and explain the changes of state through particle theory. Pupils taking single science make slower progress, with a weaker conceptual understanding of science. Progress across Key Stages 2 and 3 is satisfactory. Pupils acquire appropriate scientific knowledge and understand important key concepts. However, progress in developing investigative skills is less satisfactory, with too few opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out experiments without considerable teacher intervention, and the rate of progress for high prior attainers is only satisfactory. Older pupils aged 14 to 16 make good progress in science, using and applying scientific knowledge in a range of contexts with confidence and skill.
- 102 Across the school, attitudes to science are very positive. Pupils are keen to do the work and carry out the teachers' instructions. Pupils stay on task in the lessons and concentrate on finishing work set. Behaviour is always very good. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy. They show respect to each other, to the teachers and to equipment and materials they use. They listen carefully to the teacher and carry out their instructions diligently.
- 103 The quality of teaching is good. It is sound in Key Stage 2 and good in both Key Stages 3 and 4. Planning reflects the Programmes of Study, and the method and content promotes learning for all pupils. Very good use is made of questioning to enable understanding and extend learning. Where there are shortcomings, teachers lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subjects, especially at Key Stages 2 and 3, to extend and challenge pupils with high prior attainment. Assessment of pupils' work does not inform planning and teaching in all classes or contribute to teachers' appreciation of progress from lesson to lesson.
- 104 The policy for science is of good quality but not fully informing all teachers of science. The curriculum is enriched by visits to science museums. The subject is well managed, however, continuity of learning between the two sites is less effective, lacking close monitoring of the curriculum and the quality of teaching to better inform curriculum and teacher development and

improve teaching further.

- 105 Information technology is still to play a significant role in the teaching and learning of science throughout the school. The lack of technician support restricts the range and quality of practical activities pupils can carry out and reduces the time teachers have for improving lesson planning.

## **Other subjects or courses**

### **Art**

- 106 In relation to national expectation in GCSE, attainment is high. Over the past three years most pupils have attained Grades A-C. Attainment across the rest of the school reflects these very good examination results. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The younger pupils, who are taught at Edington, increase their knowledge of artists and improve their skills and understanding, for example, a Year 6 class was experimenting with the application of paint by stippling and sponging techniques. They understood the effects of using such techniques in their own paintings. Year 11 pupils, in their examination work, used extensions of these skills in producing paintings for their course folders. Pupils are given a wide range of experiences in art at Edington, using pencil, charcoal, chalk, wax crayons and inks for painting and pattern work and a good range of experiences using clay, papier mache and plasticine for model making.
- 107 The subject development plan has identified a weakness in textiles and stressed the need to give greater emphasis to this in the future. The headteacher is involved in the discussions and costings are being prepared.
- 108 Pupils across the school show a capacity for personal study. In Years 4, 5 and 6 the process of critical analysis of work begins and is further developed in Years 7 and 8. On transfer to the Shapwick site, this preparatory work done at the Edington site is exploited with the number of entries for GCSE at Key Stage 4 being very high for a foundation subject. Behaviour and respect is excellent in art, and relationships with teachers and peers is based upon that of critical friends.
- 109 The quality of teaching in art is very good. Teacher planning is of high quality, enabling pupils to experience a wide range of teaching and learning styles. Lessons at Edington are full of the unexpected which creates a great deal of anticipation for the pupils and aids concentration and participation in the lessons. At Shapwick there is a more individualised approach with pupils discussing their work and being encouraged to analyse their work in a critical way. There is a clear expectation that pupils will, through their research, be producing work of the highest standard. Assessment is a strength in art and involves pupil self assessment, as well as a critical appraisal and discussion with the teachers. Record keeping is very good and is well used to plan for the needs of individuals as well as whole classes.
- 110 Resources in art are good and the co-ordinators have recognised the lack of textiles in their development planning. Accommodation at both sites is very good. The new art room at Shapwick provides an excellent environment for fine arts. Great emphasis is placed upon pupils gaining first hand experiences. Pupils at Key Stage 4 returned from a cultural visit to Turkey during the inspection week, each of them having taken photographs of landscapes, buildings and streets in Istanbul and the ruins at Ephesus. The trip had been well planned, with pupils having a clear understanding of what was expected of them. Similar excursions take place annually.

### **Design & Technology**

- 111 The overall attainment of most pupils at 16 is below national expectations. Pupils' attainment in making skills is good, they attend to accuracy and manufacture a range of products, with high quality finish. Although design communication skills are beginning to develop throughout the school, they

remain a weak feature in older pupils. Graphics skills and the use of colour and shape are under developed in a narrow range of design and technology contexts.

- 112 The progress of most pupils, in relation to their prior attainment, is sound at Key Stages 2 and 3, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils learn to pay greater attention to design work and are able to use a range of hand tools, model and evaluate their work by the age of 14. Although developing good practical skills by the age of 16, pupils make slow progress in the skills of designing and presenting work effectively using good graphic technique.
- 113 Pupils have mature attitudes to their learning and concentrate well on the tasks set. Both girls and boys have positive attitudes and enjoy working with a range of design media. Pupils work well together and help each other in groups, leading to development of constructive ideas which are beneficial to all. Pupils lack confidence and a range of design skills to make good progress at Key Stage 4.
- 114 The quality of teaching is sound overall, and it is good at Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils are well managed within a trusting and supportive environment in which sound teaching strategies are used. Lessons are well planned. Purposeful teacher intervention, good oral feedback and the encouragement to pupils to evaluate their work results in them making progress. Where there are shortcomings, teachers lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject, which restricts the expectations for high prior attaining pupils. At Key Stage 4 in particular, expectations, pace and outcomes for lessons are not always clear, resulting in slow progress.
- 115 The curriculum is narrow with inadequate depth of coverage, including knowledge and understanding of materials. The range of design and technology materials and contexts for learning, including the use of information technology and control, is small. Older pupils benefit from using computer aided design packages.
- 116 The subject is ineffectively co-ordinated across the two sites in the school, leading to repetition of work and an unclear progression of skills teaching in the subject planning.
- 117 The teachers of the subject lack recent and relevant professional development to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged and set appropriate expectations. The workshop used by older pupils requires some urgent attention in respect to Health and Safety issues, for example, water leaking onto the power supply, unguarded machinery and a lack of secure lockable accommodation.

## **Geography**

- 118 Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Taking account of prior attainment pupils make good progress, and this is most evident in Years 8 to 11. Pupils' achievements in fieldwork activities in Years 10 and 11 are very good and some pupils achieve very good results at GCSE. Well organised schemes of work enable pupils to acquire knowledge of places, an understanding of geographical processes and they use geographical skills effectively. Progress varies in Years 4 to 7 where continuity is less well assured.
- 119 Pupils use geographical vocabulary in a range of contexts well, they demonstrate understanding of the conventions used in geography, particularly in making maps and plans. Pupils talk enthusiastically and confidently about their work, and develop good strategies for remembering facts, including the use of mnemonics.
- 120 Teaching in all years is good. Lessons are characterised by clear objectives, good exposition, careful questioning and enthusiasm for the subject. Teaching is based on sound subject knowledge, a keenness to develop new ideas and an understanding of pupils' difficulties. Appropriately targeted resources and tasks matched to individual pupils' needs, for example, for data logging and conducting interviews, and relating the subject to pupils' and teachers' interests are effective. The

range of assessment techniques is appropriate and used to diagnose individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Assessment procedures across the department are in place, but records lack coherence and consistency.

- 121 Pupils are well behaved. They support one another and work effectively in pairs and groups. Pupils are committed learners, and in Years 10 and 11 work well even if they are away from the classroom, often during weekends and holidays. Pupils show great pride in their written work. They are eager to explore and use a range of resources to present their work to best effect. Some pupils have less well developed independent learning skills and demonstrate over-dependence on teacher guidance.
- 122 The co-ordinator uses insight and subject knowledge to great effect in determining appropriate activities and courses for pupils to follow, taking into account their particular difficulties. Monitoring the subject across all years is less effective, given the restricted amount of time available due to timetable and split site constraints. A wide range of resources is used imaginatively, but information technology and the use of computer programmes, across all years, are less well developed. Cross curricular activities, such as a theatre visit to see West Side Story and cooking Indian meals, enhance the pupils' learning.

## **History**

- 123 History is taught to all pupils in Years 4 to 9 and as an option in Years 10 and 11. Pupils make good progress across the school in relation to prior attainment. They are making gains in their knowledge and understanding of why people acted as they did, why events happened and the different ways of life in the past. They are developing a good understanding of chronology, as seen in a Year 6 class on the Tudors. By Years 10 and 11, pupils demonstrate well their ability to hypothesise, to use source material perceptively and draw conclusions from their evidence, especially evident in course work involving a study of Shapwick village in the eighteenth century. GCSE results for 1997 were very good with 21 pupils entered, of whom more than half achieved grade C or above.
- 124 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good, especially in Years 10 and 11. All pupils show a keen interest in the subject, are quick to answer questions, listen attentively to the teacher and to each other, and respect the views and opinions of other pupils. They are able to sustain concentration for lengthy periods and by Years 10 and 11, can work independently, carry out their own research and apply the results effectively. Pupils' behaviour is almost always very good. They are able to work well together and often help each other constructively.
- 125 The quality of teaching is very good across the school, especially in Years 8 to 11/12, where all teaching is delivered by a specialist teacher, and in a Year 6 class taught by an enthusiast for the subject. In these lessons, teachers are thoroughly prepared, are clear about their objectives for the lesson and make effective use of artefacts and resources, for example, tape recordings and letters about the Globe Theatre in Year 6 and original maps of Shapwick village photocopied following a visit to the Somerset Records Office. These resources are used in an imaginative way to stimulate pupils' thinking and are supported by skilled questioning, which enables pupil to draw comparisons and come to their own conclusions. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and of the standards of work; homework is set and its completion is insisted upon. A combination of quiet but firm management, delivered with good humour, works very successfully with pupils in Years 6 and 8 to 11/12. In these classes pupils are appropriately challenged, the work is well matched to meet their needs and the teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their subject.
- 126 The co-ordinator has an enthusiasm and passion for the subject which in turn enthuses pupils. A good policy document has been developed which addresses the needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties; schemes of work are well developed in Years 8 to 11 but are less well developed in Years 4 to 7. There are excellent examples of cross-curricular links, for instance, in

Year 6 with art, music and English in the Tudor theatre topic, and in a secondary class with design and technology in industrial archaeology. Teachers' assessments and recording methods are effective in Years 8 to 11, but are less well developed in the earlier years. Collaborative arrangements across the two sites are not well established which has an impact on continuity and progression between Years 7 and 8. A good range of resources is being established, and teachers make effective use of the wealth of historical resources in the community, including churches, archaeological digs, record offices and museums.

## **Information Technology**

- 127 Attainment of pupils' information technology skills at Key Stage 2, and Years 7 and 8 of Key Stage 3, is good. Progress is satisfactory, with pupils being able to perform the basic computer skills of loading and saving to and from disk, accessing programs from within Windows 95 and beginning to use word processing, supported by touch typing lessons, to produce work. However, they have little experience of information technology applications that are based upon programs that model an imaginary or real situation such as designing a new road to by-pass a town. Neither do they use information technology to control devices such as a burglar alarm, or to monitor external events such as wind direction.
- 128 At Key Stage 4, and Year 9 of Key Stage 3, pupils' progress is good. Attainment is broadly in line with national expectations, with some pupils at Key Stage 4 demonstrating attainment above expectations in their use of spread sheets as part of their assessed examination work. However, the pupils have little experience of using information technology to control devices, except for using a computer to design and produce items during their design and technology lessons, or of monitoring external events such as weather.
- 129 Pupils' attitude to learning and their behaviour during lessons is good, particularly at Key Stage 4 where it is very good. The pupils are well motivated by the experienced staff. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and the pupils' collaborative working is of a high standard.
- 130 The quality of teaching is good, particularly at Key Stage 4 where high expectations are set of the pupils. Here the teacher's specialist knowledge enabled him to both challenge and support pupils' learning of spreadsheets by encouraging them to produce a model which gave them information related to the ordering of houses and pupils based upon the school's merit system. In almost all of the lessons observed the support and management given was good, with pupils receiving constant and positive feedback, and their questions being answered in a clear, understandable manner that acknowledged their particular learning difficulties.
- 131 Both information technology co-ordinators provide good management of the resources in their respective computer rooms. However, at both Edington and Shapwick, little cross-curricular use is made of the resources, particularly in the support that information technology can offer pupils with specific learning difficulties by the use of specialist computer programs, although both Edington and Shapwick are using talking word processors to a limited extent.
- 132 Both co-ordinators, particularly at Edington where the use of information technology is being re-established, have little time in which to promote the use of information technology across the curriculum. Non-contact time is insufficient to promote the learning and support that the new computer hardware can offer pupils in other subject areas.

## **Modern Foreign Languages**

### **French**

- 133 The modern foreign language studied by pupils is French. The appointment of a subject specialist this term has revitalised interest and pupils are responding well to the subject. A detailed subject policy document has been produced to give pupils access to the National Curriculum. Schemes of work have been produced and recognition given to the special educational needs of the pupils, especially with regard to the acquisition of writing. At present there is insufficient time allocated to the subject in Year 9 and, with the re-establishing of the subject in the curriculum, no French is taught in Year 10. There is only one pupil studying the language in Year 11.
- 134 There is, at present, insufficient evidence to make judgements about attainment levels in Years 7 and 8. However, in Year 9, pupils have retained much of their previous learning and levels of comprehension and oral responses are in line with national age expectations. The Year 11 pupil is being well prepared for GCSE, and attainment in comprehension, oral responses and the course work diary is good. The progress which pupils make across Years 7, 8 and 9 is satisfactory in the understanding of the spoken language, with the capability to respond already being strengths. The progress being made in Year 11 is good.
- 135 Teaching is good across the school. Lessons are very well planned and take account of the need to change the teaching approach to maintain interest. Very good use is made of taped material in the target language. A good range of strategies is used to change the style of delivery from whole class to group and paired working. A good range of games activities is used to promote and consolidate vocabulary. Opportunities are taken for pupils to converse in pairs. However, there is a lack of opportunity for role play to develop conversation because there is no teaching base. This is particularly the case for Years 7, 8 and 9, at both Edington and Shapwick where the dining rooms are the only spaces available. The co-ordinator is, at present, discussing the possibilities of using information technology (CD ROM) to extend the learning opportunities.
- 136 Pupils display very good attitudes in lessons. They enjoy the challenging work and concentration levels are good. In groups and pairs pupils work collaboratively in games activities and dialogues. Behaviour in all lessons is very good.
- 137 Planning takes account of the varying specific learning needs of the pupils, and ensures that appropriate strategies are deployed to secure confidence and understanding. Assessment and recording procedures are thorough and address National Curriculum attainment targets. Assessment is well used to inform future lesson planning and to alert the teachers to the specific learning difficulties of individual pupils.
- 138 The subject is well led, and the co-ordinator is working on a development plan to secure its position across the two sites. The co-ordinator sees the need for external accreditation through the Certificate of Achievement and GCSE. She is keen to organise trips to France. The lack of a designated classroom, on either site, impedes the development of the cultural aspect of the subject and opportunities for role-playing activities. There is an adequate variety of resources which have been adapted to make them accessible to pupils with specific learning difficulties. However, there is a lack of information technology resources.

## Music

- 139 The music curriculum is not meeting statutory requirements. In Years 4,5,6,7 and 8 pupils are not taught the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, but instead practise hymn singing. In Year 9, insufficient time is available to deliver the music programme which is based on the Key Stage 3 Programmes of Study. Their overall progress in music is unsatisfactory, and reflects the lack of a planned whole school music curriculum.
- 140 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. All pupils enjoy their lessons. They smile and put a lot of energy into their work. Pupils behave well and listen carefully to the teacher. Relationships are good and all pupils fully participate in the lesson.

- 141 The quality of teaching of singing is good. At Edington, reports are not made to parents on the progress which pupils are making. At Shapwick in Year 9, good use is made of praise and in supporting pupils to recognise their own achievements, but reports to parents do not consistently provide information on what pupils know, understand and can do. The teacher given the role of subject co-ordinator is not a specialist music teacher. The role and responsibilities of the co-ordinator for the development of the subject across the school are not clear. The one, thirty five minute lesson per week which pupils receive is not satisfactory to deliver a balanced music programme. No music is offered in the school timetable for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- 142 There is no specialist music accommodation. The teaching time is significantly reduced as the classroom is re-arranged or equipment is moved. There is a small music room at the Edington site, but this is used for the extra-curricular lessons which involve some pupils in learning to play the piano, drums and the guitar. The co-ordinator has recently taken advice on how to develop a range of quality resources in order to support a more extensive music curriculum, but as yet this has not been implemented.

## **Physical Education**

- 143 All pupils are timetabled for two periods of games and two periods of physical education each week and have, in addition, access to a wide range of physical activities offered as extra-curricular options. During the inspection week mainly games activities were observed. The higher attaining pupils make good progress throughout the school in certain team games, especially in rugby, which is a particular strength of the school, athletics and cross country. Pupils succeed well in inter-school competitions. In Years 4 to 8 progress is generally unsatisfactory, except in rugby where reasonable levels of performance are being achieved. For most pupils, however, there is a lack of recorded information on pupils' progress by which to assess standards. Throughout the school, pupils' individual achievements and levels of skill are not assessed and recorded; in particular, pupils with co-ordination difficulties are not progressing incrementally through clearly identified small steps to improve their body awareness and performance. A significant number of pupils, however, achieve high standards, for example, two boys representing the County, in rugby, at under 15 and 16 level and three in County athletics.
- 144 In the well managed lessons, particularly in Years 9 to 12, pupils respond well and are keen to improve their performance and work well together, demonstrating their ability to work together as a team. In Years 4 to 8, however, weak teacher control results in pupils losing interest and concentration. In lessons such as swimming in Year 11, badminton in Years 9 and 10 and in rugby coaching in Years 9 to 11, pupils demonstrated an enthusiasm to improve their performance.
- 145 The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good in Years 9 to 11, but is unsatisfactory and, in one lesson poor in Years 4 to 8. In the good lessons, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their specialist area and are able to provide clear advice on how to improve performance. These teachers demonstrate good coaching skills, give clear instructions, expect high standards of behaviour and performance and review and evaluate the latter at the end of lessons. The poor lesson in the junior school involved too large a group in a gymnastics lesson, following an inappropriate activity, which resulted in a loss of control and of concentration on the part of pupils. In a junior school girls' netball activity the teacher lacked the confidence to change the nature of the activity when the pupils lost interest and the lesson deteriorated. Teachers' assessment and recording of pupils' individual progress is unsatisfactory, and planning for progression, particularly in the junior school is weak.
- 146 A whole school policy is being developed, but is not yet in place or understood by all staff. Schemes of work have not been developed across the whole school, resulting in weaknesses in pupils' ability to build on their skills incrementally. The curriculum is not meeting all of the requirements of the National Curriculum, for example, in providing dance in Key Stage 2, and

gymnastics activities are poorly planned and delivered in Years 4 to 8. A policy for assessment has not been devised, although a form of fitness testing is being implemented for Years 9 to 11. There is good co-ordination of the subject and of activities in Years 9 to 11, but this is not extended to the earlier years, where there is a lack of monitoring and support for teaching and of the curriculum. Girls have opportunities to access most of the activities and the need for access to team games with other schools is being addressed. Extra-curricular opportunities in sport are very good, including swimming, caving, dry skiing and horse riding.

- 147 The provision of resources is mostly good, including a good sized sports hall, well equipped with nets and a fitness area, but the range of small and large apparatus, fixed equipment and suitable junior age equipment is insufficient. Pupils, therefore, do not have opportunities to develop the skills of climbing and swinging. Playing field facilities and hard play surfaces for tennis and other activities are good.

## **Religious Education**

- 148 Only pupils in Year 9 are receiving a programme of religious education. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in these lessons and are beginning to reflect on their own beliefs and the views held by others. Evidence of progress is limited by the lack of a planned curriculum taught in earlier years and which is supported by records of progress over time.
- 149 Pupils responses are good. They listen carefully to the teacher and are prepared to share their thoughts. Pupils show respect for one another's opinions. They are interested in the lesson and behave well. Girls are as confident as boys when contributing ideas and answering questions. All pupils willingly complete the written tasks set in lessons.
- 150 The quality of teaching is sound, but in some lessons the didactic teaching style limits the contribution which pupils can make. Good use is made of praise to encourage and support pupils. Artefacts and other resources, for example, maps and photographs, are not used to help extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Pupils' work is marked and good use is made of encouraging comments. Reports to parents do not include information on what pupils know, understand and can do.
- 151 There is no whole school co-ordination of religious education, and the provision made for the teaching of the subject is very poor. Pupils do not have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and understanding in this subject, or of obtaining accreditation.

## **College Links**

- 152 The school has a good link with a college of further education. Students in Year 12 spend one day a week (Thursday) at the college. The aims for the link are clearly stated and the programme provides placements into a range of classes which include bricklaying, photography and art and media studies. The intention of the link is to provide the best possible match with the students' interests and the courses being taught on the day the students are attending, and it is successful in doing this. However, at the time of the inspection, some students had yet to receive their full complement of classes and were spending one of the teaching sessions in the college library.
- 153 The students are developing their independence skills very well. They have to use public transport to get to and from college and they have to try to solve any problems which may arise. The college provides a named key worker to support them and provides an induction day to help prepare the students for their time at college. Students work alongside other college students, for example, in the furniture workshop, where many course members are adults. College is also giving the students the opportunity to make decisions for themselves and to use the college facilities, for example, the cafeteria and common room. They have joined the students' union.

- 154 The students value and enjoy their college link and have access to a range of specialist equipment and facilities, such as in the photographic darkroom and the furniture workshop. Students said that they enjoyed the practical nature of their course work. The link is helping to prepare students for the transition from the more sheltered environment of the school to a possible future full-time placement in further education.
- 155 Last year students attending the link received a college certificate which identified the units of work they had completed towards the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) National Diploma in Performing Arts. The school has not yet given consideration to how it will record the skills and achievements of this year's students who are not following courses which lead towards any national accreditation.
- 156 Year 11 pupils have a taster day at the college in order to provide them with an experience of a college environment.

### **Boarding Provision**

- 157 The residential accommodation at both sites is very good, it is warm and homely and reflects the investment made by the school in providing new carpets and furniture. Accommodation in all 7 boarding houses is of a good standard. The joint headteacher pastoral is also the head of care. He works well with the boarding staff and meets with them daily on an informal basis. Formal meetings are arranged at the beginning and end of terms, with additional meetings arranged according to need. The standard of care in general is good across both sites.
- 158 There is a good communication system when pupils are ill or need staff at any time during the day or night. The communication book provides a clear reporting system between boarding and teaching staff when pupils are unwell or confined to their beds.
- 159 Pupils are able to identify an appropriate adult to whom they could relate. They have access to telephones and there are clearly detailed telephone numbers in all boarding areas.
- 160 Parents are positive about the quality of care at the school. Many felt that communication with house-parents was a strength and they were happy that their children were being well looked after. Good links with home are further strengthened by boarders having an exeat weekend every three weeks.
- 161 The meals attended during the inspection provided a very good range of food which was well presented. At a breakfast at Shapwick, pupils could chose, in any combination, a variety of cereals, grapefruit, yoghurt, bacon, eggs, toast and marmalade. Pupils commented on the quality and range of the food and felt that it was very good.
- 162 Arrangements for setting homework (preparation) are excellent and well supervised. Pupils have access to information technology and use the library unsupervised. Extra-curricular activities are broad in range and of a very good standard. Parents are regular supporters of games fixtures and often take the opportunity of speaking with staff during these visits.

## PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### Summary of inspection evidence

- 163 The school was inspected by a team of 9 inspectors for 33.5 inspector days. Over a period of 5 days, 116 lessons or parts of lessons, and a range of pupils' activities were observed, and pupils' work was scrutinised, for a total of 83.5 hours.
- 164 Discussions and interviews with school staff and representatives of other agencies totalled a further 40.25 hours. Feedback to staff and the headteacher involved a further 11 hours of inspector time. Registration sessions, assemblies and staff meetings were attended, and meetings were held with the proprietors.
- 165 Statements of special educational need, annual review reports and individual education plans were scrutinised. Parents' views were sought at a meeting attended by 36 parents/carers and the responses from 69 questionnaires (41 per cent of the total of 167) were analysed. The school provided a full range of documents and records for analysis, both before and during the inspection.

### 166 Data and indicators

#### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y4 - Y12	167	91	91	0

#### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

##### Qualified teachers (Y4 - Y12)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	20.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.1

##### Education support staff (Y4 - Y12)

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked each week	0

#### FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1996
	£
Total Income	1,619,000
Total Expenditure	1,570,276
Expenditure per pupil	9,402.85
Balance brought forward from previous year	Nil

Balance carried forward to next year	48,724
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**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:

167

Number of questionnaires returned:

69

**Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	32	52	12	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	64	35	0	1	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	32	38	14	3	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	46	46	3	3	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	64	33	3	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	74	22	4	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	71	23	3	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	43	41	4	9	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	80	13	6	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	72	23	1	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	59	33	7	0	0