

INSPECTION REPORT

BEAMINSTER SCHOOL

Beaminster

LEA area : Dorset

Unique Reference Number : 113884

Headteacher : Mrs Susan Collard

Reporting inspector : Mr Tim Feast - 3650

Dates of inspection: 6th to 10th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708093

Inspection number: 184810

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils :	11 to 18 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Newtown Beaminster Dorset DT8 3EP
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Appropriate authority :	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Dr Shirley Preston
Date of previous inspection :	May 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Tim Feast Registered Inspector	Physical education; Business Studies and Economics.	Attainment and progress; Teaching.
Mrs Jenny Mynett Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupil welfare.
Mrs Mary Cureton Team Inspector	English; Special educational needs (SEN) and special educational needs unit.	
Mr John Fletcher Team Member	Mathematics.	The efficiency of the school.
Mr Haydn Webb Team Inspector	Science.	The curriculum and assessment.
Mrs Christine Thompson Team Inspector	Design and technology.	Non National Curriculum at Key Stage 4.
Mr Ross Parker Team Inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT).	
Mr Roger Parry Team Inspector	Geography.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mr Russell Whiteley Team Inspector	Art.	
Mr Graham Laws Team Inspector	Modern foreign languages.	Leadership and management.
Mrs Sue Jones Team Inspector	Music.	
Mr John Laver Team Inspector	History.	
Mr Richard Brent Team Inspector	Religious education.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Mrs Helen Feasey Team Inspector		Sixth Form and Joint Sixth Form; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare.

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The Office for Standards in Education
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- There is a very positive ethos which emphasises and successfully promotes success in pupils' academic and personal development.
- There is attainment well above average in science and above average in English, art, geography and aspects of religious education and physical education.
- There is excellent provision of extra-curriculum activities.
- There is much good assessment of pupils' progress and the use of it to raise standards still further.
- The moral and social development of the pupils is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The inclusion of the pupils in the Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) unit completely into the life of the school is very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment in aspects of information and communications technology, design and technology and history and modern languages are below standards expected.
- Statutory requirements are not met completely in respect of daily acts of collective worship and religious education in the sixth form and the reporting of special educational needs in the governor's annual report.
- Some of the strategic planning of the school lacks linkage to budgets.
- There is a lack of consistency in managers and governors monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning rigorously.
- The specific support for pupils in the MLD Unit is not sufficiently targeted, nor is there appropriate monitoring of the progress of the pupils, of the curriculum they receive, nor of the quality of the support offered.

The school's strengths outweigh considerably its weaknesses. The governors' action plan which will be sent to the parents and guardian of all the pupils in the school will set out how the weaknesses identified in the report are to be tackled.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvements in relation to the key issues identified at the last inspection. The differential performance of boys and girls has been investigated, strategies have been put in place and the differential has reduced in many areas. There has been an improvement in the provision of ICT resources and an increase in their use although some of the higher skills required by the National Curriculum are not available to all pupils. While there has been an improvement in the provision of acts of collective worship and religious education the requirements are still not fully met. Homework policies have been reviewed and there is much good practice although there are still some inconsistencies with the setting and marking of homework. There has been a considerable improvement in the implementation of the assessment policy and much greater consistency in marking. There have been moves to develop managers' and governors' monitoring of the school's effectiveness but the information produced by this is not yet consistently used by all heads of department to improve performance in their areas. Some common systems are only just being carried out consistently. There has been an improvement in the uptake of pupils taking modern languages at Key Stage 4 in line with National Curriculum requirements but the uptake in the sixth form is still low. The capacity of the school to improve further is good as staff are now fully aware of the expectations re quality of learning and teaching.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1999:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<i>Key</i>
			<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
Key Stage 3 tests	C	D	
GCSE examinations	B	C	
A/AS - levels	D	N/a	

These tables show that in 1999 standards in the end of Key Stage 3 were in line with the national average and below those achieved in similar schools. Whilst standards in science remained well above average, standards in English declined significantly. In GCSE the school achieved good results, above the standards achieved nationally for pupils achieving 5 grades A*-C. and in line with those achieved by similar schools. At Advanced Level the pass rate was over 90% grades A-E but the average point score per pupil was below the national average. Very few pupils at the school take four Advanced Levels. Standards above average are achieved in English, science, business studies, geography, physical education and religious education at Key Stage 3. Standards below expectation were seen in information and communication technology (ICT) and aspects of design and technology at Key Stage 4.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	Geography, science, art, mathematics and English.	History and modern foreign languages.
Years 10-11	Good	Geography, science, art, physical education, mathematics, English and music	
Sixth form	Good		
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		

The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in nearly 94% of lessons observed. It is good in 42%, very good or better in a further 14%. It was unsatisfactory in 6% of lessons observed. The most effective lessons posed real challenge to the pupils, encouraging them to make real gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. In the rare instances of unsatisfactory teaching the lack of tasks which challenge the range of abilities within the class results in progress less than that of which the pupils are capable. Teaching was generally particularly good in science, English, mathematics and geography and less good at Key Stage 3 in history and modern foreign languages.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory with very good punctuality.
Ethos*	There is a very positive ethos. The quality of relationships is very good. There are good attitudes to work and there is a commitment in many areas to high standards.
Leadership and management	Good overall, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation in respect of targets set require further emphasis.
Curriculum	Good: generally broad and balanced. Excellent provision of extra-curricular activities.
Pupils with special educational needs	Support for pupils is generous but the lack of identification of specific targets for pupils hinders their progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good social and moral development, good cultural and satisfactory spiritual development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is a mixture of excellent accommodation e.g. science with that which is unsatisfactory e.g. design and technology and art. Some departments' staffing is constrained by the school's finances, as are the resources in some areas.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are encouraged in a range of extra-curricular activities. • Their children are enabled to achieve high standards • Parents are encouraged to play an active part. • They are well informed about their children's progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some are unhappy at how the school deals with some complaints. • Some are unhappy with the new behaviour management policy. • Some believe they are not clear as to what their children are being taught. • Some are unhappy with the consistency with which homework is set and marked.

The inspection team agrees with many of the parents' positive views about the school. Children do like school. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. There is an excellent provision of extra-curricular activities which pupils join with enthusiasm. Pupils do achieve high standards in some areas but these are not yet consistently achieved across all the subjects. The school has provided information in a variety of forms giving parents details of what their children are studying but none was provided this term. The behaviour policy is generally seen as positive by staff and pupils, although there is some inconsistency in implementing it. Overall behaviour is very good. There is much good homework set and marked but there are examples in pupils' homework diaries of some homework not being set. The team was not in a position to see how individual complaints were dealt with but parents feel generally that the school is approachable and many believe that complaints are dealt with effectively.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To raise further the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the Headteacher, Governing Body and staff should:

- .raise standards overall to those achieved by the most successful departments by:

ensuring that a range of appropriate tasks and resources are available to motivate and challenge pupils of all abilities in all lessons;
raising teacher expectations in relation to the requirements of the National Curriculum in those subjects not yet achieving high standards;
using assessment information consistently to set challenging departmental targets for specific classes and individual pupils.

(Paragraphs – 10, 11, 13, 24, 33, 88, 119, 128, 132, 136, 155, 164)

- .take further steps to met statutory requirements in respect of daily acts of collective worship and the provision of religious education in the sixth form and providing parents with information in respect of special educational needs by:

involving the Head of Religious Education in the provision of material for key stage and class acts of collective worship;
monitoring that the requirements are consistently being carried out in practice;
adapting the ethics component of the sixth form provision so that it has a recognisable religious education element.

(Paragraphs – 29, 35, 56)

- .take greater steps to link the strategic planning to the budget by:

identifying resources available for development and making those known generally;
requiring curriculum or pastoral leaders to prepare bids for funding linked to priorities identified;
identifying success criteria by which the progress towards the targets can be measured and the value for money established.

(Paragraphs – 52, 55, 62)

- .continue to develop the monitoring and evaluation role of governors and managers by:

formalising the role and specific responsibilities of all involved;
ensuring that agreed programmes are carried out by all by the end of the academic year;
continuing to support the professional development of those who have responsibilities in these areas;
planning the effective dissemination of good practice and the use of information to support the next stages in the planning process

(Paragraphs – 53, 55, 114, 179)

- .take steps to support the management of the MLD Unit

by providing additional time for the manager to monitor the target setting, the curriculum offered and the quality of support directed towards the pupils;
extending the professional development of staff to a focus on skills of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning;
improving the target setting within the Individual Education Plans;
improving the specific staff expertise available to meet the need of pupils with moderate

learning difficulties;
by governors and senior managers monitoring and evaluating the work of the unit against specific targets and appropriate success criteria.
(Paragraphs – 26, 197, 200, 203)

In addition the following issue was also mentioned in the report and should be considered as part of the governors' action plan:

- extend opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum.
(Paragraphs – 11, 14, 27, 28, 70, 88, 122, 137, 147, 168, 183, 189)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is situated in the town of Beaminster, an attractive part of West Dorset. The catchment area includes the town and the local villages and farms. The school is a co-educational voluntary controlled secondary comprehensive school with Christian affiliations, housed in a number of buildings on the same campus. It provides education for pupils aged 11-18 years. There is a joint sixth form provision with Sir John Colfox School in Bridport. A number of pupils aged 16 elect each year to move on to other educational establishments.

2. Within the school's extensive small town and rural catchment area there is a wide range of social backgrounds with the balance being favourable between advantaged and disadvantaged homes, although the catchment area contains pockets of economic deprivation.

3. The school has 633 pupils on roll, the school is smaller than the average 11-18 comprehensive school. Generally the number of boys and girls is balanced overall although there are variations in individual years. Numbers have grown slightly since the last inspection.

4. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities and no pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. This is low when compared to the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below 9% and this is below the national average.

5. Over 21% of pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs. This is above the national average. 42 pupils have been provided with statements of special educational needs. This includes pupils who have been sent to the school from a wider catchment area with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). The school has a designated MLD unit to cater for 35 pupils with statements and at the time of the inspection there were 29 on roll. The number overall with statements has declined since the last inspection

6. The attainment of the different year groups on entry has varied and the year groups contain pupils with a wide range of attainment. Overall the attainment on entry is above average

7. The school aims are made explicit in the documentation. They are to:

"Promote all round excellence
Achieve high academic standards
Develop self discipline, enterprise, responsibility and independent learning
Value, encourage and support all students equally
Prepare students to succeed in a changing world
Help students to know about and respond to the needs of others
Work with the wider community to the benefit of both."

1. The key objectives in the school development plan in 1999- 2000 include:

- .Improving Student Achievement
- .Improving the Quality of Teaching
- .Improving Student Progress Tracking
- .Improving Leadership and Management
- .Improving Literacy and Numeracy
- .Enhancing Community Contribution to Student Achievement

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	47	60	107

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	19	29	31
	Girls	41	40	44
	Total	60	69	75
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	56 (79)	65 (62)	75 (70)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	27 (42)	51 (43)	40 (47)
	National	28 (34)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	23	29	30
	Girls	54	47	44
	Total	77	76	74
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	76 (53)	75 (58)	77 (75)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	48 (30)	50 (37)	54 (36)
	National	32 (31)	38 (37)	29 (31)

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	51	57	108

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	27	47	49
	Girls	44	54	55
	Total	71	101	104
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	63 (51)	94 (93)	95 (97)
	National	48 (46)	88 (87)	94 (92)

Number studying for approved vocational Qualifications or units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	N/a	
National		

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

Number of pupils aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examinations in the latest reporting year:

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	17	14	31

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	14.6	16	15.7 (14.6)	4	2	3 (2.4)
National	n/a	n/a	n/a (17.8)	n/a	n/a	n/a (2.8)

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved this Qualifications:

	Number	% Success rate
School	n/a	
National		

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success Rate
School	7	100%
National		n/a

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.4
	National comparative data	7.6
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.04
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	15
Permanent	1

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	14

Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. Attainment overall is in line with the national average and this is broadly similar to that reported at the last inspection. There are differences in attainment between key stages and subjects. The results which are reported include those of pupils in the MLD Unit.
2. The school had not taken the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 at the time of the last inspection. Overall in 1999 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science the results were broadly in line with the national average but below those achieved by similar schools. The main reason for this was the decline in the percentage of pupils in the school achieving what was expected nationally in English compared with previous results. The reason for this was due to the administration of the test rather than the ability of the pupils. In the other core subjects standards remained very high in science and were above average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools standards were well above average in science, below average in mathematics and well below in English. Over the period 1996-1998 taking all the core subjects into account the performance of pupils was above the national average. Much of this was due to the performance in science where overall the standards achieved were well above average. In this period girls performed consistently better than boys in English, whilst boys performed consistently better than the girls in science and mathematics and over the period performance in all the core subjects was very similar between the boys and girls. The performance of the current Year 9 pupils is above the national expectation, particularly in English which is returning to its previous standard. It remains well above average in science and in line with the national expectation in mathematics. In the other subjects standards are broadly in line with the national expectation other than in geography and physical education where they are above. This is a similar picture to that reported at the last inspection other than in modern languages where they have declined. They are also below in design and technology.
3. Standards achieved by the pupils in the GCSE examinations in 1999 were above the national average and in line with those achieved by similar schools. The school's results in 1999 were the best achieved in the school's history. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C were above average in science, English language and literature, mathematics, art, German, drama, business studies, geography, music, physical education and statistics. They were below in aspects of design and technology, French, history and religious education. Since 1997 the GCSE results including the average points score per pupil has been improving and has been in line with the national average. The girls have achieved better overall results than the boys but the gap has been narrowing and both have achieved results close to the national average since the last inspection. Current standards in Key Stage 4 are well above expectations in science, above in English, geography, music and physical education and average in all the other subjects except for information and communications technology where they are below owing to the lack of consistent progress of all pupils across all the required elements and in aspects of design and technology.
4. At Advanced Level in 1999 the results in respect of the average point score per candidate entered for two or more Advanced Levels was below the national average and this has been the case for the last three years. However the pass rate in 1999 for pupils achieving grades A-E was over 90%. Very few of the sixth form take more than three Advanced Levels and the school prides itself on the success rate of all who are entered for the examinations. One or two pupils each year opt for other post 16 provision in the area where there are subjects they want to take not offered by the Beaminster/Colfox consortium. Many of the subjects had 100% pass rates in 1999 and only in chemistry did more than one candidate not achieve a pass grade. Girls achieved higher

average points score than boys generally. The school enters sixth form pupils for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and all achieved a certificate at Level 2 and nearly half achieved a merit. Current standards in the sixth form are at least in line with the requirements of the syllabuses.

5. The progress pupils make in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and this is maintained in most subjects at Key Stage 4. Progress is very good in science, good in English, mathematics, art, business studies and physical education and satisfactory in most of the others. It is unsatisfactory in ICT and history. The progress of pupils in the sixth form is satisfactory. The progress made by pupils with special education needs is satisfactory although some of the targets set for them are not sufficiently specific. In the best lessons pupils make good progress because they are made well aware of what it is they are expected to learn in the lesson and are challenged appropriately by the tasks they have to do. In some lessons pupils grouped according to similar abilities make only satisfactory progress because the range of tasks does not meet the full range of abilities within the class. Occasionally progress is less than satisfactory owing to the inattentiveness of some of the pupils.
6. Pupils use their literacy skills well and this contributes to the high standards achieved in subjects like science and geography. The use of numeracy skills is well developed across the curriculum and supports the standards achieved in science, geography and history. There is a great deal of usage of ICT skills across many subjects but standards achieved are capped by the restrictive nature of the current scheme of work.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

7. The school has effectively maintained the good attitudes reported in the previously and behaviour has improved. Pupils generally show positive attitudes to learning, they are well motivated and enjoy their time at school. Pupils respond enthusiastically in lessons, quickly and confidently applying themselves to the activities presented. They participate well in class discussions and debates and are prepared to undertake and persevere with challenging tasks. There is a small minority of pupils in Years 9 and 11 who have a more casual attitude to learning. There are opportunities for pupils to choose their own resources in art and design and technology and to take increasing responsibility for their own learning as they progress through the school. Good examples of independent learning and project work is seen in GCSE course work and assignments undertaken by sixth form pupils involved in Advanced Levels. Pupils have good access to computers in the Learning Resource Centre at lunchtime and after school, enabling them to pursue their own researches. Pupils are also given the opportunity to help organise the arrangements for their work experience in Year 11, and through the courses for those undertaking a vocational qualification. This approach has been very successful in promoting pupils' independence and sense of responsibility.
8. Behaviour in and around the school is very good, and makes a substantial contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. They are courteous and friendly, happy to talk about what they are doing and show their work to visitors. Pupils speak well of the school, they show respect for the property of others and the environment, although there is a significant amount of litter left around after break and lunchtime. Parents also spoke highly of the school, commenting particularly on the good attitudes and the way high standards of behaviour are promoted. However a small number of parents commented on the new behaviour modification programme, and the inconsistency in awarding pink slips. Pupils are well aware of the school rules and this has a positive impact on standards. There are few incidents of disruption and inappropriate behaviour, or evidence of bullying in the school. Incidents which do occur are taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively. The number of exclusions in the school has fluctuated over the last three years but mostly relate to a few individuals. There have been two pupils excluded

this term. The school has established effective systems to work with and retain pupils.

9. Relationships within the school are very good both between pupils, and staff and pupils. In classes there is generally very good rapport between teachers and pupils based on mutual respect. There are very good relationships in the sixth form with pupils from Beaminster and Sir John Colfox School working productively together. The pupils from the MLD Unit are well integrated into the school and enjoy excellent relationships with other pupils. The frequent opportunities provided in lessons for co-operative and collaborative work enable pupils to work in both pair and group situations well. They solve each other's problems in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, respond positively in physical education when their peers are taking the session, create imaginative improvisations in drama and offer supportive criticism in art. These levels of mutual support promote high levels of attainment.
10. Pupils' personal development is very good. Frequent opportunities are provided for pupils to share their values and beliefs, and to consider and talk about important issues. The personal and social education programme and tutor periods promote mature discussion and debate with pupils willing to listen, reflect and comment on a wide range of issues immediately relevant to their lives. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and undertake positions of responsibility are promoted throughout the school, and particularly in Year 11 and the sixth form. Pupils volunteer as librarians and there are sports captains and two School Council representatives in each tutor group. Pupils in Year 11 volunteer to undertake the role of prefects. They monitor behaviour on the buses and effectively undertake different responsibilities around the school. Successful fund raising initiatives are organised by year groups, which support a number of local, national and international charities. Sixth form pupils have established a Student Union with a variety of committees, through which they organise a number of events such as Rag Week and the Prom. The School Council is also run efficiently by form representatives and the Student Union.

Attendance

11. The levels of attendance in the school have improved since the last inspection. Overall figures are broadly in line with national averages, whilst the number of unauthorised absences are slightly above the national average. Last year pupils in Years 9 and 11 had attendance figures below 90%. Pupils are prompt into school with over two thirds of pupils being bussed in each day. The school is spread over a large site with some considerable distances between classrooms. Five minutes changeover time is allocated between lessons, which generally start on time. In the circumstances any latecomers to lessons are few and they are generally suitably challenged. With the consortium, sixth form lessons are reduced to 45 minutes to allow for travel from one site to another. To compensate pupils have ten instead of eight periods every two weeks.
12. Registers are completed correctly at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions, and during each lesson to monitor any possible internal truanting. The school and governors are reporting the attendance figures appropriately in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Statutory requirements are met.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

13. The quality of teaching has improved upon the standard reported at the last inspection. The quality is good overall but there has been an increase in the percentage of very good and excellent teaching and the unsatisfactory teaching remains a very small percentage. In lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better in 95% of lessons observed. It was good in 41%, very good or better in a further 14%. It was unsatisfactory or poor in 5% of lessons observed.

Good teaching was seen in all years and in all subjects. The teaching was never less than good in art and geography and was usually very good or better in science. Much good teaching was also observed in English and mathematics and good teaching was observed particularly at Key Stage 4 in music and physical education. Examples of unsatisfactory or poor teaching were observed in lessons in modern foreign languages, history, design and technology and English.

14. In the excellent and very good lessons the teachers find challenging and exciting ways to make sure that the pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the topic which is the subject of the lesson and make clear at the start of the lesson what it is they want the pupils to learn. This was seen to very good effect in a Year 10 science lesson where the enactment of the process of rock formation using the science bloc entrance hall and the external environment combined with an exceptional running commentary on the process both captivated and enthralled the pupils and ensured that they all had a very good knowledge and understanding of the process which they could translate into high academic standards. Similarly Year 9 pupils in an English lesson on the poetry of Christina Rossetti benefited from outstanding teaching on how the economy of expression and the form and the shape of the sonnets supports the findings and messages conveyed. Teachers have high and sometimes very high expectations as for a Year 10 mathematics class where the excellent teaching enabled pupils to have a very good grasp of the linear scale factor and its relation to area factor. There is good use of target-setting in many subjects. There are similarly high expectations as to the pace at which pupils will work. Good questioning is often seen to extend pupils' understanding, as in a Year 11 physical education lesson where the principles of different strategies for defence in basketball were made relevant to the game situation. Homework is often well used to extend learning as in health related fitness in Key Stage 3.
15. In some of the lessons where teaching is satisfactory teachers do not make as clear to the pupils what it is they are expected to learn as is the case in the best lessons and there is insufficient emphasis on planning differing tasks and resources to cater for the full range of abilities, especially in classes which have been grouped by pupils' ability.
16. In the lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory or poor there were a variety of reasons but not one single factor. In a Year 9 design and technology lesson the teaching was let down by a lack of expertise in textile technology which limited the level of attainment of the pupils. In some the management strategies were not successful, for example in a Year 7 history lesson and in a Year 11 English lesson where they were finalising the details of the production the following week of their pupil-assessed project. In modern languages the pace of lessons was sometimes too slow and the level of the work not matched closely to the ability of the pupils and too much use was made of English and not the target language.
17. During the inspection and the lead up to it there was much good homework which was set consistently and work had been marked regularly. Scrutiny of the home diaries did show some inconsistency with the setting of homework in different years and different subjects. While much good and very good marking was seen in some subjects like science and mathematics, there is some inconsistency across staff as to the guidance they give in writing on pupils' work as to how they are to improve. In some lessons, such as in mathematics and science, there is good and sometimes very good use made by the teachers of their assessments to inform changes in the activities in the lesson and in their planning but this is not yet consistent across all lessons.
18. There is some good support provided for pupils with special educational needs. Many class teachers identify their needs and in the best lessons full account is taken in preparing appropriate tasks and resources for them but this is not yet a feature of all lessons. The support of staff identified to have specific responsibility is always appropriate and sometimes good but is not helped by the lack of specific targets in many of the Individual Education Plans. This also

hinders the assessment of pupils with special educational needs as the starting point for assessment is the setting of targets against which progress can be measured.

19. There is much good support for the teaching of literacy across the curriculum. Most subjects do concentrate on specialist vocabulary and in many areas there is good use of literacy to support high standards in their understanding of texts and in their written responses to questions posed. Similarly good support for numeracy helps pupils reach high standards when required in subjects like science and design and technology. There is much good use of information and communications technology across some parts of the curriculum but pupils' attainment is restricted by the expectations of the scheme of work.

The curriculum and assessment

20. The provision of the curriculum is good. The school aims to promote all round excellence, achieve high academic standards and to prepare pupils to succeed in a changing world. In terms of the curriculum these aims are very largely met. There is a broad curriculum for all pupils at Key Stage 3. This is similar at Key Stage 4. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities for using information and communications technology (ICT) in all the subjects of the curriculum. Good experience is provided in science and geography where pupils use ICT to process and compare data and carry out research using the Internet.
21. Sufficient time is allocated for teaching religious education in Key Stages 3 and 4. The teaching of religious education is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There is a compulsory module of ethics for all pupils in Years 12 and 13. However, this is insufficient to meet the approved syllabus requirements. Competitive sports are taught. The consortium of two schools enables a satisfactory range of subjects to be offered to pupils in Years 12 and 13.
22. All pupils have access to the Internet to support independent studies and research. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy in all the subjects of the curriculum. The study of systems and control technology is under represented for pupils in design and technology. Pupils benefit from the availability of two modern foreign languages. Sex education and an awareness of drug misuse and their adverse effects are taught to a good standard. All pupils have equal opportunity to succeed in all subjects. In geography in Years 10 and 11 boys and girls are taught in separate groups. This has successfully reversed the imbalance in achievement by gender in this subject.
23. In the majority of subjects good schemes of work ensure quality and continuity of learning as pupils progress from year to year. The curriculum is appropriately challenging for pupils of all abilities with exception of ICT and design and technology at both key stages and history at Key Stage 3. In many subjects pupils are taught in sets of similar ability. Regular testing ensures that the pupils are correctly placed and that the curriculum is adjusted to suit their needs. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, especially in science. Lessons are carefully planned to allow easy integration into the whole science curriculum. Careful grouping in English in Year 8 allows pupils needing extra support to improve their standard of literacy. There is a special programme of co-ordinated activities and events designed specifically to challenge higher attaining pupils for example; the Citizenship Foundation Magistrates Court Award Scheme where pupils can learn procedures of law and compete as lawyers in mock trials.
24. There is outstanding provision for extra curricular activities that are available at lunch times and after school. These include an extensive range of sports, gymnastics and judo. Some clubs bring further interest to learning, for example there are clubs for art, geography and music. Many pupils enjoy participating in the evening performances and productions for drama and dance. The school holds a project week annually, where the pupils are offered a diverse choice of activities

that are exciting and extend and enrich the pupils' learning experience. These range from visiting art galleries in Venice to white water canoeing. Pupils in Years 12 and 13 are given the opportunity to visit India to help in a village development programme.

25. The provision for the assessment of pupils is good. Pupils are regularly tested in all subjects and their grades compared to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Comparisons are made to monitor and record each pupil's achievements over time. This information is used successfully to adjust the pace and content of the curriculum to suit pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Year 10 pupils are helped to achieve their full potential when they are given special tests to assess their future capabilities in GCSE examinations and to set appropriate targets. The results are compared with their predicted achievements and discussed with them individually. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the monitoring of the curriculum but its impact is not as yet seen consistently across the work of all the departments.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

26. The importance of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is recognised in the school's aims and the school has also carried out a formal exercise to confirm the extent and quality of provision. This painted a positive picture and overall provision remains good. Provision to develop pupils' spiritual awareness through the curriculum is satisfactory. Religious education, particularly at Key Stage 3, helps pupils to understand ways in which different societies celebrate special moments and why people believe as they do. Thoughtful work on the creation and environmental concerns prompt pupils to reflect on the need to preserve the world. Work in art and science gives pupils important insights into the natural world and aesthetic quality. It also fosters their creativity. However, although assemblies play an important part in helping pupils to understand the school's values and expectations, the assemblies do not always offer opportunities to enhance spiritual awareness and encourage reflection on purpose and meaning.
27. Governors and senior staff have not fully tackled the key issue raised in the previous inspection report to comply fully with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. Assemblies and form periods observed during the inspection showed that not all complied fully with legal requirements. No co-ordinated programme for collective worship, other than the circulation of given themes for each week, is in place. Reflection is not always focused during form periods and not all key stage assemblies contain an act of worship as defined in the order. There is too little pupil participation in assemblies, and this deprives them of a major aspect of worship.
28. Provision for moral development is very good and the school is a strongly moral community. The Personal, Social and Religious Education (PSRE) programme in Key Stage 4 makes a good contribution to developing pupils' moral reasoning, as does history, English, geography and science. The behaviour policy sets clear expectations and there is a developed system of rewards and sanctions. Teachers take a firm lead in strengthening an awareness of right and wrong, regard for others and the importance of fair play. Particularly good emphasis is placed on helping pupils develop values based on principles rather than the prospect of reward and punishment. The 'Rag Week' profits go to a range of charities and the school supports many others, including the Terence Higgins Trust, N.S.P.C.C. and charities linked to Romania.
29. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to help others, make decisions and take responsibility such as prefects, counsellors, Young Enterprise, pupil librarians and Students Union. Sixth formers also run the School Council and produce an annual pantomime for the rest of the school. There are good links with the local community. The

school big band plays at local functions, such as weddings and parties and the school provides readers for the annual Beaminster Carol Service. Together with the town, pupils are helping to create a Millennium garden and a photographic record of the town. Across the curriculum there are very good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to make choices. For example, there are opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour in pair work in art, in discussion in English, religious education, history, geography and science. In physical education pupils sometimes lead for part of the lesson. Behaviour in the Learning Resource Centre is excellent. Team games are taken seriously by pupils and many take considerable pride in representing the school where they show good sportsmanship. The Judo teams have reached the national finals regularly. There are other examples of good practice. Pupils visit a range of places such as Lulworth Cove, London Art Galleries and Tout Quarry Sculpture Park. Almost all pupils attend the Year 11 project week which involves a residential visit. A wide choice of work experience placements is available to Year 11 pupils. Citizenship education is of good quality: the careers programme incorporates an understanding of the legal and political system and the school successfully enters teams for the Magistrates and Crown Court Mock Trial Competitions organised by the Citizenship Foundation. Pupils in the MLD Unit and from Sir John Colfox School are fully accepted and integrated into the life of the school.

30. Provision to develop pupils' cultural awareness is good. Their horizons are broadened and they experience and appreciate a range of cultural and creative expression in English, art, music and an exciting range of extra-curricular activities. Provision includes a wide range of visits including that of approximately twenty pupils to India every two years for three weeks. There is also an activities holiday in France. Work in music and art introduces pupils to art and musical experiences from a range of cultures and work in religious education gives them some understanding of world faiths, although multi-cultural links overall are under-developed and there are insufficient opportunities to explain the cultural diversity of our society. Elsewhere in the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to learn about local life and traditions: for example they look at nineteenth century Dorset census returns and learn about the local area in geography when they do work at Lulworth Cove and Yeovil.
31. The school has built upon the good foundations noted at the last inspection and pupils' attainment and progress benefits from the good provision. Given the school's commitment to this important aspect of school life, there is a good capacity for further improvement.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

32. Overall the school's work in supporting and guiding its pupils has a very positive impact upon the standards achieved. Parents who attended the meeting before the inspection expressed the view that the school provided very good support to children of all abilities.
33. Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils. Heads of year are committed to their role of caring for their pupils. Form tutors know their pupils very well and are generous in providing help to individuals. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from form tutors, class teachers and learning support assistants. The transition from primary school is particularly well planned and effective. Pupils rapidly feel at home in their new environment and the teachers are well informed about the pupils' previous progress.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are very good. Form tutors and heads of year are responsible for monitoring the overall progress of their pupils and setting targets for future success. Heads of year have regular meetings with the Headteacher and with outside agencies to discuss the needs of individual pupils. The senior management team, together with a representative from the Governing Body, has initiated a comprehensive programme to review the work of all departments and the learning experiences

provided to pupils in each year group.

35. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in the opportunities provided for pupils' personal development. In Key Stage 3, form tutors now deliver a well structured programme of personal and social education which is linked to themes addressed in year assemblies. Senior teachers deliver a weekly PSRE lesson to all pupils in Key Stage 4. Form tutors in this key stage meet small groups of pupils during lesson time to discuss all aspects of their academic and personal progress. A very successful mentoring system also exists whereby teachers and other adults from the wider school community offer help and support to individual pupils. There is satisfactory provision for careers education and good opportunities provided for work experience.
36. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance. The school follows up pupils' absence rigorously. The Education Welfare Officer visits the school every week to check the registers and to identify areas for concern. The Head of the Sixth Form manages the potentially difficult situation of pupils' attendance and punctuality at two separate sites very efficiently. Thorough records are kept, particularly of pupils' attendance at their weekly tutorial lesson.
37. Pupils know that high standards of behaviour are expected. The school operates as an orderly community with structured policies of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are praised for their achievements, for example by the issuing of award cards and certificates. This year a new system of issuing 'pink slips', leading to detentions, has been introduced for offences in the classroom and around the school. This system is beginning to have an impact upon pupils' behaviour but it is not yet used to the same extent by all teachers. The school has both a clear policy for the elimination of harassment and bullying and a contact policy explaining the new law relating to the use of reasonable force.
38. The school's arrangements for promoting the health, safety and general well being of all its pupils are very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has responsibility for child protection and has undergone recent training. Advice on procedures and on general awareness of child protection issues is well documented in the pastoral handbooks. Very good relationships exist with outside agencies who provide sensitive help and support. Regular meetings of teachers and other professional staff involved in behavioural and learning support take place. The school nurse visits once a week and operates a 'drop in' session for all pupils. A member of the technical staff is qualified in first aid and is available to attend to pupils during the school day. Other members of staff have also undergone first aid training. By the end of Key Stage 4 all the pupils have acquired a qualification in first aid as part of their PSRE lessons.
39. The Assistant Head is the health and safety representative. He undertakes an inspection of the school premises with the caretaker twice each term, reporting his findings together with an appropriate risk assessment to the Financial Director and the Governing Body's health and safety committee. Some issues, such as the poor condition of the technology workshops which impedes pupils' learning, have yet to be resolved. Clear procedures are in place for ensuring safety during school visits.

Partnership with parents and the community

40. Parents generally expressed very positive comments about the school. They feel staff are very approachable, that they are generally kept well informed and welcomed into the school. The school recognises the importance of effective liaison between home and school and the active role parents can play in supporting their children's education. Comprehensive information about the school and its activities is provided in the school prospectus, information packs provided at transition points and the governors' annual report to parents. Regular contact is maintained

through the Bulletin and reminder letters, and parents are circulated with information relating to option choices and career guidance. Some parents expressed concern that they do not receive sufficient information regarding what pupils are taught. Curriculum details were previously circulated each term, and the intention is to continue with this practice in future. Consultation evenings held each year are well supported by parents. They provide opportunities for parents to meet teachers to review their child's progress and achievements, and to set targets for improvements. There are two interim reports and very informative annual report detailing pupils' progress and attainment. Records of Achievement are compiled as pupils progress through the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully briefed about their child's progress, and are involved in the review process.

41. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is very good. Some are able to offer help with work experience placements and by offering career talks. The very active Beaminster School Association involves a large number of parents and makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The association provides support at school events with refreshments and offers a means of communication between parents and school. A number of successful social and fund-raising events are organised. These support school activities and generates significant sums of money each year. Over the years these funds have helped facilitate building initiatives such as the science block and the Learning Resources Centre, and provides sponsorship for the India trip. Home/school contracts are in place.
42. The school has established very good links with businesses and the local community. The school's position within the town is fostered by computer courses run for the community and use of the school facilities by the Citizens Advice Bureau. There are contacts with a number of professionals who offer their time to help with career talks and hold mock interviews. Strong links have been forged over a number of years with companies who offer placement opportunities for the work experience programme. There are a large number of visitors to the school during the year, and opportunities for pupils to undertake trips and visits which support project work and enhance the curriculum. Many of these activities are aimed at extending pupils' horizons beyond their rural location. The school places a high profile on sporting activities and pupils successfully compete in different sporting competitions with other schools. Sixth form pupils undertake informal community service activities visiting elderly people as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Pupils are involved in organising fund-raising events for local, national and international charities. These activities help them become aware of those less fortunate than themselves. Very good links are maintained with local primary schools and Sir John Colfox School with the joint sixth form. Effective links have been established with the religious community, both with St Mary's in Beaminster where the Choir and band contribute to special services, and local parish churches in surrounding villages fostered through parent representatives. Links with other faiths are limited by their distant locations.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

43. Leadership and management in the school are good. A culture of high attainment and good social development has been engendered throughout the school and this results in the satisfactory standards achieved by the pupils. The Headteacher is looking for ways to improve management systems and is prepared to modify strategies to meet perceived needs and statutory requirements. The systems introduced during the past year ensure greater levels of accountability at all management levels. At the same time, consultation processes enable all groups involved with the school to present viewpoints for consideration. Pupils have a voice through the School Council and ancillary staff are represented by the Financial Director, who is a full member of the senior management team. The Headteacher's sensitive and spirited leadership has resulted in effective

teamwork and a true sense of camaraderie throughout the school.

44. The school's development plan closely matches the Dorset LEA plan. The senior management team recognises the importance of the strong links that exist with their link adviser. The plan is comprehensive and bears the hallmark of a long-term development plan. Although priorities are not clearly identified the school has informally agreed the main focus. This relates to pupils' continuing progress and more rigorous analysis of assessment data. The three year development plan provides useful guidelines in curriculum, monitoring procedures, training requirements and premises. The plan does not dovetail sufficiently with the long-term financial plan. This lack of coherence inhibits progress towards the identified priorities, and links with the development plan are tenuous. Annual departmental plans follow the school model. There are at least seven areas for review and development. There is insufficient time for all areas to be covered in depth by all departments and priorities are not sufficiently identified.
45. The work of departments and year groups is monitored by senior staff and middle managers. Departments are required to evaluate progress towards their annual targets at formal meetings held twice a year, when senior managers interview heads of department. There is a clear, well documented three year cycle of intensive reviews, covering all departments and year groups. Monitoring of standards within departments is particularly strong in science, mathematics, art and geography. There are some weaknesses in history and the mapping for information and control technology is poor.
46. The school has a laudable set of aims which cover all major aspects of school life, and they are substantially reflected in the very positive ethos that is evident throughout many aspects of the school's work. Beaminster clearly lives out its values as an inclusive family unit, that attempts to extend pupils' horizons beyond their immediate locality. The school has made satisfactory improvements in relation to key issues raised in the last inspection report. It has a good capacity to improve further as staff are now fully aware of the expectations re the quality of learning and teaching.
47. The Governing Body is very supportive. Many governors are linked with year groups or departments, and participate willingly in the four committees that deal with most of the detailed work. Despite this involvement, governors sometimes lack detailed knowledge of long-term strategies to produce a balanced budget and to improve standards of attainment. They have agreed that the school should focus on the monitoring and teaching of information and control technology, citizenship, music and target setting. Heads of department are expected to report to the appropriate committee on a rota basis. Several governors have acted as critical friends. One parent governor has monitored provision in Year 7 and another operates as a point of contact for parents of children in local primary schools. A governor with expertise in computers has supported the ICT programme. The governors are not sufficiently involved in the formulation of the School Development Plan or in monitoring the progress being made towards identified targets. The Governing Body has established targets for the Headteacher. However, it has a responsive, rather than an initiating, management role.
48. The school meets statutory requirements in most areas but not in the provision of a daily collective act of worship, the provision of religious education in the sixth form and providing parents with the necessary information on special educational needs in the annual report.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

49. Overall the provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory.
50. Staffing is satisfactory. There is a balance of gender and experience on the teaching staff. The

school benefits from fresh ideas brought by recent staff changes. The match between teaching qualifications and subjects taught is satisfactory overall. However, in history, mathematics, and music a proportion of teaching is by non-specialist teachers. In design and technology some staff need further training in specialist skills now required by the curriculum. On balance support staffing is satisfactory. Since the last report improved science accommodation aids the role of the single technician. There is now a technician for information and communication technology (ICT). Art shares a part-time technician with design and technology. The school recognises the need to increase the hours of this post, to give more support in the areas of resistant materials and food technology. The caretaker's working hours are longer to match the additional buildings, but there is no assistant caretaker.

51. Good arrangements exist for induction, appraisal and professional development. The school recently received recognition by the Investors in People scheme for the quality of its provision. Newly qualified teachers have strong support from line managers and the professional tutor. The school's appraisal system, called *Staff Review and Development*, operates through line managers, includes lesson observation, and informs the professional development programme. The Finance Director operates a parallel arrangement for support staff. Both run smoothly. Professional development supports the School Development Plan in contrast to the emphasis reported in the previous inspection. Recent staff training includes department leadership skills, target setting, action planning and the National Literacy Scheme.
52. Accommodation is satisfactory. The new buildings for science and the Learning Resources Centre, and the remodelling of the ICT room add to the quality of the learning environment. Some accommodation weaknesses reported previously show improvement, for example geography is consolidated in two adjacent rooms, food technology is in refurbished accommodation, and music has a larger base room with more storage. Weaknesses remain however. Workshop accommodation for design and technology is in the old science laboratories and these are unsuitable to deliver National Curriculum programmes of study. The school has applied for a grant to improve this accommodation. One of the art rooms is very small, lacks display space, and has no means of controlling the heat level. It is an unsatisfactory teaching space. The gymnasium and hall are heavily used during the autumn and winter because the fields suffer from poor drainage and are frequently unusable. Some history is taught in a distant mobile classroom, and instrumental music practice occurs in the Sandhurst building some distance from the music department. This creates difficulties for both subjects. The buildings and site are cleaned to a high standard, and very little graffiti is seen. This is dealt with quickly and regularly when it occurs.
53. Learning resources are satisfactory. A new Learning Resources Centre (LRC), easily accessible from the central school building, opened earlier this term. It is light, spacious and attractive. The current book stock is 8,200 with capacity to increase. The librarian scrutinised the stock recently for relevance and condition. There are good facilities for study, and the sixth form has a separate book collection and study area on an upper level. Some subject sections require development, for example business studies. Over 600 books are borrowed weekly, and much use is made of the computer and CD-ROM facilities for research. Year 7 have lessons in the LRC fortnightly when they learn how to access information. Some subjects use the LRC well as a focus of research for particular enquiries, such as life in the Caribbean in geography. The LRC staff support pupils and teachers well. The librarian obtains loan materials through the local education service to supplement school resources. In contrast to these good learning resources some subjects are without adequate provision. Design and technology lacks a computerised sewing machine to deliver the latest curriculum requirements. There is a shortage of basic equipment in the food and resistant materials areas of the curriculum. In music there are no printers which limits the use of computers for musical notation. Resources for religious education are just adequate.

The efficiency of the school

54. School financial planning is satisfactory. The delegated funds that it receives from the Local Education Authority are close to national norms. The school receives significant additional funds from a variety of other sources, especially a charitable trust. The Headteacher, Financial Director and Governors' Finance Committee establish the school's budget. They take into consideration the financial requirements of the School Development Plan and the day to day financial needs of the school before submitting it to the full Governing Body for ratification. The final agreed budget is the product of a planning process that is also informed by middle managers. The Finance Committee meets regularly to review the operation of the budget. These reviews form part of subsequent budget planning processes. The School Development Plan contains both short and long term priorities. The long-term plan is not fully costed and this creates some difficulty for those establishing the full budget.
55. Changes in the detail of the funds delegated by the authority have contributed to the school having a significant budget deficit. Governors have tackled this and have taken steps to ensure that the budget will be balanced within a three year period. The Local Education Authority has accepted the school's plans. School financial managers have compensated for some of the difficulties with the budget by securing funds from a variety of grant making bodies. These funds have provided computers, a digital piano for music, kit for school football teams and funds for building work. Over the past four years the school has used funds from its own charitable trust to improve its accommodation.
56. The school makes satisfactory use of its staff and good use of accommodation and resources. The ratio of staff to pupils is close to the national average and the percentage of time spent in contact with pupils is economical. Accommodation is sufficient and well arranged for most subjects. Departments generally make good use of the learning resources at their disposal. A new Learning Resource Centre has recently opened. This has improved study opportunities and access to computer technology for pupils in all subjects. The various grants that the school receives are appropriately used and those for pupils with special educational needs are well applied to help individuals and groups requiring extra support. The use of funds for the MLD unit is satisfactory.
57. Financial control is satisfactory. A formula based on the number of pupils studying the subject is used to calculate departmental allowances. Staff responsible for budgets receive regular detailed financial reports. The Headteacher and governors, who are well informed about the state of the budget at any time of the financial year, receive regular financial reports from the Financial Director and consider the cost effectiveness of spending. The latest auditor's report made recommendations to improve systems of financial control. Significant amongst them were recommendations concerning the receipt of goods and the use of inventories to record school stock. Action has been taken on all recommendations. Secretarial and other support staff provide an efficient, welcoming service, and the school runs well on a day to day basis.
58. In relation to pupils' abilities on entering the school and their attainment and progress whilst at Beaminster School, the quality of education provided and unit cost per pupil, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

1. Pupils' attainment in English overall is above average. In 1998, in the end of Key Stage 3 national tests, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 was well above the national average, and the percentage of those achieving Level 6 was broadly in line with the national average. The figures show that the performance of pupils was above the national average by over a year's progress, confirming that pupils made good progress during the key stage and showing good value added. This is also confirmed when the school's performance is compared with the national benchmarks. The figures for 1998 show pupils' performance in the English tests was also well above average in comparison with schools where pupils are from similar backgrounds. Boys made the same good progress as the girls. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, however, pupils' average performance was close to the national average. There was steady upward trend during these years over and above the improving national picture. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the national average dropped and overall it was below average. Improved moderation procedures, now in place, will in future assist better teacher assessment. In the GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils who achieved A* to C grades in English language was broadly in line with the national average in 1997 and 1998, with 100% achieving grades A* to G. In 1999, there was a great improvement in standards. It is a strong feature of the department that such a high proportion of pupils is entered for GCSE in both language and English literature. In both 1997 and 1998 the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in English literature was significantly above the national average. In 1997, 100% of pupils achieved grades A* to G, and in 1998 the proportion of those achieving A* to C was broadly in line with the national average. 1999 has seen a significant improvement.
2. At Advanced Level the proportion of pupils achieving grades A and B in English literature is consistently better than the national average. Numbers entered for the examination vary widely, but there is a consistently high number of A grades. Almost all pupils have achieved a pass in the last three years. In 1999, all pupils achieved grades A to D.
3. Standards of speaking and listening, reading and writing, in the subject are enhanced by drama lessons, particularly at Key Stage 3. Drama provides good opportunities for public performance at both key stages. Some pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening, for example when they take part in public speaking performances and a mock trial as part of the extension and enrichment programme.
4. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They have well-developed skills oral collaboration. In one Year 8 lesson, they were able to effectively organise a campaign for and against an imaginary project to be based in the town. They presented their findings in the class clearly and confidently. Pupils have a good knowledge of terms to describe and analyse techniques in English literature by the end of the key stage. In a lesson in Year 9, in which "Remember" by Christina Rossetti was being studied, they were able to identify the quatrains and sestet in the sonnet. They used its pattern of pronouns to understand that the first message the sonnet gives is a selfish one, and as the pronouns alter, so the reader is urged to stop grieving and to continue with life. By the end of the key stage, pupils write well-judged essays in literary criticism. They write about "The Ghost Messengers" by Robert Swindell, placing it squarely in the genre of ghost stories. Pupils write for a range of purposes and in a variety of styles. They have a developing sense of audience. Pupils' independent work is a strong feature of their attainment. There is a good emphasis on spelling and grammar. Re-drafted work is often substantially correct. There is, however, too little use of

ICT, although pupils frequently word process their work at home.

5. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have good skills of oral collaboration. All speak clearly and confidently in class. All but the most reticent can argue a point of view fluently. Pupils use their oral skills effectively to refine their ideas before writing. In a lesson on "Across the Barricades", for example, low achievers were able to discuss standard and non-standard English before writing about social divisions. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to pay the close attention to text required for successful literary criticism. In a Year 10 lesson pupils readily identified a range of poetic devices in "Disabled" by Wilfred Owen and annotated the text to help them analyse and organise their criticism of the poem. Pupils write at increasing length and with a good sense of style. Year 10 pupils were able to write at length and very perceptively on the social background of "Of Mice and Men", concentrating on racism, sexism, itinerancy, loneliness and the pursuit of the American dream. An excellent standard of literary criticism continues to be a significant strength.
6. In the sixth form, pupils collaborate readily and highly effectively. They have much to contribute orally to the lessons. They present their arguments to the class clearly and succinctly. Pupils are beginning to read widely to support their assertions and their studies generally. Literary criticism shows a developing personal style. Pupils respond sensitively to the texts covered. Essays show a striking capacity to sustain and illustrate a coherent argument.
7. Pupils make consistently good progress in both key stages and in the sixth form. Typically good progress was seen in a lesson on "How green you are" by Berlie Doherty in which pupils learned inference and deduction by finding out as much information as possible about the character of Anastasia. In Key Stage 4, they made great strides in the skills of annotation as they marked up poetry of the First World War. In the sixth form, pupils developed their oral skills rapidly in response to Carol Ann Duffy's "Collected Poems".
8. Pupils enjoy the lessons and become completely absorbed in the texts studied. Pupils want to learn. They enjoy learning for its own sake. They are interested, work hard and stay focussed on their tasks. Behaviour is very good. Pupils respond well to a challenge. They are capable of sustaining long periods of concentration. In one lesson in Year 9, a class was completely silent as they analysed a demanding text. Pupils undertake role-play confidently. They collaborate willingly. Pupils develop good skills to aid their independent learning as they increase the depth and range of their reading, learn to annotate text more usefully and increase their capacity to collaborate orally.
9. Pupils do well because they are consistently well taught. They do so well in English literature because teachers have a particularly good knowledge of the subject and the requirements of examinations. Expectations of the pupils are high and well realised. Teachers plan their lessons carefully. Strategies to catch pupils' interest and imagination are well considered and effective, rather than merely entertaining. Because pupils are so interested in the work, management of classes appears effortless. Assessment is accurately undertaken and well used in lesson planning. Good quality schemes of work which are shared by all teachers and contain clear assessment objectives contribute both to the consistently good standard of teaching and to the good progress of the pupils. Monitoring of coursework is careful and effective and has contributed significantly to pupils' improved grades in the GCSE examinations.
10. The newly appointed head of department provides a leadership of high quality. Management of the subject is conscientious, well informed and highly effective.
11. Since the last inspection standards of attainment in both English language and literature have

improved significantly at Key Stages 3 and 4. The high standards in the sixth form have held firm. After a period in which standards of assessment were unsatisfactory, procedures have been improved so that they are now good. Accommodation has been greatly improved. Access to ICT is still inadequate, although pupils word process their work at home and present it to a high standard. A joint policy of assessment of speaking and listening for English and drama has yet to be developed.

Literacy.

12. Standards of literacy are good and fully support learning in all subjects at both key stages and in the sixth Form. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and improve their capacity for oral collaboration. In geography, pupils give well-illustrated formal talks to the rest of the class. Pupils listen to native speakers in French, although speaking in this subject is an area for development. Technical vocabulary is used orally and effectively in such subjects as geography, science, English literature and business studies. There are some opportunities for pupils to speak in unfamiliar situations as part of the extension and enrichment programme. In Key Stage 4, business studies, particularly Young Enterprise, provides a particularly lively forum for debate.
13. Pupils are introduced to a wide variety of worthwhile literature in English at Key Stage 3 but many of them, particularly boys, do not read much beyond that except for leisure fiction. Pupils read fluently for information across the whole curriculum. They use the library confidently. They efficiently derive information from CD ROMs. Pupils read widely in the sixth form to deepen their understanding, particularly in English.
14. Pupils writing skills fully support their work, although ICT is not used as much as it could be. Pupils write extensively in English at both key stages and in the sixth form. In R.E, pupils write good narrative and imaginative poetry. Pupils write to explain their observations, using good technical language, in science. Pupils' writing covers a wide range in history, with empathetic writing a strong feature of their work. At all key stages, pupils re-drafted writing is substantially correct.

Mathematics

15. The attainment of pupils in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 is close to both the national average, and the average attained by pupils in similar schools. Over the three years 1996-1998 boys consistently attained higher levels of attainment than girls.
16. In the GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4, the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C is in line with national average for the two years to 1998. In 1999 the percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-C improved by a remarkable 20%. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*-G is consistently above national averages, reaching 100% in 1998 and 1999.
17. Sixth form pupils achieve results at Advanced Level that are close to national averages. In 1999 all Advanced Level pupils attained grade E or better.
18. In Key Stage 3 lessons, attainment was in line with national expectations or higher in all but one lesson. By the end of the key stage, attainment is in line with the expected level. All but the lowest attaining pupils are competent and confident working with numbers. Calculators are used appropriately, usually to check accuracy of answers. Most handle data well and standards of statistics are generally high. High attainers use scatter diagrams to identify correlation. All understand the concept of probability and most use the probability scale accurately. Lower attaining pupils experience difficulty summarising their findings in sentences. This difficulty

- significantly lowers attainment levels. Lower attainers work well with tally charts and frequency tables. All but the lowest attaining can calculate various measures of average. When solving problems, most pupils are able to form and test hypotheses, and explain their conclusions. Lower attainers find it difficult to construct a sequence of operations to assist problem solving.
19. In Key Stage 4 attainment is in line with, or above, national expectations in all lessons, except for those with pupils from the MLD Unit. In lessons with higher attaining pupils attainment is well above national expectations. By the end of the key stage attainment is firmly above expected levels. High attainers work accurately with algebra, manipulating and solving complex equations. They use algebra skills to support problem-solving work. All pupils recognise, and correctly name, common shapes. They calculate the size of angles associated with these shapes, and use this information to form conclusions about other shapes. The highest attaining pupils work well with similar triangles. They understand the relationship between linear and area enlargement factors and have very good mental arithmetic skills. Many of the lower attaining have successfully developed alternative strategies to overcome the difficulties experienced when working with numbers.
 20. In sixth form lessons, attainment is above nationally expected levels. Pupils have a good knowledge of statistics but some have difficulty in explaining the effect of their calculations on the data. Upper sixth pupils are competent and confident in differentiating complex algebraic expressions.
 21. Overall progress is good at both key stages and in the sixth form. In one lesson with pupils from the unit progress was unsatisfactory. Written work indicates that pupils make good progress over time, in small but significant steps, drawing on previously learned knowledge and skills. For example, algebra progresses from simple substitution in Key Stage 3, to the solution of quadratic equations in Key Stage 4. Measurement of length and angles at Key Stage 3 is extended to consideration of similar triangles and enlargement factors in Key Stage 4. Lower attaining pupils and those with special education needs make sound progress when lesson objectives are explained to them, and they are supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Where progress is restricted it is usually the result of low levels of confidence, difficulty in recalling previous learning and untidy work that makes revision impossible. Good progress stems from careful revision and consolidation of earlier learning, which is used as a foundation for new learning. Progress is very good in lessons containing a variety of activities designed to sustain pupil motivation and extend learning. Good progress in standards of numeracy has resulted from the inclusion of a numeracy session in each lesson.
 22. Teaching was satisfactory or better in every lesson observed. In over half of the lessons teaching was good or better. In some lessons at both Key Stages 3 and 4 teaching was very good or exceptional. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subject and teach with enthusiasm. The most effective lessons are well planned, meet the learning needs of all pupils, and learning objectives are clearly explained to pupils. They include a balanced variety of activities designed to sustain pupils' motivation, and extend learning. One such Key Stage 3 lesson on algebra with lower attaining pupils required them to revise and consolidate number skills. These skills were then developed through a series of short, increasingly difficult tasks, guiding pupils to the attainment of the lesson objectives. At the end of the lesson pupils were confidently solving simple equations. The pace of the lesson sustained the motivation of pupils and ensured good progress. In a Key Stage 4 lesson on similar triangles the teacher asked questions encouraging pupils to form and test their own theories about enlargement factors. The lesson moved at a brisk pace, the work was challenging and progress was very good. The lesson concluded with an exciting number game designed to consolidate pupils' number knowledge. Pupils sustained a high level of motivation, responded well to the very challenging work and made very good progress. In less effective lessons progress slows when work planned to meet the learning needs of all pupils is not used. In these lessons higher attaining pupils do not find the work sufficiently challenging

and low attaining pupils become confused. Occasionally, opportunities for practical work are missed, for example, a lesson where pupils were required to draw tessellations in their books rather than assemble cut out shapes as a mosaic. Homework is set regularly and makes a significant contribution to learning. Work is marked accurately and teachers use assessments well to inform their lesson planning. Classes are well managed and standards of discipline are high. Insufficient use is made of computers to support learning. This is caused by poor access to the school's computers, a problem that has recently been resolved.

23. The department is very strongly led and benefits from a good well qualified team of teachers who are committed to their pupils. Schemes of work are clear, linked to National Curriculum levels and identify appropriate resources. Good assessment procedures are consistently applied across the department. Departmental performance targets are produced by comparing pupil assessments with results from a bank of tests that predict future performance. These very good assessment arrangements generate individual attainment targets for Key Stage 4 pupils. However, they are not used to the same effect with other pupils.
24. Since the last inspection report, the department has maintained its high standards.

Numeracy

25. Although there is no formal whole school policy for numeracy in the curriculum, the subject is well supported by the application of mathematical skills and knowledge in other curriculum subjects. Graphical work is well developed in geography, science and history. In a Key Stage 4 history lesson pupils analysed a variety of data extracted from the class register. They represented the data in pie charts and histograms. In sixth form geography lessons pupils use and understand correlation coefficients. Measurement skills and mental arithmetic are practised in a range of subjects, particularly physical education. Pupils at both key stages apply their algebra skills when solving equations in science. In information and communications technology lessons pupils tabulate data in a spread sheet and use formula to manipulate them. The department has started planning for the introduction of a whole school policy and has completed an audit of numeracy in the curriculum.

Science

26. In tests at the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' results were well above the national average. Attainment is well above expectations when compared with similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 4, in GCSE examinations the percentage of pupils achieving A* - C in balanced science, double award, is very high and twice the national average. All pupils passed in the range A* - G. There is a continuing upward trend in attainment at Key Stage 4. This represents a further improvement since the last inspection. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
27. In recent examinations for Advanced Level biology all seven pupils passed, nearly one half achieved a grade A or B. Similar successes were achieved in physics. Pupils were less successful in chemistry where less than half the pupils entered passed, and with lower grades.
28. From the evidence of the inspection, at Key Stage 3, pupils achieve a standard of work that is well above national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 4 it is also well above national expectations. There is evidence that the pupils' level of understanding of this subject is of a very high standard. In Years 12 and 13 attainment in all three subjects is in keeping with course requirements to achieve the full range of grades at Advanced Level.
29. Overall pupils make very good progress with their studies. This is a consequence of the provision

of rich and stimulating education of the highest quality. The science teachers work very well as a team and consistently set the highest expectations to which the pupils readily respond. Excellent management and the very valuable contribution of an experienced and dedicated technician complete this story of success.

30. Pupils in Year 9 have already acquired a good understanding of chemical processes. They set up apparatus to investigate the effect of heat on copper carbonate. They write equations to represent this thermal decomposition reaction and similarly know about some oxidation reactions. At Key Stage 4 pupils make very good progress with their studies. By Year 11 the majority can describe how organisms have features to improve their chances of survival in their harsh environment. They can explain in detail the many ways a cactus is modified for desert survival, understanding that the stomata through which the plant breathes are sunk in grooves down the sides of the cactus to protect them from wind to reduce water loss.
31. Pupils make good progress with their studies with their studies in Years 12 and 13. Good progress is made when pupils are studying physics in Year 13. They understand the principle of superposition of sound waves and consequently they can explain constructive and destructive interference including interference between direct and reflected radio waves. The pupils demonstrate an increasing confidence in the way that they use scientific concepts to provide full and accurate replies to their teachers' questioning. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
32. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn and clearly enjoy their lessons. They sustain their concentration and are prepared to contribute well in class discussions. They answer questions thoughtfully and knowledgeably. During practical sessions they work well in groups sharing ideas and supporting each other in their learning. They take pride in their work. This is completed neatly with good attention to recording observations accurately. All pupils take care with equipment and carry out experiments safely. Older pupils demonstrate insight and a strong sense of enquiry. They ask far-reaching questions and confidently explain difficult concepts.
33. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. The teachers have a very good knowledge across all aspects of the subject. They organise their pupils and manage classroom and laboratory situations to a very good standard. Very good questioning reinforces previous learning and advances the pupils' understanding. Higher attaining pupils receive very good encouragement and support. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties are taught science to a very good standard by a specialist teacher. The lessons are lively and interesting and designed to increase the pupils' skills and confidence.
34. At times the quality of teaching is outstanding. In Year 7 pupils were captivated when they studied the anatomy of a narcissus flower. This was a lively lesson with high academic rigor. However, the teacher ensured that an appreciation of the wonder and beauty of the whole flower was not lost. Outstanding teaching was seen in Year 10 when the whole class enacted the process of the formation of igneous rock as molten materials move from the mantle to the crust of the earth. With such a vivid portrayal it made it easy for the pupils to understand why granite is made of much larger crystals than basalt, relating this to where the molten rock started to cool.
35. The curriculum is very well planned and the schemes of work are matched accurately to National Curriculum requirements. Much attention is given to developing and enhancing pupils' skills in numeracy and literacy. Pupils are given many opportunities to advance their skills in ICT when studying science. They use the Internet for research and a computer connected to sensors to directly collect data and plot graphs. Some take the opportunity to gain a certificate of

competence in data logging during out of school activities. The standard of pupils' work is regularly monitored and recorded as they progress from year to year. Pupils earn certificates for good work in their scientific investigations. A record of marks for homework is kept along with results from regular testing. After Year 7 pupils are taught according to their abilities in sets. Regular assessment enables pupils to be correctly placed and appropriately challenged.

36. There are many other opportunities for pupils to extend their learning through visits and out of school activities. These include a trip to a science centre in Bristol and special activities for pupils to become involved in environmental issues. Recently pupils were involved in the collection of micro-meteors as part of a national survey.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

1. Performance at GCSE has greatly improved since the last inspection. In 1999, 65% of pupils gained A*-C passes which is higher than the national average for comprehensive schools. The proportion of boys and girls achieving A*-C was about the same.
2. In lessons observed and from the scrutiny of work, at both key stages, the majority of pupils are achieving the national standard and a minority of pupils are exceeding the national standard. At Key Stage 3 there is confidence in and good control of a variety of media. Creative work is being undertaken in oil pastel, 3D clay and papier mache, pattern work based on foreign cultures, dry brush and scumble application as well as intricate drawing from observation. At Key Stage 4, pupils are experimenting successfully and producing sensitive and individual work. They are confident with 3D, the broad sweep of acrylic paint and delicate watercolour. There is a strong sense of balance, exciting composition and good control of tone and texture in the work undertaken. At both key stages the influence of the styles of established artists and periods on the pupils' work is obvious.
3. At the two key stages, both over time and at the present time, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress through the key stage. At Key Stage 3, pupils were observed acquiring and consolidating their knowledge of the use of colour to create mood, how to adjust shading and arrange the focus within a composition. They were also developing a deeper understanding of balance and symmetry. Their familiarisation with the language of art was also being expanded. At Key Stage 4, pupils were observed modifying light and shade, adding texture to composition, developing their own approach to subjects using an impressionistic style, adding depth and highlights to their work and evaluating their projects using the GCSE criteria.
4. At both key stages the response of the pupils to lessons is very good. Pupils of all abilities remain focused throughout lessons, show positive attitudes and behave very well. They work well together and are confident both in the analysis of their own work and that of others. They co-operate productively and take great pride in the presentation of their work. Candidates of all abilities express themselves clearly using recognisable art vocabulary with confidence and are always sensitive to the feelings of others. There is an obvious enjoyment of the subject which, coupled with a desire to do well, helps to create a workmanlike, happy and creative atmosphere in the lessons.
5. Teaching at both key stages is good. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of art education. Challenges presented to pupils of all abilities are high but realistic targets are set which do not defeat the pupils. Expectations from pupils are well understood by them, always presented very clearly and underlined by reference to work being undertaken. Classroom

organisation is efficient and distribution of equipment is well managed. Positive assessment takes place during lessons and regular homework is given. This helps to ensure the commitment of pupils at both key stages. The emphasis on caring and creativity in the delivery of the curriculum accords well with the overall ethos of the school.

6. The display work around the school is stimulating and the visits to local art galleries, The National Gallery and The National Portrait Gallery in London allied to an art trip to Venice, contribute very positively to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Business studies

1. There was no report on this aspect of the school's provision in the last inspection report. The department offers a range of courses. In Key Stage 4 business studies is taught as a GCSE examination subject. In the sixth form Advance Level business studies is offered as well as a component in an NVQ Level 2 course.
2. The 1999 GCSE examination results were well above the national results for the subject. Nearly 65% of the candidates achieved grades A*-C in the subject and this was a considerably increase on the results achieved in 1998. In the last two years girls have achieved higher grades than the boys overall and in 1999 this gap in performance widened considerably.
3. At Advanced Level the size of the group in 1999 makes valid comparison with national figures difficult but the percentage of pupils achieving grades A-E was 89% and 22% of the grades were in the A and B categories. The subject contributes appropriately to the NVQ Level 2 course. Appropriate standards were achieved in 1999 and over 25% achieved high grades.
4. The standards in lessons observed were always appropriate and in line with what is expected by the examination syllabus. The quality of teaching is good. Expectations are high and the management of the classes is good. Good use is made of ICT equipment and good subject knowledge supports pupils' acquisition of the extensive technical vocabulary to be used. Work is carefully planned in the light of the requirements of the examination syllabus but occasionally precisely what it is intended that the pupils will learn is not made sufficiently clear to them and they do not make the progress expected of them. There is a wide range of ability within the classes and there is insufficient use of a range of differing tasks to extend the challenge to the full range of abilities. Work is marked and assessed regularly and the information is used to plan activities to support pupils making improvements. The difference between the standards in lessons during the inspection and those achieved in end of course examinations is explained mainly by the timing of the course where many of the lessons during the inspection were revision of topics or reviews of examination performance. At Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrated appropriate skills in the use of information and communications technology, mainly in word processing. They showed appropriate knowledge and understanding of concepts such as mission statements and social costs and in relation to the latter made appropriate analysis and presentations re the impact of a proposed by-pass on a village community. Pupils showed some good skills in literacy for example in their evaluation of the mini-enterprise activity where they had sold products at the Christmas Fair in the week prior to the inspection. Progress at Key Stage 4 is good. Pupils have no prior experience of the subject and achieve standards above those achieved nationally. They develop a good knowledge and understanding of technical terms and can translate this theoretical understanding into description and in the best cases evaluation of case studies. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress but no examples of learning support were seen in lessons. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory. Pupils' notes are clear and well-organised and follow the requirements of the syllabus. There are varying standards in the answering of examination-style questions. Some do find these activities difficult but the emphasis on practicing such responses enables them to make satisfactory progress. There

is evidence in some of the work of pupils achieving above average standards and making good progress.

5. Pupils respond well to their lessons. They are attentive and listen carefully to the teacher's input. They are prepared to work in groups to produce presentations for the whole class but some make very limited oral contributions to such discussions. They stay on task well and act responsibly when using the Learning Resource Centre for research purposes, as for example, when searching the Internet for appropriate examples of the mission statements of major companies. They appear to have responded very positively to the opportunity to work collaboratively in the mini-enterprise activity.
6. The subject contributes well to a broadening of the curriculum and its relevance to the pupils. There is a good contribution to pupils' acquisition of skills in literacy and numeracy and they use ICT resources well. There is a good contribution to the moral development of the pupils and on the evidence presented satisfactory contribution to their social development. There is only one person in the department and although there is appropriate development planning the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is limited.

Design and technology

1. The standards attained by pupils in the 1998 and 1999 examinations are below the national average and well below the school's average, particularly in resistant materials, but a great improvement on the previous years results. GCSE examination results have declined since the last inspection, but since then there has been a change in the curriculum, from traditional Craft Design and Technology and Home Economics to Design and Technology, so comparisons in standards are difficult to make. In lessons, attainment is better in Year 10 than in Year 11, but still below what it should be, particularly in the practical skills in resistant materials and textiles. Good standards are achieved in food technology and creative designing skills in textiles technology.
2. Attainment in the end of Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 was well below the national average and significantly below those in most other subjects. Achievement in lessons is still below national expectations and not as high as it could be due to the lack of challenge and expectations in making skills in most areas of the subject, except in food technology. Designing is better than making in all areas, except food technology. There is an over-emphasis on drawing and colouring at Key Stage 3.
3. In the sixth form attainment in the 1999 Advanced Level design and technology; design examination was very good. Good standards and progress are made in lessons. The pupils work on their own specific projects related to real life situations e.g. a car seat was being designed and made for a lady with a spine injury.
4. The progress that the pupils make during lessons is mainly sound or better in all key stages. The progress they make matches the quality of teaching they receive. Progress that has been made over time is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3, but better in Year 7 and 8, than in Year 9. At Key Stage 4 good progress is made in food technology, and satisfactory progress made in the other areas. Year 10 pupils make better progress than Year 11. Many high achieving pupils use their own initiative to make good progress. Some less able pupils make good progress because of the good teaching they receive.
5. Teaching in two thirds of lessons at Key Stage 3, was good or very good. At Key Stage 4 teaching was sound or better. Advanced Level teaching in Year 13 was good. Good lessons were well planned, focussed and effectively managed by specialists. Where it was very good, teachers gave clear explanations, pitched the lessons at exactly the appropriate level of interest and

ability, asked probing and challenging questions, delivered at a brisk pace and lively manner, using a variety of teaching strategies during the lesson. Teaching was less effective when specialist knowledge was limited and pupils were not sufficiently challenged.

6. Pupils' response to teaching was mainly very positive. In the majority of lessons at Key Stage 3 response was good, it was satisfactory or better at Key Stage 4, and good in Advanced Level lessons. The majority of pupils willingly settle to their work and enjoy being actively involved in learning. Most of them work with sustained concentration intent on producing good quality work. They behave very well, with good humour and work well co-operatively. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
7. Although the curriculum is well planned, it is still in the stages of development and there is insufficient consideration given to providing opportunities for pupils to develop higher order making skills and include more subject specific technical knowledge. Assessment is built into schemes of work and used in each module at Key Stage 3, but the procedures are complex and burdensome.
8. Teaching is still hampered by poor accommodation for work with resistant materials, as mentioned in the last report. There is a lack of basic resources such as workshop refurbishments and machinery, computerised sewing machines, computer-aided manufacture (CAM), ICT hardware and software. There is still a shortage of technician support, also mentioned in the last report. Some staff need more training in specialist skill development.
9. The department has had some staffing problems in the past, which have now been resolved. The majority of the staff have changed since the last inspection. The department has a clear vision for the future and is now in a position to improve standards and move forward.

Geography

1. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve standards above the national expectations for their ages. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above the national average. In 1998 58% of pupils gained A*-C grades in the GCSE examinations, compared with 52% achieved nationally. The 1999 results show a marked rise to 79.5% gaining A*-C grades. There is a trend of improvement over recent years. Girls' performed better than boys in 1998, but in 1999 their performance was similar. Sixth form pupils attain standards above national expectations at the end of the Advanced Level course. In 1998 all pupils gained grades A-E compared with the national average of 91%, and 43% achieved grades A-B when the national average was 34%. Attainment at Advanced Level in 1999 was 92% at grades A-E, and 31% at grades A-B. Over time attainment shows improvement overall, with some fluctuations in the percentage gaining A-B grades, and in the performance of boys and girls.
2. Key Stage 3 pupils understand how different types of rainfall occur. They know the earth's crust is unstable, and pupils in Year 8 make 3D models of volcanoes and label their features accurately. Pupils in Year 9 classify economic activities into a number of broad categories, and they use statistics to draw conclusions about development in various parts of the world. Key Stage 4 pupils use geographical terms confidently to show their understanding of the coastal processes of erosion and deposition. Pupils with statements of special educational needs (taking the Certificate of Achievement in geography) know the factors that favour the growth of industry in particular places, such as the rope and net-making activities of the Bridport area. For their GCSE individual studies pupils use research techniques, such as questionnaires and fieldwork to obtain evidence. Sixth form pupils use a variety of information sources to investigate Advanced Level course modules, for instance the management of coastal landforms. They know a variety of

measures to counter erosion, and from their research and teacher's input they compile reports on how to manage the effects of the sea and weather on different types of coastline. Pupils at all levels are competent with information and communication technology. They gather factual information from the Internet and CD-ROMs, and use word-processing and desktop publishing programs to present their work.

3. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. They learn that geographical conclusions result from measurement, observation and recording, for example to explain weather and climate. As they move through this key stage pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of global patterns and processes. Higher attaining pupils gain confidence in using such terms as *epicentre* and *aftershock* when answering questions on earthquakes. Occasionally lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs progress slowly when a task is too difficult for them. Overall, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. They acquire a substantial body of knowledge and use it with understanding. Year 10 pupils, for example, give presentations in pairs to their class. This challenges them to prepare thoroughly, and present their talks referring to annotated diagrams on transparencies and paper. This work motivates all abilities to progress well, including those with special needs. A number of pupils with statements of special educational need make satisfactory progress with the Certificate of Achievement in the geography course. Sixth form pupils make satisfactory progress over time, and those who are admitted with lower academic attainment frequently make good progress. Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of complex environmental management processes, such as the treatment and disposal of sewage. They acquire skills that help them summarise the physical and human factors of such issues as a conflict matrix.
4. Pupils' attitudes to geography are very good. They enjoy the subject, and many choose to study it in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. They respond very well to challenges and organise time effectively when asked to work in small groups. Great pride is shown in the presentation and originality of group work, for example reports on volcanic eruptions written in newspaper format by pupils in Year 8. They apply themselves seriously, but there is a constant buzz of discovery to their learning. In topics that refer to desperate human situations, such as earthquake disasters and life in less economically developed countries. They discuss the social, moral and cultural issues with much understanding.
5. The quality of teaching was good in two-thirds of lessons observed, and very good in a third. Teachers have good subject knowledge that is used effectively to question pupils' understanding. This is particularly challenging on occasions for higher attaining pupils. Teachers set high expectations in terms of completing tasks on time in lessons, and for homework. Some lessons provide a high level of independent research by small groups. Pupils enjoy using ICT for research and presentation. Teachers develop pupils' literacy skills, when they ask pupils to present work orally. They also improve their listening skills, for example, by reading Caribbean poetry to introduce the area's culture. Teachers make good use of fieldwork references in lessons, and they strongly support the development of individual study skills. Management of pupils is very good: its success is based on good planning, organisation of time and resources, and the brisk pace of lessons. Teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment and progress, and make good use of assessment in planning future work. They set targets for pupils, and involve them in assessment of their work. Occasionally work is not well matched to pupils' ability levels. For instance, when lower attaining pupils are unable to start a task unaided, or when higher attaining pupils complete a task quickly and receive no further work to extend their capability.
6. This continues to be a very good department. Very clear direction is given, and teachers show commitment to high standards. Matters raised in the previous inspection have been addressed. There is good practice for improving the attainment of boys at Key Stage 4 by teaching them in single gender classes. Teachers are keen to improve pupils' progress further, and developing

tasks to match ability levels, especially at Key Stage 3, will support the department's objectives.

History

1. Standards of attainment in history for pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are in line with those of similarly-aged pupils nationally in the key elements of knowledge and understanding, historical enquiry and the ability to communicate verbally and in writing. There is less evidence of dealing with interpretations. This judgement on standards is confirmed by the evidence of the teacher assessments made in 1999, which showed that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 or above was slightly below the national average. Standards of attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with the expectations of similarly-aged pupils nationally in their knowledge and understanding of modern world history and their skills in handling historical evidence. The GCSE results for 1999 showed a percentage of pupils achieving grades A*-C which was below the national average and below that of other subjects in the school, although the results for 1997 and 1998 were very much in line with national averages. Standards of attainment of pupils in the sixth form are in line with the course average nationally, in the area of knowledge and understanding of Tudor history. The numbers of pupils taking the Advanced Level examination are too small to make meaningful comparisons with national examination averages, although there is a good pass rate.
2. Pupils enter the school at the age of 11 with standards in history in line with or above expectations for similarly aged pupils nationally. Some make unsatisfactory progress during Key Stage 3. Average-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in several areas. They develop their knowledge and understanding of Ancient Roman history, medieval and Tudor history, the development of Britain between 1750 and 1900, the history of Black America and the history of the modern world. They learn to produce a range of writing, including imaginary 'letters' about Hannibal's attack on Rome, 'newspaper articles' about the assassination of Julius Caesar, and a variety of structured pieces and essays, such as descriptions of the attack on Maiden Castle. Pupils learn to increase their historical vocabulary and begin to evaluate sources for evidence of everyday life, as when Year 7 pupils examine Roman artifacts. They learn to make links between events, as when studying exploration in the New World, and they increase their empathetic understanding when studying the topic of slavery in the Americas. Pupils learn to increase their sense of historical perspective when studying a period of broad change like the Industrial Revolution.
3. However, higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 and those with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. Higher-attaining pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks to consistently raise their levels of attainment. Few pupils with special educational needs receive specialist support, and their progress is restricted, particularly by technical inaccuracies in extended writing.
4. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4 in extending their knowledge and understanding and their ability to analyse and evaluate a range of source material. They increase their knowledge and understanding of the peace settlement after the First World War, and international relations between the Wars, and they examine in depth the causes of the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany. Pupils also learn to analyse the complex causes and consequences of incidents which made up the Cold War. Coursework, for example on the First World War, increases the ability of pupils to do extended writing.
5. Pupils in the sixth form make good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding and their analytical and interpretative skills. When studying events such as the English Reformation, pupils learn to evaluate the respective importance of long and short term causes, and the

significance of key events. When studying Tudor Government, they make good progress in considering different interpretations of topics such as Elizabeth 1's dealings with her parliaments. Pupils make good progress in their ability to write detailed and relevant essays.

6. Pupils' attitudes towards learning in Key Stage 3 are variable. Most pupils are orderly, concentrate well on their work, collaborate effectively as well as work individually, and take pride in presentation. However, there is a substantial minority of pupils which has poor listening skills, does not respect the conventions of speaking appropriately, and is mildly disruptive in some lessons. This restricts progress. Attitudes are satisfactory or good in all Key Stage 4 and sixth form lessons, and older pupils contribute effectively to debate.
7. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 was satisfactory or good in over half the lessons observed, but unsatisfactory in over one third. It is always satisfactory or good at Key Stage 4 and always good in sixth form lessons. Where teaching is good it is characterised by several features. Objectives are clearly set out for pupils. Different tasks or different resources are used to match the different ability levels of pupils, as seen in Year 7 lessons on the Romans and Year 9 lessons on the Industrial Revolution. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, which is imparted enthusiastically to pupils, especially in the sixth form. There is a good emphasis on extending pupils' general and specialist vocabulary, for example teaching them the meaning of concepts such as the Reformation and martyrdom when studying religious change in sixteenth century England. In sixth form lessons the teaching emphasises the importance of changing interpretations. There are high expectations of pupils, as seen when Year 11 pupils were encouraged to debate the significance of American involvement in Vietnam. There are good relationships in lessons, and when the teaching is good, it is authoritative but relaxed. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is principally due to higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 being set tasks of insufficient challenge, tasks which restrict their progress. In such lessons the planning is not geared to specific National Curriculum objectives or intended outcomes, the lessons are too unfocused, or the pace is slow. On a few occasions teachers do not employ sufficient strategies to maintain good behaviour.
8. The history department is led enthusiastically, although both the full-time history teachers have extensive responsibilities in the school. Professional development is inadequate to meet the needs of the non-specialist teacher. The supply of textbooks is barely adequate, and the fact that there is only one specialist teaching room hinders effective integration within the department. The scheme of work lacks sufficiently close focus on National Curriculum outcomes and the use of information and communications technology is underdeveloped.
9. The last inspection judged that the quality of learning in history was sound or better in most lessons and this is still the case. The report also judged that pace and challenge were only moderate. This is still the case in a minority of lessons. The report found that there was insufficient focus on staff development, preparing appropriate work for all abilities, and analysing assessment data to improve planning. These areas are still undeveloped, although the department has begun to tackle them.

Information and communications technology (ICT)

1. Attainment in information and communications technology is in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils can use the computer systems efficiently, and can use a desktop publisher to produce documents which integrate graphs, text and clip art. However, by the end of the key stage higher attainers are not evaluating their work. They do not judge whether their leaflets are suitable for their audience, and they do not consider whether information and communications technology provides the best solutions to their problems. At Key Stage 4 attainment is below expectation. Some pupils are able to develop their skills, but this does not happen consistently.

Attainment is limited in the sixth form. Some pupils develop practical competence to attain NVQ level 2. They become effective users, but develop little understanding of the way that computers and information technology systems work.

2. Progress is initially good in Key Stage 3. Pupils of all abilities rapidly develop familiarity with the machines and the software. They learn to use files independently, and to integrate them into sophisticated presentations. They do not progress to the higher skills where they might evaluate the reliability of a survey which they have recorded, and refine it so that it people can understand the results more easily. Progress is unreliable at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form because individual pupils are not guaranteed the opportunities to develop their skills.
3. The initial rapid progress is largely due to the positive attitudes which pupils bring to the subject. They are well behaved, they co-operate with staff, and they collaborate well together. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, maintain their concentration throughout the lessons.
4. The limits on progress are the result of an inappropriate curriculum at Key Stage 3. The scheme of work introduces a very wide range of practical skills, but does not develop understanding. Pupils are told what to do, and offered few opportunities to decide for themselves what might be best. Tasks are aimed at producing products such as a very precise three-dimensional drawing, rather than developing skills which could be used in other situations. As a result, assessment is related to the quality of the product rather than the skills acquired, and pupils are only aware of what they have made, rather than what they can do. They do not have the opportunity to consider whether the skills they have acquired are useful. They rarely consider the effects and influence of information and communications technology on today's society.
5. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is inadequate. There is some very good use of computers to measure and record scientific processes, but this is not available to every pupil. There are good opportunities within geography for pupils to use the Internet for up-to-date research. These opportunities occur inconsistently because access to the Internet has been unreliable. Elsewhere the intention to use information and communications technology in the way the National Curriculum requires is written into departmental schemes of work. It does not happen as intended, and there is no assessment system to record what experiences individual pupils have been given, or what skills they have developed.
6. In the sixth form the curriculum satisfies the needs of a small group of pupils. The lack of any common course which develops understanding does restrict progression within the subject.
7. All the teaching observed was satisfactory. Even within the restrictive scheme of work there was some good teaching, where teachers anticipated pupil needs, and used questioning well to ensure that lower attainers understood what they needed to do. Teachers prepare in detail and produce good resources for individual lessons. They manage pupils well; they monitor what the pupils are doing, and respond quickly to their questions. They use homework effectively to enable pupils to prepare for the next lesson. Generally teachers direct pupils too much, and do not give them sufficient responsibility. Because lessons are not planned to develop specific skills, there is no review of the skills developed at the end of the lesson, and no record of individual pupils' skill levels. The lessons normally enable lower attainers to cope with the work, but there are no specific activities to extend the skills of those who progress most quickly.
8. The current team of teachers is sufficient to deliver the National Curriculum. The technician is giving good support and the accommodation is good. There are sufficient computers but they are of very different ages and quality. Music and design and technology are particularly restricted in

what they can offer because they do not have up-to-date resources. All departments are hesitant to build lessons round an unreliable Internet service provider.

9. The department needs strong leadership, with a clear understanding of the National Curriculum, and the skills to build a team approach. The curriculum currently gives insufficient access to higher skills at Key Stage 3 and to all pupils at Key Stage 4. The skills of individual pupils and the progress they make is not consistently assessed or recorded.

Modern foreign languages

1. French GCSE A*-C grades in 1997 and 1998 were above national averages. In 1999, pupils who followed the full course maintained this high standard. However, half of the pupils in that year group only followed a short course, but were also entered for the GCSE examination. When these combined results are compared with national norms, levels of attainment are well below average. Girls consistently outperform boys.
2. In recent years only a few pupils have chosen to follow a GCSE course in German. Results have always matched or exceeded national averages. In 1999, thirteen pupils took the exam and they all achieved A*-C grades.
3. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 matches national standards, although there are significant differences between attainment levels in upper and lower sets. Higher attaining pupils can write at length. They use a range of tenses, and appreciate the significance of irregular verbs. They understand adjectival agreement and are able to sustain meaningful dialogues. Lower attainers successfully complete exercises that are based on a single structure, but often struggle when required to combine several elements. This is particularly evident in speaking tasks. Across the ability range, pupils are much less confident when required to initiate a dialogue. When they read aloud from a text, there are frequent inaccuracies in pronunciation. All pupils listen for key words in listening exercises, reading levels are high, and they use dictionaries confidently.
4. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment in relation to national standards remains satisfactory. Higher attainers reach impressive levels of maturity in all aspects of their learning. They speak confidently and write accurately at length. The underlying structure of language is well understood and detailed work on projects such as 'Notre Planete' is impressive. Lower attainers are rarely able to sustain conversations using basic question and answer patterns. Their writing usually follows predictable patterns and lacks variety. Girls generally write much more accurately than boys. All pupils frequently use their textbook as a reference source. Listening and comprehension skills are well developed across the ability range and this helps to boost the examination grades achieved.
5. Progress throughout both key stages is satisfactory for most pupils. It is however, unsatisfactory for some lower attaining boys and for pupils with special educational needs. There is sound consolidation of vocabulary. Higher attainers successfully retain information from previous topics which they incorporate in writing and speaking assignments. Lower attainers have an insecure recall of structures and this results in particularly slow development in speaking skills. Girls progress much more quickly than boys, and they outnumber boys by a wide margin in all top sets. The lack of commitment and attention to detail by a significant minority of boys is largely responsible for their unsatisfactory progress. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties receive only one language lesson per fortnight. This provision does not enable these pupils to develop a secure foundation of basic skills.
6. The few pupils who are studying Advanced Level courses are making satisfactory progress and

their attainment is in line with course expectations. Their work is accurate with due attention to detail in French. Letters to the editor of *Le Figaro* display mature content and style. In German, some pieces of work are brief and contain grammatical inaccuracies. However, work on 'Mein Alptraum' indicates a significant improvement. In both languages, comprehension tasks are completed efficiently. Pupils make notes independently and sixth formers from the linked schools work harmoniously together.

7. Pupils' attitudes are variable. In upper sets pupils recognise the importance of concentration and help to create productive learning partnerships with their teachers. In some lower sets there are good levels of co-operation. For example, a Year 9 French class responded positively to the trust placed in them to prepare for their *Cafe des Reves* project. However, the enthusiasm of younger pupils sometimes degenerates into inappropriate calling out and social chatter. Some boys lack self-control and in some classes they deliberately disrupt the lesson. Most pupils involve themselves actively in the assessment of their own progress, and prepare thoroughly for tests and coursework. There is generally a more casual approach towards understanding structures that will support future progress. This contributes to weaknesses in speaking and the lack of variety in individual writing assignments.
8. Teaching was good in one quarter of lessons and satisfactory in just over half of the lessons observed. Unsatisfactory teaching occurs in Key Stage 3 with lower sets, and there was poor teaching observed in one mixed ability group in Year 7. Teaching is sound rather than inspired. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers know their subject, although they often use English, particularly for organisational matters. In one classroom, the teacher has an array of posters and mobiles that provide helpful cues for pupils whilst they are working independently. In a good German lesson in Year 10, the teacher achieved the lesson objectives by introducing a series of tasks that guided pupils into more individual and extended use of language. Better lessons are always permeated by challenge and active use of language by pupils. This was demonstrated in a French lesson with higher attainers in Year 10, where the teacher planned a carousel of activities enabling her to exert quality control throughout the lesson. Whenever teachers provide pupils with opportunities for personal research, they respond positively. However, they do not adapt their methods sufficiently for lower attaining sets. Although objectives are always ambitious, they are not always appropriate. Writing tasks are sometimes used for control, and insufficient time is devoted to speaking. Resources do not adequately match pupils' capabilities and the continuing use of the coursebook with these pupils stifles initiative. When teaching is poor, explanations are unclear, there is no clear structure to the lesson and there is a failure to engage pupils' interest. Extra support for pupils with special educational needs is generally peripheral. Advanced level pupils are given strong individual attention and teaching imparts a genuine sense of discovery in both content and language development. Lessons are conducted almost entirely in the language being taught.
9. The department has experienced significant changes in personnel in recent years. This has affected continuity. A team of three full-time teachers is currently supported by two part-time appointments. Leadership is based on effective teamwork. The head of department has wisely identified assessment as a key priority within the development plan, and recognises the need to monitor more rigorously the progress of lower attaining pupils, boys in particular.
10. Teaching quality and trends in pupil progress are similar to those reported in the last inspection. The need for more appropriate resources and teaching strategies for lower attainers remains a key issue for the department. All pupils now study at least one language in Key Stage 4. The number of pupils opting for both languages is falling, with only eight in the current Year 10.
11. There is a determination within the department and the senior management team to tackle the identified weaknesses. Staff are looking forward to incorporating new technology in their

schemes of work and there is a willingness to adopt more collaborative teaching methods with lower attaining pupils

Music

1. In the GCSE results for 1999 the number of pupils achieving grades A* - C was 100%. GCSE results since the last inspection have been well above national averages with 100% of pupils achieving grades A* - C in each year that pupils have been entered. Comparisons with national figures are not reliable because of the small number of candidates annually. No candidates have been entered for Advanced Level music over the last three years.
 2. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is in line with national expectations. When performing in a group, pupils can maintain an independent part, making changes as necessary to make their part fit with others. However, individual instrumental skills are underdeveloped through lack of appropriate resources. Singing is also underdeveloped. When composing the introductory music for a film, pupils are able to exploit musical elements and develop their musical ideas using different textures to achieve their intended effect. They are also able to use appropriate music notation to record their work. Pupils' listening skills are well developed and they show good use of music vocabulary in written evaluations of their performing and composing work.
 3. By the end of Key Stage 4 attainment is above national expectations. Year 11 pupils are able to use their knowledge and understanding of musical elements to create effective compositions that are well structured and show good development of ideas. The performing skills of the majority of pupils are of a high standard. They can discuss features of a piece of Blues music, applying previous knowledge of cadences and syncopation for example, and using technical terms.
1. Progress overall is satisfactory. Over Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress. The more musically able make good progress when materials and tasks are matched to ability. There are good gains in listening and appraising skills, but less progress with keyboard skills. Over Key Stage 4, progress is good. For instance, in Year 11 composing work, pupils consolidate and make good gains in their understanding of harmony, texture and structure.
 2. Generally pupils show good attitudes and are well behaved. The take-up rates for GCSE in the current Years 10 and 11 show a significant improvement over previous years. Pupils listen attentively and are able to sustain concentration and stay on-task. However, some pupils become restless when not fully engaged in the work. Pupils work co-operatively in groups on composing tasks and when sharing keyboards and listen with interest to performances by other members of the class. Care and respect for equipment are good and pupils take pride in the presentation of their written work.
 3. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use their own musical skills to help pupils' learning. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Lessons are well planned and there is good integration of performing, composing, listening and appraising activities. Assessment is used effectively in lessons to help pupils make progress, for example, with their keyboard skills or with their composing tasks. However, in Years 7 to 9, materials used are not differentiated sufficiently well to challenge the more musically able. In Year 10 and 11 lessons, teacher expectations are higher and questioning is more challenging. No teaching was observed in the sixth form, as the only pupil was absent. Teaching in instrumental lessons is satisfactory overall with evidence of some good teaching.
 4. There are detailed schemes of work in place for all key stages and these are monitored and revised regularly. Links with primary schools are very good but insufficient time and thought have been given to planning for continuity and progression from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.

There are very effective procedures in place for the assessment of pupils' attainment, with specific assessment criteria for each unit of work. Assessment results are used to inform future lesson planning, units of work and reports.

5. The provision for instrumental and vocal lessons remains a strength of the school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a wide range of instruments and approximately 23% of the pupil population are receiving lessons at school. This has a very positive impact on pupils' achievements in class. Pupils can develop their performing skills further by participating in one of the activities on offer during lunch time – brass ensemble, big band, junior choir and training orchestra, and on Saturday mornings at the West Dorset Music Centre.
6. Department development planning is good and the head of department has clear ideas of how the department needs to move forward in terms of curriculum development. However, there is a lack of monitoring and observation of instrumental teaching.
7. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the music accommodation, which now includes a large teaching room and three small rooms for group work. This now enables full delivery of the National Curriculum programmes of study. However the instrumental teaching takes place in a building some distance from the main music room presenting difficulties for the effective monitoring and management of lessons and for the security of instruments stored during the day. There are plans to make further improvements to the music accommodation in the near future. The recent improvement in the number of keyboards in the main music room now provides enough for a class of pupils to share. There are also a variety of untuned and tuned percussion instruments but the range of instruments provided is narrow. The department is not adequately equipped to deliver the ICT requirements of the National Curriculum through lack of appropriate resources e.g. there are no keyboards that have multi-tracking facilities and no computers with music sequencing software for composing.

National Nursery Examining Board (NNEB)

8. As part of its vocational provision in the sixth form, the school runs an NNEB course for the training of nursery nurses. Although this is a two year course, there is also provision for a one year course leading to the Certificate in Childcare and Education. Results in the NNEB course are good with almost all pupils being awarded the full diploma and obtaining permanent employment. In the lesson observations and from the scrutiny of work, pupils are seen to make good progress. This is particularly evident in their successful application of experiences gained during practical placements to their understanding of the theory of child development.
9. Pupils respond well and enjoy their work. They find the written assignments difficult but they persevere in their completion, aided by a great deal of individual help from their teacher. They work well together in groups, sharing their experiences and listening well to each other.
10. The teaching observed was very good. Lessons proceed at a good pace and are carefully planned with a variety of appropriate activities and resources. Constant encouragement increases pupils' confidence and greatly assists their acquisition of language skills.

Physical education

1. Attainment in physical education lessons is above the national expectations at the end of both key stages and in some lessons pupils demonstrate standards and progress well above those expected. Pupils are selected for local and county teams and in judo teams of pupils have won national championships for a number of years. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the MLD Unit, make similar progress to the other pupils in their class. Pupils take GCSE

and Advanced Level courses in the subject. The first pupils to take Advanced Level received their results in 1999 and the number taking the course was too small to make valid national comparisons. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A-E was 67%.

2. A GCSE course has been in operation for the last four years and the first results were for those pupils taking the examination in 1998. In both 1998 and 1999 results have been in line with national figures, in 1999 the percentage achieving grades A*-C was 50 %. Girls' performance is higher overall than boys. Pupils take a number of tests awarded by national sporting bodies for example in gymnastics, athletics and swimming and the results in these are good overall, with some pupils achieving standards at the top end of the accreditation spectrum.
3. In Key Stage 3 lessons pupils achieved standards overall which were above the national expectations in gymnastics and health related fitness and the progress of many of the pupils is good. Teaching groups are set by ability in the subject. Second sets were achieving standards in line with what is expected nationally whilst first sets were achieving standards above that. Both boys and girls are making good progress in health related fitness in their knowledge of the body and the effect of exercise on it and perform well in circuits which are used to test their knowledge and understanding of both aerobic and anaerobic activities. In gymnastics both boys and girls are making good progress in their standard of performance for B.A.G.A. awards and those in Year 9 who were preparing for their final assessment showed standards above average in the required activities. Pupils incorporate well the suggestions made by their fellow pupils into their performances and standards improve visibly in some lessons. Some good work was seen resulting from homework including the displays of circuits devised by the pupils relating to health related fitness. Pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of technical terms relating to aspects of the subject, they listen well and many make good responses to questioning or opportunities to evaluate their own or the performance of others.
4. In Key Stage 4 lessons pupils achieve standards which are above the national expectation in basketball and hockey and above those expected in aerobics. Year 10 and 11 pupils in their games options made good progress in their passing and stopping and shooting skills in hockey as demonstrated in short corner routines. They umpired well and the games were played with a good knowledge of the rules, which translated in games to good progress for the girls over the key stage and very good progress for some of the boys who were at the end of their first module in the sport. In aerobics Year 10 pupils showed a good understanding of co-ordination in their choreography of routines and had made appropriate progress over the module. In basketball pupils made good progress in developing their skills built on during the module and developing well new defensive strategies. In the GCSE groups standards achieved were appropriate and in line with the expectations of the syllabus. Standards shown in the work scrutiny were always at least appropriate and a small number in each group were achieving levels well above the national expectation. There was appropriate progress between Year 10 and 11 in their skills in leading groups and devising routines to consolidate and extend skills in specific sports. This was seen to good effect in their written reports and in one of the lessons when the circuit selected concentrated on fitness routines appropriate to rugby. Sound progress is maintained in their knowledge, understanding and use of vocabulary appropriate to the different activities and in their response to opportunities to speaking and listening.
5. The sixth form pupils are achieving appropriate standards. Pupils in Year 13 have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the psychology of sports in relation to aspects such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and were able to draw on the results of experiments to use this to analyse the motivation of individuals. Pupils taking the sports leader award showed a good understanding of what constitutes effective leadership in this field and were busy putting this into practice for a series of competitions to be held early next term.

6. The pupils respond well and often very well to their lessons and to the extra-curricular activities and response is good overall. This is reflected in the increased number of pupils opting for the subject at both GCSE and Advanced Level. In many situations they persevere well with the strenuous activities offered to them, for example in the fitness circuits. They work well in pairs and small groups and games are played with good sporting behaviour. They listen carefully to the teachers' inputs and also to the observations and comments of their fellow pupils. Pupils support inter-form matches and other extra-curricular activities well and support the department very well in the handling of both school and district sporting competitions. Pupils and parents are very positive about the school's sporting offerings and they are very proud of what they achieve. The positive picture presented in the last inspection report has been built upon well.
7. The quality of teaching is good. It was always satisfactory, good in most lessons observed and very good on a number of occasions. Teachers have high expectations of both standards and behaviour. They establish good working environments and good, and sometimes very good, relationships with the pupils. Good homework is set especially at Key Stage 3 and there is appropriate assessment of pupils' work and guidance on how to improve. Staff support, generously, a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
1. The National Curriculum requirements are met in physical education and greater opportunities are provided for pupils to enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities which has been recognised by the awarding of the Sportmark. Examination courses and other awards have been introduced since the last inspection. There are some inconsistencies in the incorporation of non-participants into lessons and the provision of warm-down opportunities at the end of sessions do not appear as well established. The indoor accommodation available is restricting, many of the lessons are taken in the school hall and canteen. There are appropriate outdoor hard court surfaces and the swimming pool. Although there are extensive playing fields, the quality of the drainage means that large areas are unusable for considerable parts of the year. The department is well led. There is as yet insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, especially of the new curriculum initiatives. The department has developed very well since the last inspection and is well placed to continue this progress.

Religious education

1. In 1999, at the end of Key Stage 3, attainment was broadly in line with the expectation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Attainment in GCSE religious education was also in line with the national average, with girls achieving at a significantly higher rate than boys. The numbers of pupils accredited at the end of Key Stage 4 under the arrangements governing the Locally Agreed Syllabus were also average.
2. Evidence gained during the inspection shows that standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are above expectations. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are in line with expectations. Currently, there are no pupils taking GCSE courses. Overall, standards in all key stages are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
3. Staffing for religious education has changed since the last inspection and the subject is enjoying something of a renaissance. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with satisfactory knowledge and understanding of religion; in particular, they know something of the main features of Christianity.
4. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils interpret concepts and symbols well, as when pupils produce good work on the symbolism of the creation which they link well both to Islam and to their own views on the environment. Similarly, they have well formed views on important matters such as love, life, death and money. Year 7 pupils produce thoughtful work on the advantages and

disadvantages of arranged marriages and Year 8 provide interesting arguments for and against free will. Year 9 pupils study the spending habits of David Beckham and his wife and relate the value of what they do to earn it to the plight of Dorset farmers today. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the major religions and most can explain what is unique to each of them. Sixth form pupils tackle complicated questions such as the nature of happiness well and show satisfactory powers of analysis and reasoning, as when discussing advertising on television. The subject makes a good contribution to literacy development through a requirement for a comprehensive range of written exercises, including narrative and persona writing. This is sometimes linked to cartoons, for example dysfunctional families like 'The Simpsons'. Poetry is encouraged, as when Key Stage 3 pupils write poems on the nature of love. Currently, the subject makes an unsatisfactory contribution to the development of information and communications technology skills because of both lack of time and software.

5. Progress is satisfactory overall. It was mainly good in lessons observed as a result of good planning which provides pupils with demanding but achievable tasks. In particular, teaching incorporates clear religious interpretations of the subjects being studied. Examples of this were seen on work on the family and Jesus' disciples and on divorce. Higher attaining pupils grasp ideas readily and average attainers also make good progress. Occasionally, pupils with special educational needs make less good progress when the demands of the lesson exceed their speaking and writing skills. Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they study issues from the perspective of right and wrong, evaluate moral and religious issues and analyse the links between religion, culture and society. Pupils also make progress when they write formal evaluations of their own and others' contributions to discussions and ideas.
6. Pupils' responses and attitudes are always good and often very good. They are interested in the subject and, as a result, they show that they are receptive to the possibility of a spiritual dimension to life. This was shown when a Year 7 class readily grasped the principles of Sikhism. They understand the importance of commitment to values and good examples were seen of work on death linked to that of Jesus which pupils then linked to Hindu views on the after-life. They reflect on belief and have firm views, for example, on whether love of money really is the route of evil. They are tolerant of the views of others. Response at Advanced Level is good; pupils respond well and show insight and imagination. Overall teaching at Key Stage 3 is good. Good teaching is lively and positive, drawing ideas and opinions from pupils. Teachers show a good knowledge, as when discussing the story of Abraham and the Covenant. At all key stages, teachers promote an understanding of religion by organising a range of activities which enables pupils to make associations between religion and everyday life. At Key Stage 4, teachers succeed in establishing an atmosphere where pupils can talk freely and they lead discussions confidently, encouraging pupils to seek meanings when looking at religious ideas. The scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of lessons indicate that teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory. There is enthusiasm and a commitment to the subject with well prepared lessons. On occasions, however, maximum use is not made of questioning to develop underlying philosophical concepts.
7. The subject is now enjoying clear, vigorous leadership which has provided it with a strong ethos. This is a major improvement on the earlier report. Similarly, schemes of work are being enhanced and resources built up. There is now a well balanced team of committed teachers. However, there remains no course for all pupils in the sixth form which is an omission in the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. On balance, however, the subject has improved its standards and made good progress in addressing outstanding issues mentioned in the earlier report. With the present organisational arrangements and continued support from the senior management team, the subject should continue its improvement.

Sociology

1. Sociology is available for study in the sixth form at Advanced Level. In the past two years, insufficient candidates from the school have been entered for the final examination to make valid statistical comparisons with national figures. In 1999, three out of four candidates passed but none achieved the higher grades of A-B. In 1998, two out of four candidates passed but again there were no passes at the higher grades. In the lessons observed and from the scrutiny of work, pupils are seen to make satisfactory progress in their understanding of specialist vocabulary, sociological theory and its practical application.
2. Pupils' response in lessons is good. They display courteous behaviour to each other and to their teacher. Some are reluctant to voice their opinions but are willing to answer questions when asked directly. They take their work seriously and show interest in current political events, for example in relation to bias in the media.
3. Teaching is shared between two members of staff, one based in each component of the joint sixth form. Schemes of work are divided between the two teachers who share information readily on all aspects of the subject and on pupils' progress. Teaching was satisfactory in the lessons observed at the school. All pupils were encouraged to contribute to discussions although there were no opportunities for extended debate. Essays and data response questions are marked thoroughly with helpful comments and marks related to examination grades. The provision of increased resources, including the greater use of ICT and a wider variety of text books, would support pupils developing their understanding further.

Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) Unit

1. The unit within the school provides the main provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in West Dorset. Although funding is provided for 35 pupils, 29 pupils attend the unit at present. Some pupils are taught both in the unit and within ordinary classes in the school
2. Pupils achieve appropriately in externally validated achievement tests in a range of subjects. A few pupils achieve appropriate grades in one or two subjects in the GCSE examinations. Progress is at least satisfactory for all pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Some pupils make good progress, particularly in GCSE courses in Key Stage 4.
3. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good. They show interest in their work and persevere at their tasks with a determination to succeed. Behaviour is good. They develop friendly and constructive relationships with the teachers. In Key Stage 4, they begin to develop their capacity for personal study as they accept the challenges provided by their courses. Those studying subjects at GCSE are able to take the responsibility for their own coursework.
4. Pupils attend registration with their tutor group. Their attendance is separately monitored; a daily register is kept. Pupils attend regularly.
5. Teaching in almost all lessons seen was satisfactory, with about a third of the lessons good or better. Teachers show good subject knowledge. Expectations of pupils are at least appropriate and often high, particularly in lessons taught in the school. Lesson planning is better in the school than in the unit, where planning is sometimes inadequate. There is generally a good match of task to ability in both the unit and in the school. Pupils are managed well. Lessons are frequently brisk. Word frames and helpful worksheets aid learning. Assessment is at least satisfactory as it conforms to the departmental policies of the subject being taught.
6. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is satisfactory, except that French is not taught often enough for the

pupils to make satisfactory progress. Provision is broad, balanced and highly relevant to pupils' needs. In the unit, pupils are taught in very small groups. All study the National Curriculum in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, French, art and ICT. They are taught religious education, physical education, drama, music and design and technology within the school with the rest of the pupils. They are fully supported by learning support assistants in these lessons. The curriculum changes at Key Stage 4. Provision continues to be broad and flexible and accommodates all pupils for whom GCSE studies are a realistic option. Provision for French, however, remains inadequate. Fewer subjects are now taught and pupils take at least one optional subject less than the rest of the school. This enables the pupils to take externally validated challenges, although these are too easy to extend the most able pupils. Some pupils, for whom some of the other externally validated courses prove too difficult, follow special programmes to boost their literacy, working independently with learning support assistants. These programmes are of poor quality.

7. Pupils receive the same health, sex, drugs and careers education as other pupils in the school. The LEA careers service has pledged to commit resources to these pupils to help them plan their life after school, and provision is very effective. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education or for a career. There are strong and useful links with the local college, to which most pupils transfer post 16. There is also a strong link with a local agricultural college to which on occasion, the unit transfers pupils. The school careers officer attends the school for all transitional reviews.
8. Assessment of the pupils is unsatisfactory, although the school can demonstrate some improvements in literacy skills by the use of standardised tests. Although pupils have Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), these do not contain targets for them to work towards. As a result, parents, pupils and teachers do not know the specific steps which pupils must take to improve and support cannot be properly targeted. Progress cannot be measured in the short term. Assessment is not adequate to allow teachers to plan for the next programmes of study. The curriculum of the pupils cannot be monitored properly at either key stage in terms of outcomes. The unit's provision is monitored for content, but the varying literacy programmes at Key Stage 4 are not well co-ordinated. Lack of proper targets on pupils' IEPs compromise the quality of both statemented pupils' annual reviews and the transitional reviews of all pupils in the unit.
9. Pupils are well supported in their learning. Each pupil has a key worker with whom they have an entitlement to work with exclusively at some time during weekly lessons. Pupils use an agreed procedure to contact their key worker at any time during the school week. Pupils are also well supported by a range of health and educational specialists, including the services of an educational psychologist who visits fortnightly. There are referrals to a full range of support services.
10. The SENCO works hard to maintain an effective partnership with parents, who are consulted as required by the Code of Practice. Liaison with feeder schools is strength. Transition from primary to secondary education presents few problems either to the staff or the pupils.
11. Leadership of the unit is satisfactory. Liaison with external agencies is of a high standard. Relationships are very good. Equality of opportunity is excellent. The level of integration of pupils with the rest of the school is a strength. Evaluation of the curriculum is, however, unsatisfactory. Development planning is weak. Statutory requirements are not yet fully met with regard to pupils' targets. There are omissions in the prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents with regard to the effective use of the money spent on SEN pupils. A SEN governor has recently been appointed, but governors are not, as yet, fully involved in the work of the unit. The SENCO works hard to raise the unit's profile in the school. She has expanded her role to give some advice on differentiation to other teachers. Subject Link staff have been

appointed and play a key role in overseeing pupils' progress in the lessons taught in the school.

12. Staffing is generous. There are two full time and three part time teachers in the unit. The three full-time and two part-time teachers are well supported by visiting teachers employed by the local authority. There are sufficient learning support assistants to help the pupils when they are being taught in the unit where they play an important and effective pastoral role. Support assistants accompany the pupils from the unit to the lessons which they attend in the school. Some are permanently attached to the subject areas of science, ICT, geography, technology, physical education and mathematics, where they are used effectively to fulfil the requirements of pupils' Individual Educational Plans. Support assistants' training needs are taken seriously by the school and all have received at least some externally organised training for the tasks they are required to undertake.
13. Accommodation is good. The suite of rooms that comprises the unit is newly decorated, warm and welcoming. Rooms can be inconveniently small when a practical subject such as art is being taught, however. Almost all the accommodation is fully accessible to wheelchair users.
14. Resources for learning are adequate, although some textbooks in Key Stage 4 need review or replacement. There is a need to update some of the computer programs. The money provided for the unit, and more, is entirely spent on the pupils. Teachers' time is not always well used in the unit, and in the absence of further funding, the SENCO is right to review group sizes and rationalise involvement of both teachers and support assistants in some of the activities.
15. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement overall, although the standard of teaching appears to have declined. Progress is now satisfactory rather than good. Statutory requirements are now more fully, but not entirely, met. Link staff now monitor the effects upon pupils' learning of increased differentiation through the involvement of subject teachers, but the SENCO's involvement in this is still too infrequent. Subject teachers now write pupils' subject specific targets, but this procedure is not monitored sufficiently. The accommodation of the unit has been enormously improved and is now housed centrally in the school. This improvement has played a crucial role in raising the status of all pupils and has promoted a very high level of inclusion with the rest of the pupils.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

16. The team consisted of 14 inspectors. During the inspection 167 lessons or part lessons were observed. Time spent observing classes, sampling pupils' work and talking to pupils amounted to over 214 hours. Discussions were held with pupils within lessons, as appropriate, and at break and at lunch times. Inspectors observed assemblies, registrations, the conduct at break times, lunch arrangements and the arrival and dispersal of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. A sample of pupils of all abilities from all years discussed their work with inspectors and present and past work was examined as part of the specific planning of the inspection. Displays and photographs were included in the evidence gathered.
17. Most teachers were observed teaching, some on many occasions. Support and peripatetic staff were observed. Planned interviews were held with the Chairman and members of the Governing Body, the Headteacher, teaching and non-teaching staff.
18. The school documentation was scrutinised. This included the school prospectus, policies, schemes of work, curriculum planning and assessment information, the School Development Plan and the budget, minutes of meetings and the governors' annual report to parents, pupil reports and other examples of written communication with parents, attendance registers and special educational needs documentation.
19. The Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 29 parents over two weeks before the inspection and their views were considered by the team. The team also considered 114 replies in response to the parental questionnaire.

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
Y7 – Y13	633	42	179	47

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	39.87
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked each week	450.5

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	76.4
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	23.4
	KS4	19.5

Financial data

Financial year:	1999
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	£
Total Income	1,594,739
Total Expenditure	1,593,692
Expenditure per pupil	2,521.66
Balance brought forward from previous year	-25,280
Balance carried forward to next year	-24,233

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

633

Number of questionnaires returned:

114

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	20.4	62.8	13.3	3.5	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37.7	52.6	5.3	3.5	0.9
The school handles complaints from parents well	14.9	50.0	21.1	10.5	3.5
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	12.3	55.3	17.5	14.9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	22.8	57.9	10.5	8.8	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	30.7	55.3	12.3	1.8	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	40.4	46.5	7.0	6.1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	21.9	59.6	9.6	6.1	2.6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	24.6	53.5	13.2	7.9	0.9
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	11.4	55.3	23.7	8.8	0.9
My child(ren) like(s) school	34.2	49.1	9.6	5.3	1.8