

INSPECTION REPORT

ROWDEFORD SCHOOL

Rowde, Devizes

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126546

Headteacher: Mr G Darnell

Reporting inspector: Alan Lemon
20165

Dates of inspection: 19.03.01 – 22.03.01

Inspection number: 187629

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special – moderate learning difficulties
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Berry
Date of previous inspection:	24.06.98

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9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the work in partnership with parents?
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	Information and communication technology French Religious education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Residential provision
22948	Mary Vallis	Team inspector	English Geography History	
1769	Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rowdeford School is a residential special school catering for 90 pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. Currently, there are 89 pupils made up of 51 boys and 38 girls with moderate learning difficulties. The school provides weekly boarding for up to 25 pupils. At present there are 11 boys and 7 girls in residence. How long any pupil boards is variable depending on their circumstances and some stay as little as one night a week. Pupils come to school by taxi and, as the school serves the whole of Wiltshire, some travel considerable distances. Pupils are almost entirely white and they all speak English. Twenty-one pupils are eligible for free school meals. About one third of pupils have more severe learning difficulties and lower levels of attainment than the majority. A few pupils have additional special educational needs such as autistic spectrum disorders or specific learning difficulties. All pupils, as a result of their special educational needs, enter the school with levels of attainment well below that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Rowdeford is a very good school, which is very effectively led and managed. It has made substantial improvements to the quality of education it provides and, as a result, all pupils are achieving well. Teaching and learning are very good. Pupils benefit enormously from the high expectation set for them and the support they are given to become self-assured and independent. They have very good attitudes, behave very well and enjoy very good relationships. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The high quality of leadership and management has ensured very good and rapid improvement so that the school meets all of its aims very effectively.
- It teaches all pupils very well by setting very high expectations, which leads to very good quality learning.
- Literacy is taught very well and French to an excellent extent.
- Assesses pupils' progress very effectively and uses this well to plan for their further progress.
- It gives very good support to all pupils, which helps them to be as self-assured and independent as possible.
- Encourages pupils to have very positive attitudes, values and behaviour.
- Provides very good residential experiences for boarding pupils.
- Promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

What could be improved

- The provision of dance or gymnastic activities in physical education for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- The management of careers education and personal, social and health education.
- The use made of computers so that they are involved in every area of pupils' learning.
- The education of pupils about the misuse of drugs.
- The opportunities for pupils to work alongside pupils in mainstream schools.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in 1996 when it was made subject to special measures. A re-inspection in 1998 carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors, deemed a full inspection, removed the school from special measures. The standards of pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, the leadership and management had all improved by then. The school has continued this trend as a result of very effective leadership and management and, to date, the improvement is very good. Pupils are achieving much more because the quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably. There have been associated improvements since 1998 in curricular planning and in assessment, which are good. The improvement since 1996 in each subject is seldom less than good and very good in English, mathematics and music. It is excellent in French because of a significant improvement in teaching and subject management. The high standards of pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour have been maintained, as has the strengths in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The issues for action, identified in 1998 have mostly been addressed well. While the provision for information and communication technology has been improved it is not established fully across the school because

some teachers are not yet sufficiently expert in its use.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	A	A	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	A	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	C	C	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

Pupils are making very good progress towards their personal targets for literacy and numeracy. The progress being made by the school in the targets it sets for improving pupils' literacy and numeracy is also very good. Pupils with additional special educational needs, or whose attainment is very low, are provided for well and are making good progress. Overall, pupils are achieving well as a consequence of their attitudes to learning. These are supported effectively by very good teaching and detailed planning of what should be taught, which is based upon very good assessments of pupils' learning. A comparison of results in the National Curriculum tests, taken by Year 9 pupils, shows a marked shift upwards between 1995 and 2000 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have achieved good results in Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations. Their progress in French is excellent and nearly all gained a distinction in their examination in 2000. Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics, design and technology, and information and communication technology. Progress is good in science, geography and music. It is satisfactory in history and restricted to this by the teachers' limited subject knowledge. It is satisfactory in religious education and personal, social and health education because the plans for what is to be taught are not developed fully. Pupils are not achieving well enough in physical education because the school does not have the space and facilities for gymnastics or dance for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and place a lot of value on their learning. They are enthusiastic and self-confident in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know and abide by the school's high expectations for best behaviour. Pupils treat each other with respect and have a concern for each other's feelings.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are expected to take a great deal of personal responsibility and ably do so. They take charge of much of their learning and work independently. Pupils play an enthusiastic part in the life of the school and contribute willingly to other's well-being.
Attendance	Very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14	aged 14 - 16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good and excellent in nearly 37 per cent of lessons, especially so in French. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Teaching in English and mathematics is very good. It is good in science and satisfactory in personal, social and health education. The teaching of literacy is very good. Most teachers are confident in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing and have an increasing knowledge of phonics and handwriting skills. Numeracy is taught well. Basic number skills and their use in solving problems are taught effectively. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to make lessons interesting, which makes pupils enthusiastic and learning exciting. Lessons are approached in a lively manner using resources that pupils find interesting. The very effective planning of lessons, the very high expectations and management of pupils are the strengths of teaching. Classroom support assistants work effectively with teachers and ensure the needs of all pupils are met. There are very good relationships promoting very positive attitudes to learning and lead to pupils making considerable efforts in developing knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers make very careful note of pupils' progress and give them good praise and encouragement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. There is a wide range of learning opportunities broadened by good links to the community and other schools. Detailed planning of most subjects ensures all pupils needs are met effectively. The opportunities for pupils' physical development are restricted by inadequate facilities at the school.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be a strong feature of the school. There are many very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and become more independent as well as developing informed and positive views of the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care taken over pupils' welfare is very good. The quality of all of the provision for boarding pupils is very good and makes a significant contribution to those pupils' progress and personal development. Assessments of pupils' progress are made regularly and are very thorough. The school uses its assessments well to plan lessons in order for pupils to continue progressing.

Parents hold the school in the highest regard. They are kept very well involved in the work of the school and receive good information, particularly on their children's progress.

The use of information technology is not uniform across the whole curriculum because some teachers are not sufficiently conversant with its uses. The school has not written and approved a policy on the education of pupils about the misuse of drugs although one is planned. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work alongside pupils in mainstream schools.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. Leadership and management have improved significantly. The headteacher has the support of staff and governors and gives a clear direction for the school. He has been very resolute in bringing about substantial change for the better. The work of the school is managed very effectively.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors make a very good contribution by actively supporting the headteacher and staff. They keep themselves informed well and work hard to see that the school moves forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school manages the monitoring and evaluation of its work well. It has good policies in operation that ensures its educational provision will be of the highest quality. The monitoring of teaching is very good. Information on pupils' performance is starting to be analysed and used to formulate targets for further improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school improvement plan is good. It guides decisions on spending and leads to good financial and long term planning.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. The school obtains good value in its spending on supplies and services, although it is not yet comparing its performance and costs with other similar schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers set high expectations for their children that result in them working hard and achieving their best. Because of the high expectations and the support the school provides to pupils it is helping their children to become mature, independent and responsible. The school is always concerned to keep parents informed and involved in what is going on in the school. It is a welcoming place to visit. Teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. There have been a lot of good improvements. 	

The positive qualities and strengths described by parents were all confirmed in inspection findings and therefore inspectors agree with parents that what please them are things the school is doing successfully. There were no substantial issues raised by parents on what they would like to see improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Overall, pupils of all ages are achieving well. This is a significant and very good improvement on the standards pupils were achieving when the school was first inspected in 1996. Then there was considerable underachievement in almost all subjects, especially English, mathematics and science. A re-inspection in 1998 reported a very marked improvement; pupils were making good progress in almost half of their lessons. This positive trend has been maintained because of continued improvements in teaching, the planning of what will be taught and the assessment of what pupils have learned. In contrast to 1995, the attainments of Year 9 pupils in 2000, in relation teachers' assessments against National Curriculum standards, show an improvement in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are assessed and set targets for literacy and numeracy when they enter the school. The progress pupils make in relation to their targets is very good for literacy and numeracy. In 2000, in an overall total of 52 entries for Certificate of Educational Achievement examinations, there was a 100 per cent pass rate; 35 per cent of entries achieved a merit award and 44 per cent achieved a distinction. Of the ten pupils entered for the French examination, nine passed with distinction. Overall, these results represent good progress made by pupils between Year 9 and Year 11.
2. Currently, pupils are making good or very good progress in most of the subjects they study. This is excellent in French. Boys and girls are achieving equally well. Pupils with additional special educational needs, such as autistic pupils or those whose attainment is very low are provided for well and make good progress as a consequence. In physical education, the only subject where pupils are not achieving well enough, it is because the school does not have the space and facilities for gymnastics or dance for pupils between Years 7 and 9. They are therefore unable to make progress in areas of learning that are required in the National Curriculum.
3. Pupils of all ages are achieving very well in English. Pupils acquire good literacy skills, which they use effectively in all their learning, to cope in school, the community and the work place. By the age of 14, pupils listen very carefully. They have learnt to appreciate both sides of an argument and discuss the issues sensibly. By the age of 16, pupils adapt their speech to suit the situation, for example, moving from an informal style with each other to a more formal register when addressing a teacher.
4. The standards of reading achieved by all pupils are very good as a result of very well planned opportunities to read in English lessons and also in other lessons. The effective teaching of phonics means pupils are skilled at deciphering difficult words. By the age of 14 lower attaining pupils read common words and enjoy reading stories with a simple structure. Higher attaining pupils search reference books for information competently. By the age of 16, pupils read information from a wide variety of sources such as the Internet and newspapers. They read aloud confidently and try to do so expressively.
5. All pupils are progressing well in improving their writing. Good emphasis in teaching towards more accurate spelling and handwriting makes a positive contribution. Pupils regularly consult their own spelling journal and use a dictionary. Increasingly, by the age of 14, pupils write in full sentences. They write book reviews, letters and accounts of their weekends or visits. By the age of 16, pupils compare themselves with, and discuss the emotion of, characters in novels and plays. They use positive strategies in spelling and handwriting, which is usually mature and attractive.
6. All pupils are achieving very well in mathematics. As a result of very good teaching, planning and assessment, pupils are consolidating their mathematical knowledge and skills very well. A short numeracy lesson each day and good opportunities to promote their number skills in every lesson contribute to their very good progress. By the age of 14, pupils know the value of numbers up to 1000 and higher attaining pupils make accurate additions of sums using numbers up to 20. Most pupils recognise simple shapes such as a rectangle; they can measure its sides and calculate the perimeter. They tell the time, reading the hour and half-hour positions on a clock; some convert the time into digital values. Pupils collect and sort information into block graphs, for

example. By the age of 16, higher attaining pupils solve simple number problems involving sums of money. They translate some fractions to percentages, for example, three-quarters and 75 per cent. Lower attaining pupils understand the differences between heavier and lighter objects.

7. The standards pupils achieve in French are excellent as a consequence of the highest quality of teaching, which captures pupils' interest and motivates them highly. By the age of 14, pupils ask and answer simple questions, confidently using good French. In pairs, they sustain simple conversations. Pupils use French reference books and higher attaining pupils report to the class what they have researched using appropriate French vocabulary. By the age of 16, pupils ask for drinks and food and request the bill. They are increasingly familiar with French money and know the French names for their clothes. Pupils use this knowledge to write a dialogue for buying a tracksuit.
8. Overall, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in their use of information and communication technology, although they are achieving very well when taught in lessons especially for information and communication technology. However, the use made of this technology in other subjects is uneven, essentially because some teachers lack the skills and confidence to incorporate it into their lessons, which slows the rate of pupils' progress. By the age of 14, in information technology lessons, pupils use word processing to plan and re-draft their writing. They control a robotic toy by programming commands. By the age of 16, pupils design a kitchen using a computer programme. Pupils are achieving very well in art and design and technology. In art, pupils have extended their skills well in drawing, using colour and modelling clay by the age of 14. Their ideas are imaginative and they work with precision. By the age of 16, pupils model with clay very skilfully. They develop their ideas through investigations of artists' work and by exploring different materials. In design and technology, by the age of 14, pupils explain how air pressure can be used in a mechanism to make a component move. They know what constitutes a healthy diet and modify recipes to this end. By the age of 16, pupils independently plan, prepare and present a two-course meal.
9. The standards achieved in science, geography and music are good. Pupils are developing a good range of scientific skills and knowledge in, for example, conducting enquiries and making records. By the age of 14, they investigate the properties of magnets and by the age of 16, pupils measure the performance of a model helicopter using a computer to record findings and produce graphs. In geography, pupils recognise features on a map such as rivers and mountains. They understand maps have different scales. By the age of 14, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of environmental pollution. By the age of 16, pupils show an understanding of global warming and use a geographical vocabulary to describe a tropical rainforest. Pupils understand the changes in local land use and the industrial development that has occurred. In music, pupils compose simple rhythms and melodies by the age of 14. By the age of 16, they compose using more complex forms, for example, following those in Javanese music.
10. Pupils' achievements in history, religious education and personal, social and health education are satisfactory. There are some restrictions influencing why pupils' achievements are not better. The teachers' limited knowledge of history is a factor in that case. The time allocated to personal, social and health education is low compared to similar schools, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The plans for what should be taught are still being developed in religious education and in personal, social and health education and the management of this in personal, social and health education is not yet settled.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and to the whole life of school; the school motto of "Living and Learning Together" well describes the high quality of relationships, which exist between staff and pupils and the very positive ethos that permeates the school. Parents are very happy with their children's attitudes and values. At a personal level, pupils are prepared for lessons each day and engage in learning opportunities with considerable concentration and determination. They enjoy and find interest in the work, gaining a sense of achievement in what

they do. These very good outcomes reflect the very large proportion of high quality teaching pupils receive. Only in very rare instances when teaching is not as effective, for example, in

religious education, do pupils' attitudes vary from being very good.

12. Pupils' personal development is very good. All play a part in the daily routine of lessons. They have total responsibility for their equipment, their journals and a range of classroom responsibilities. Good examples of this include giving out work sheets and making sure chairs are in the correct place. In mathematics, pupils are given a list of the materials and equipment they will need for the lesson and they gather these as soon as they arrive. Pupils play a significant role in preparing for the Christmas Carol service and the Summer Fete. They discuss and, as a result, have real ownership of their targets for behaviour and learning. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to learn from outside the school environment and to respect others' religions and cultures, although the opportunities for contact with pupils of the same age in mainstream schools is too restricted. Pupils show very good levels of initiative. They are developing well as responsible citizens around the school and, by Year 11, are prepared to transfer to the local college.
13. Behaviour is consistently very good in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils subscribe to the values promoted in the school and are happy about adhering to the school's rules for good behaviour. They are encouraged by the grades given in every lesson for their efforts and behaviour. The fact that what they earn as individuals contributes to the overall score of the school team to which they belong is an added incentive. In no lesson, during the inspection, was learning seen to be interrupted by any poor behaviour. No issues of bullying or oppressive behaviour were observed and pupils are re-assured they will be well supported if they need help. There have been three instances of short exclusions in the last year.
14. In personal, social and health education lessons and across the curriculum pupils are learning to understand the impact of their actions on others. Assemblies are also used to allow pupils to reflect on issues related to personal development. In lessons teachers often refer to personal and social issues and ask pupils to consider how they can apply what they have discussed as a whole class to the current situation. In planning carefully to meet pupils' individual needs a pupil with autism has pictures of himself showing good attitudes and behaviour that visually clarify the positive values the school would like to promote.
15. Attendance is very good. Attendance levels in the last school year were above the national average. Punctuality is generally good but for those pupils not boarders it is reliant on school transport getting to school on time through traffic that is sometimes slow moving.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, teaching throughout the school is very good and this ensures that the quality of all pupils' learning is very good as well. By the time the school was re-inspected in 1998, the quality of teaching had improved greatly and since then there has been a further very good improvement. In 1998, teaching was good or better in nearly half the lessons observed and one in ten lessons was unsatisfactory. Currently, well over three-quarters of lessons are good or better and there is no unsatisfactory teaching.
17. Teaching and learning in most subject is good, very good or better. They are excellent in French. Overall, they are very good in English, mathematics, and in design and technology. Teaching and learning are good in science, art, geography, information and communication technology and music. They are also good in the limited range of activities provided in physical education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in history, religious education and personal, social and health education.
18. The teaching of literacy is very good. There is a good portion of time each day devoted to literacy work, which pupils enjoy. Most teachers are confident in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing and have an increasing knowledge of phonics and handwriting skills. The planning of literacy time is very good. Pupils learn effectively through a well-structured programme of activities. Pupils are able to work independently because they know their programmes and these are matched carefully to their individual needs. This frees the teachers and support assistants to focus their efforts where they are most needed. In the curricular plans for each subject opportunities are identified for promoting literacy and numeracy and this planning is informed well

by assessments of pupils' attainments in both areas. In a food studies lesson, for example, a Year 11 pupil read aloud from a food hygiene poster and used his phonics skills effectively to decipher some long and difficult words. There are similarly good opportunities regarding numeracy and it is taught well. Basic number skills and their use in solving problems are taught effectively. Pupils count in French and solve money problems using francs. Knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes are promoted in art. A small amount of time each day is given to teaching numeracy across the school in addition to mathematics lessons. This is planned well and helps pupils make progress by consolidating basic mathematical concepts and skills, for example, concerning money and time.

19. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects is good overall and this has a good effect on pupils' learning. In French, the teacher's expertise is excellent in generating well-spoken conversational French. Pupils are quickly enthused and consequently work very hard at communicating and speaking in sentences. In science and geography pupils are being challenged well because of teachers' very good expertise. In science, for example, well-focused questions get pupils into explaining their thinking and results, which reinforces their understanding. In English, teachers have been learning how to use information and communication technology in lessons and pupils are increasingly making use of computers here. However, some other teachers lack confidence in using computer applications in their lessons.
20. Very effective lesson planning together with very high expectations and very good management of pupils merge into a significant strength of teaching. This accounts largely for the considerable efforts pupils make in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. The very good management of pupils goes well beyond the high level of discipline in the school. It develops pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and has an enormous impact on progressing personal development, particularly self-sufficiency. Very good relationships throughout the school engender an interest in learning and a desire to succeed with whatever problem pupils encounter. The pace of lessons is very good as a consequence. Pupils are given much positive encouragement and praise, which leaves them self-assured. Teachers and their classroom assistants work consistently in giving pupils support. In English, for example, pupils are encouraged to extend themselves and to take risks with their work that ultimately supports very good learning. As pupils are so well attuned to learning, through having self-confidence and much curiosity, they match the very high expectations teachers have. Pupils work very hard, sustaining very good concentration and independence.
21. Teachers use very effective methods for helping pupils learn. They take careful note of the individual needs of pupils, including those with the greatest special needs and approach lesson activities ensuring all pupils get good access to learning. A number of lower attaining Year 8 and 9 pupils are grouped together and taught by one teacher. This has proved to be a very effective way of meeting all of their learning needs. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what is expected of them, which is linked for them to what they had been doing in previous lessons. Good questioning at the start and throughout lessons leads to pupils recalling and consolidating what they have learned. In a science lesson, Year 11 pupils could put forward clear explanations for the results of their experiment. In French, good questioning encourages pupils' earnest responses and leads them into very animated French conversations. The teacher helps by emphasising the correct pronunciation and the teaching assistant does very well to help pupils' use of vocabulary. Most lessons are rounded off very effectively with similar questioning and teachers are left with a very clear assessment of pupils' progress. In the best examples of lessons finishing well, pupils leave aware of what they have learnt and how this relates to the aims for the next lesson. Teachers prepare and use good resources to support the learning process. Many resources are appropriate to the ages and interests of pupils. In French, the teacher made highly effective use of good visual resources such as toys with the youngest pupils to encourage the learning of French vocabulary. In design and technology, a powered model car was used very effectively by the teacher to explain to Year 8 pupils how key mechanisms and processes caused the model to move.

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

22. The good improvement reported when the school was inspected in 1998 has been maintained. There have been ongoing good improvements to the provision for literacy and numeracy across the school. The resources for information and communication technology has improved but, because not all teachers are fully conversant with its use, information and communication technology is not used in every area of the curriculum effectively.
23. The curriculum is good and provides all pupils with a broad range of learning opportunities. The curriculum is relevant to the needs of all pupils and, in particular, their special educational needs are being well planned for. The provision for pupils with more severe learning difficulties and those with lower attainment is good. Speech and language therapy is offered to all pupils with severe learning difficulties and to a number with lower attainment.
24. The school makes very good provision for literacy. The daily lessons in literacy are highly effective in extending and consolidating learning, thus raising attainment in this key area as well as other areas of the curriculum. The strategies to promote numeracy are good. Numeracy is given less dedicated time each day than literacy but is planned well and succeeds in consolidating important areas of mathematics for pupils. The school makes good use of the specialist skills of its teachers; almost all are specialists in the subjects they teach. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, except that the breadth of study in physical education is unsatisfactory because of the school's limited facilities for gymnastics or dance. Sports facilities in the locality are used for games and swimming, although the cost in time of travelling to these impacts on other areas of the curriculum, for example, personal, social and health education.
25. Equality of opportunity in the school is good. There is an effective whole school policy, which is reflected in subject policies and routinely monitored. In this way the school ensures that the needs of all pupils are met and that they have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and opportunities to succeed in them. The school intends to strengthen these procedures further, for example, the co-ordinators for English and mathematics are given time to see how their subjects are being taught by other teachers.
26. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall. Pupils, other than those boarding at the school during the week, travel long distances to and from school and opportunities for curricular enrichment and support for learning are largely confined to lunchtimes. For example, there are two computer clubs each week where pupils receive good help, which supports their progress in information communication technology. There is a French club, which reinforces learning in using the language and provides pupils with additional knowledge of French culture. The school library is open and supervised at lunchtime. There is an annual activities week when pupils have the opportunity to try a wider range of sports and activities such as climbing, archery and fencing. In addition, pupils are given good opportunities for residential experiences. Boarding pupils have a well-planned programme of out-of-school activities each evening.
27. The school provides a satisfactory programme of personal and social education, including health and sex education. While the school has no policy or provision for the education of pupils about drug misuse, these are now being developed. The time allowed for the teaching of personal, social and health education is too low compared with similar schools, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The co-ordination of the subject has been delegated to a teacher recently is not as advanced as in most other subjects; for example, the plans for what should be taught need to be developed in more detail.
28. The school makes satisfactory provision for work related education, including careers education and guidance. The school makes excellent use of a specialist careers advisor in preparing the pupils for the next stage in their education. Parents are fully involved. Pupils are given good opportunities and assistance to prepare curriculum vitae and prepare for mock interviews. There are excellent and well-supervised opportunities for a fortnight's work experience in Year 10. Pupils in Year 11 visit a local agricultural college for introductory courses in such areas as small animal skills and tractor driving. Liaison between school and college is very good and many of the pupils go onto college when they leave. In Year 11, pupils are given a profile of their personal and academic achievements, which can be of help in choosing future training or careers. There is, at

present, no career's library in the school for parents, teachers and pupils to consult for additional information. The school acknowledges careers to be an area for further development and plans are well advanced for improvement.

29. The relationships with neighbouring schools and colleges are good. The school has useful and productive links with the primary schools its pupils attended. A relationship with a local technology college involves a computer link-up between the two schools, providing video conferencing, to extend teaching and learning in design technology. However, the school does not yet promote sufficient opportunities for its pupils to work alongside pupils in mainstream schools. The use of the community for extended educational opportunities is good. The school plays a significant part in a music festival and has a Christmas service in the parish church. There is an annual school fete for the community and occasional opportunities to entertain the elderly. Pupils are taken to shops as an aid to promote their numeracy and learning related to food studies. Boarders participate in youth groups. The school makes good use of local sports facilities. There is a good programme of visiting sites and places of interest and inviting visitors in for talks.
30. In 1998, the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors identified spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as a great strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains as strong. Provision for spiritual development is good and for moral, social and cultural development it is very good. The school succeeds in achieving its stated aim that it will develop pupils' behaviour and moral, cultural and spiritual attitudes that will prepare them for the responsibilities of adulthood.
31. Spiritual development is good because the school treats all members of its community with dignity and respect. The high regard paid to achievement wherever it occurs and the excellence of some displays help to reinforce pupils' pride and sense of worth. There are frequent opportunities, both planned and unplanned, for the discussion of ideas, feelings and beliefs. Assembly themes are well planned, for example, a class assembly based on the theme 'help' opened pupils' eyes to how they help others and who can help them. Religious education does not contribute as much as it ought to the spiritual development of pupils although it provides opportunities for pupils to experience Christianity and learn of some beliefs of peoples of other major world faiths.
32. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are encouraged effectively to keep to the rules, for example, by earning merit points for their team. Pupils are expected to be courteous and friendly. They respond positively to the very good role models provided for them by all school staff. Pupils are increasingly aware, through very good teaching across a number of subjects, of major moral issues such as homelessness and its causes, or pollution and its impact on the world. Personal and social education is satisfactory in helping to raise pupils' self esteem and enable them to make informed choices.
33. Provision for social development is very good. Most lessons offer some time for pupils to co-operate in pairs or small groups, and for boys and girls to mix. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills of independence, from being responsible for their own work to preparing a speech for Parents' Evening. Pupils who are resident have particularly good opportunities for social development through informal and formal evening activities such as guides and visits to the local area. The social use of language programmes, from which all pupils benefit in turn, helps give pupils the widening vocabulary they require for the increasing range of situations they encounter. Speakers from organisations such as the Salvation Army and learning about charities such as OXFAM and CAFOD as well as raising money for charity helps raise awareness of current social issues.
34. Cultural development is very good because of the wide range of well planned for opportunities which pupils receive. These allow for the exploration of British culture and also that of a wide range of other cultures. Pupils not only learn about native Americans and Australians in history and geography but they explore their art as well. For example, they look closely at North American Indian totem poles and make interpretations in clay. They use the work of European and other artists and crafts people as stimuli for their own impressive creative work. A broad range of music and musicians is studied, resulting in pupils composing music inspired by listening to Javanese composers or enjoying American pop culture of the 1950's. Many visits take place such as those to museums, an industrial mill, the ballet and theatre. Very good provision is made for exposure to good literature such as Dickens, Shakespeare and the war

poets. Pupils learn about Wiltshire myths as well as exploring traditional stories and legends from around the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils. Pupils are supported by a happy and secure school environment. Pupils are well known to all members of the school staff and are given opportunities to develop life skills for healthy and safe living. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Policies are well used by all staff and monitored by the appropriate governors of the premises committee, the health and safety co-ordinator and subsequently by the full governing body. Risk assessments are undertaken and they are up to date. All equipment is well maintained and regularly checked for safety. A number of adults have a current first aid certificate and first aid provision is good. The school promotes healthy and safe living across the curriculum. The school has good relationships with a range of outside agencies and works successfully with them to secure pupils' welfare.
36. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in the school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality. These are now very good and are closely adhered to. Registers are correctly completed both morning and afternoon and are monitored regularly by the Education Welfare Officer. There is an informal daily monitoring by the school secretary and all none informed absences are checked.
37. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good. The procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance are very good. All are assessed for literacy and numeracy skills when they first arrive. Further assessments are carried at regular intervals and lead to identifying individual literacy and numeracy targets. The staff looking after boarding pupils monitor their personal development. They give effective support to each boarding pupil in their role as individual care officer. Daily records of progress are kept for all pupils and weekly reports are written. Pupils' individual portfolios collect together important information and make it accessible. They contain independent and whole school targets for improvement, annual review reports and assessment records. Pupils' self-assessment contributes positively to overall assessment. Personal development for pupils is good and is supported through the tutor system, with briefings for pupils in the morning and afternoon and at other appropriate times throughout the day. The good communication with parents and with external organisations further supports the individual development of each pupil.
38. Procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour are very good and they are well known to pupils and their parents. The school succeeds in ensuring that any potential for oppressive behaviour or harassment is eliminated. Teachers give much praise for good work and good behaviour, following consistently the school policy; pupils respond well to the rewards system and show real pride when they are praised and given merits. Information on the school policy is provided in the school prospectus for parents and carers. The school's open door policy encourages parents to play a full part in pupils' welfare both at home and in the school.

The provision for boarding pupils

39. The provision for boarding pupils is very good; it is very well led and managed by a well-qualified and experienced head of care.
40. When the school was inspected in 1998 the quality of care was good. In the inspection of 1996, the accommodation was judged as being adequate and comfortable. Since then the accommodation has been refurbished well. It is warm, cheerfully decorated, kept clean and well maintained. There are 3 separate residential units, for younger boys, younger girls and senior pupils. Their bedrooms are bright and personalised. There are a few single bedrooms and, while most pupils sleep more than one to a room, there is sufficient privacy. There are well-understood and effective arrangements for pupils to voice their opinions about boarding at the school or, if necessary, to complain. They have access to private telephones and to an independent listener. Links with families are well maintained and pupils are encouraged to write letters home.
41. The programme beyond the school day for boarding pupils is carefully planned to extend their

curriculum and the opportunities for learning. Boarders have a regular routine of doing homework, which is effectively supervised. All of the activities and routines during boarding hours help them to improve their social and personal skills and independence. Pupils frequently help prepare breakfast and make themselves additional snacks and hot drinks in the evening. Senior pupils organise their chores for themselves, and frequently take responsibility for the cooking of a meal. This begins to prepare them for independent living.

42. Pupils are given regular opportunities to make personal choices, particularly in making decisions on the leisure activities they wish to pursue. In addition, they have chosen the curtains and colour schemes for their accommodation. The relationships between pupils and care officers are excellent. Pupils are happy, relaxed and converse freely with each other and care officers. The care officers present themselves as good role models to the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents' view the school as excellent. They are extremely pleased with the progress their children make. Parents feel there have been many good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in the way the school day is structured and the facilities and equipment now provided. They feel the school has high expectations of all pupils, which they see having a very positive effect on their children's academic progress and social independence.
44. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good. Through a range of methods including the school prospectus, school policies, homework diaries, pupils' reviews and regular telephone contact there is clear communication between home and school. Parents are well informed of school events by regular newsletters and a recent school improvement planning consultation when parents were invited to send in their views. Home School Agreements have been well received by parents and are being used well to strengthen the partnership of home school learning. Parents say the school is welcoming and is always willing to listen to them. Parents are invited to visit the school for pupils' reviews and for social functions and particularly the annual prize giving.
45. Parents are supportive but many are very constrained in their involvement by the distance they live away from the school and not all have their own means of transport. Those not able to visit frequently have good telephone contact with staff and are supportive of any home school learning initiatives within their ability. Homework diaries help parents to be fully involved in the day to day work of the school and pupils achievements. There is very good parental support for the annual school fete, for Christmas functions and the remembrance service and almost all are present for the yearly prize giving ceremony.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are very good. Leadership and management have improved significantly from when the school was inspected in 1996. The current headteacher was appointed shortly after that inspection and, by the time of the next inspection in 1998, along with the senior management team, was effectively tackling the considerable shortcomings of the school. Good improvements were achieved by that time and the strong momentum in improvement and raising standards has continued to the point at present where the overall progress in developing the school is very good.
47. The headteacher has provided the direction and a very strong resolve to complete the transformation to what is now a very effective school. He has been courageous in dealing openly with the school's weaknesses. His vision for effective learning and high expectations has been taken fully on board by the staff. They have formed a cohesive group with a commitment to a culture of improvement and, taking the headteacher's lead, have raised the pace of change throughout the school. The school's aims and values are reflected very well in its work. The aims are sharply focused on pupils' academic achievement, personal development and partnership with their parents. They play a very central part in the formulation of policy, priorities for improvement and informing the values that are expressed through the ethos of the school. There is a very clear statement of aims and values and these are manifest to a considerable extent in the everyday

work of the school. They are shared and adhered to by all staff and pupils and lead to the high standards achieved.

48. The transformation and continued improvement of the school is founded on very good management principles. There has been an increasing involvement of all staff in managing and developing the school. The delegation of responsibilities is good. Management roles are defined clearly and carried out with diligence. The work of subject co-ordinators in particular has been effective in curricular and improvement planning. In information and communication technology and French the management of the subjects is of the highest quality. The school's aims are reviewed regularly by the whole staff and governors. This is contributing to the staff and governors thinking in strategic ways about where they want the school to be in the future. All staff play a part in school improvement planning through making subject improvement plans and a similar plan for residential provision. Comprehensive policy development has occurred and these clearly guide the every day work of the school and provide a clear sense of direction for all staff. Processes of review are built into both policy and planning. There is a very good structure of meetings to enable this to happen.
49. The governors make a very good contribution to the work of the school. There is a core of long serving members who are very dedicated to the success of the school. They have been increasingly active in their support and seeing that the issues for action arising from previous inspections have been dealt with. In the process of the school developing its policies, the governors have benefited from a clear definition of their responsibilities, which they carry out very well. Four committees meet twice each term; their work keeps the full governing body well informed about the school. For example, they have kept a close track on the development of curricular planning. Each governor has a responsibility for a subject that entails visiting classrooms, discussions with teachers and reports to other governors. They have approved and implemented a performance management policy. Performance objectives have been agreed with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
50. The process of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is good. In particular, the monitoring of teaching is very good and this has led to a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection in 1998. The observation of teaching is systematic; each teacher is observed each term and new teachers more often. In all cases, teaching observations are followed by discussions on points for professional development. Wider monitoring, for example, of curricular planning is established and guided by an effective policy. The scope of this monitoring and evaluation is being extended as part of the school improvement strategy. The English and mathematics co-ordinators have time for monitoring their subjects. They are also developing the use of their assessments of pupils' progress to track performance in these subjects and to set whole school targets in literacy and numeracy.
51. The headteacher and governors manage the school budget well. They have done so while contending with a large deficit caused by additional and unplanned staffing costs following the inspection in 1996. Each year, since then, the deficit has been steadily reduced to the point where the school's budget is now nearly in balance. This has been assisted by changes, made by the local education authority, for funding individual pupil's special educational needs, which has increased the school's total income. For the first time the school has a surplus of funds to finance further planned improvements. The school's improvement plan sets out a long term and well-costed strategy and supports effective financial planning. The headteacher and governors are kept fully informed about the school's on-going expenditure. As a consequence, they manage spending in the course of the school year prudently. The expenditure from the grants it receives is planned well and accounted for in detail. The financial administration is good. The use of new technology to support the work of the school is good. It uses the latest computer applications for controlling financial transactions and monitoring every school account. While computers are not being used effectively in all parts of the curriculum there is good practice, for example, the computer link to a neighbouring technology college. At most levels, the school strives well to achieve best value in its expenditure. It is not yet in a position to compare its performance and costs with other similar schools. However, the school does secure the best prices for all the supplies and services it uses by making careful assessments and comparisons.
52. The improvement the school has undergone has been comprehensive and very good. Pupils are now achieving good standards in their work as a result of very good teaching. This is a

consequence of very good leadership and management throughout the school, which, in a clear and determined fashion, transformed the quality of education provided to pupils. Taking into consideration all of the resources available to the school, these outcomes represent very good value for money.

53. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. The school has an average number of teachers, support staff and care officers. Their expertise and enthusiasm is well matched to the needs of the pupils. The staff has received training in the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and this has been an important factor in raising standards. The use of specialist teachers for a range of subjects, such as design technology and science, has resulted in much improved teaching and learning since the last inspection. Formal induction procedures adhering to national guidelines for newly qualified teachers are in place and benefiting the one teacher to which they apply.
54. The school's accommodation is good. Attractive wall displays combined with a high standard of cleanliness and maintenance make it a pleasant and welcoming environment. The development of specialist accommodation for subjects such as art, design technology and science have been a significant factor in the raising of standards. The art room, which has only very recently been commissioned, has been developed to a very high standard with much dedication and hard work by the art co-ordinator in that short time. The lack of facilities for the teaching of gymnastics, first identified in the 1996 report, has yet to be addressed. The lack of a gymnasium denies pupils between Years 7 and 9 access to the full National Curriculum for physical education and means that the standards they achieve remain unsatisfactory overall.
55. The school has a wide range of good quality learning resources, which enable pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects. The creation of a small library has brought about much greater interest in books. Good use is made of local library services. Loan arrangements with local museums and other organisations add to the number and quality of artefacts the school has in art and religious education. The very wide variety of resources in art contributes considerably to pupils' interest and ability to explore and experiment. The school has made strenuous efforts to overcome its lack of physical education facilities by making use of community sports centres.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. To sustain the momentum of improvement in the school the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff should now:-

- (1) Meet fully the statutory requirements for physical education by providing all pupils in Years 7 to 9 the opportunities to learn gymnastics or dance and do this without adversely affecting the recommended time for other areas of the curriculum.
(paragraphs – 24, 117 and 120) (This is being partly addressed through the School Improvement Plan)

2. The governors and the school should also consider ensuring:-

The management of planning and provision for careers education and personal, social and health education continues to develop and meets the needs of all pupils.
(paragraphs – 10, 27 and 28) (This is being addressed through the School Improvement Plan)

The development of a policy and appropriate provision for the education of pupils about the misuse of drugs.
(paragraph – 27) (This is being addressed through the School Improvement Plan)

The use made of computers continues to be extended to cover all areas of the curriculum and that all teachers have sufficient expertise in the use of information and communication technology to ensure it is used well in every learning situation.
(paragraphs – 8, 19, 22, 100 and 105) (This is being addressed through the School Improvement Plan)

Pupils are given well-planned opportunities to work alongside pupils of their age in mainstream schools.
(paragraphs – 12, and 29)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	95
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.2	32.6	49.5	13.7	0.0	0.0	0.0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	89
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.6	School data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.3
Average class size	11.2

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	260

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	807238
Total expenditure	792114
Expenditure per pupil	9002
Balance brought forward from previous year	-49595
Balance carried forward to next year	-34471

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	89
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	15	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	15	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	33	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	50	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	89	7	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	11	4	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	11	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	85	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	74	22	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	89	7	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	89	11	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	59	26	4	0	11

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents are very pleased with their children's progress. They particularly highlight the increased independence their children acquire. One parent pointed out how well her child's social development had improved from being a boarder at the school. Parents say that communications between school and home are very good. They get good reports on their children's progress. Parents feel very easy about contacting the school and are made very welcome on visits. They have noticed many changes for the better over the past few years, for example, that the school's resources have improved. There are no concerns about the school but parents are worried that any changes to the overall provision for pupils with special educational needs being considered by the local education authority would harm the very good work the school does for their children.

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

ENGLISH

56. The improvement in English since the re-inspection in 1998 is very good. Since the first inspection in 1996, the school has systematically and successfully addressed the significant weaknesses identified at that time in all areas of the subject. By 1998, the standards pupils achieved had improved to being satisfactory. Currently, the standards of achievement and the quality of educational provision are very good. Learning resources for English were inadequate in 1996 and are now satisfactory.
57. The standards pupils achieve, by the age of 14 and then by the age of 16, are very good overall. However, there is a variation across the different areas of English; achievement is very good in speaking and listening and reading and good in writing. In 2000, all 10 pupils entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement passed – two with merit and four with distinction.
58. At the age of 14, pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is very good. They appreciate both sides of an argument. They discuss, for example, the issues surrounding the amount of local traffic and offer sensible solutions. Pupils with additional special needs achieve much because of very well planned and imaginatively taught activities. An excellent drama lesson gave them the opportunity to practise their role in pairs and make eye contact then remain in character throughout a short performance. Higher attaining pupils speak in complete sentences and answer questions with precision. Their listening skills are already well developed so that they quickly respond to oral instructions. Pupils continue to achieve very well with the skills of speaking and listening in Years 10 and 11. The display of useful words in all classrooms helps pupils develop the vocabulary needed for a range of subjects. Pupils increasingly adapt their speech to different situations, for example chatting sociably with each other in the playground then switching quickly to more formal speech with adults. Their growing vocabulary helps them to express ideas, emotions and feelings more precisely as was seen when they explored issues surrounding homelessness in drama. By the end of Year 11 pupils have the verbal skills necessary, not only to cope with situations at school and in the community but, as they demonstrated, in the work place also.
59. Standards of achievement in reading are very good. Very well planned opportunities for individual, group and whole class reading across the curriculum support well the highly focused opportunities within English lessons. The successful teaching of phonics means that pupils are increasingly able to decipher difficult words. This is particularly successful for a group of lower attaining pupils who receive three highly focused phonic sessions a week. These pupils know the alphabet and can name the vowels. They read common words and enjoy stories with a simple structure. By the age of 14, pupils demonstrate skills learned in library sessions. They select reference books and use the contents and index pages with confidence. In years 10 and 11, pupils begin to read more selectively. They continue to show enjoyment for literature, supplementing the reading schemes they usually still require with books of a wide range of genres from the library. With prompts they gather information from a range of sources including the Internet, newspapers and brochures. Higher attaining pupils use the skills of skimming and scanning, selecting information as required. Teachers read stories aloud very well. The intonation and drama invested in this teaches pupils to be expressive when they read aloud. Pupils show much pleasure in books because they have been exposed to such a wide range of good literature and reading has not been allowed to become mechanical.
60. The achievement of all pupils in writing is good. Policies for spelling and handwriting, which are applied consistently, contribute positively to this achievement. By the age of 14, all pupils are increasingly writing in full sentences. They write book reviews, letters and accounts of visits. Lower attaining pupils write stories using word processing and illustrate these with scanned pictures. Other pupils demonstrate their increasing knowledge of technology as they compose e-mails and fax messages. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 compare their lives with, and discuss the emotions of, characters such as *Macbeth* or Piggy from '*Lord of the Flies*'. Pupils in Year 10 show sensitivity to poetry. In response to the Indian earthquake, one pupil wrote "*I am afraid they will not get me / Will they hear me? / I can smell the dead under the rocks.*" By the age of 16, higher attaining pupils show understanding of the text and sensitive use of language as they

review books such as *'Lord of the Flies.'* They develop strategies to help with spelling including asking each other and handwriting is usually mature and attractive. They are well aware of the changes required in style to suit the purpose of the writing.

61. The teaching of English is very good overall. Lesson planning is very good. It meets the needs of pupils and provides work that is of real interest to them. Expectations concerning pupils' efforts and behaviour are excellent and pupils respond very well with effort and working at a good pace. They are highly involved in their own learning and this is assisted greatly by teachers explaining clearly what is expected of them. Relationships between teachers, the support staff and pupils are warm and productive, encouraging pupils to extend themselves and to take the risks in learning that will ultimately lead to making progress. Resources are prepared well to support writing. Great care is taken to use methods and materials that are age appropriate. This can be seen in the quality of literary texts chosen, which not only contribute significantly to pupils' cultural development but also are conducive to raising self-esteem. The use of assessment is good and is set to improve when plans for new reading and spelling tests are realised.
62. Target setting is very good. Pupils know what their aims for the week are, for example, to learn a new sound or write a complete sentence. Oral assessment during lessons is very good, with pupils contributing well to their own spoken or written assessment. Teachers have worked hard to bring themselves up to date with information and communication technology. Computers are used increasingly for the drafting and final presentation of work, tapes and videos are used to stimulate interest and the Internet is increasingly used for research purposes. Digital cameras help to record assessment and are used as a powerful teaching tool. For example, drama lessons are enhanced by the taking of photographs at different stages of the plot. Pupils then work collaboratively to complete speech bubbles appropriate to the action. Homework supports learning well.
63. The teaching of literacy is very good. Most teachers are confident in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing well, demonstrating increasing knowledge of phonics and handwriting skills. Very good planning across the curriculum means that skills are reinforced in every lesson using a specific emphasis each half term, for example, during the inspection there was a focus on writing. Pupils read aloud in history, they write reports in science and use reference skills well in geography. Skills developed in one lesson are beginning to be transferred to other areas of the curriculum. Although literacy is taught every day the school has not adopted the National Literacy Strategy. However, the implementation of some of the strategies from the National Literacy Strategy framework, such as the use of big books and group readers, could, if done well, raise the quality of teaching even more.
64. The management of English, literacy and drama is very good. The co-ordinator is highly efficient and leads by example. Subject policies and schemes of work are clear, helpful and implemented. She is well supported by the knowledgeable governor with responsibility for literacy. The effective monitoring of teaching is evident in the consistently high quality of lessons observed and the improvement in learning. The quality and range of learning opportunities is interesting and very good. Very effective initiatives such as extra phonic teaching for lower attaining pupils, a computer assisted spelling programme and language development groups help make it very relevant. Every pupil in Year 11 is entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in English. Resources are sufficient and very well chosen to support the subject. The library, although not ideally sited, is a pleasant and well-used resource with sufficient books of good quality. Visits and visitors are selected with thought to enhance learning, motivate pupils and contribute positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Poets and authors visit, trips are enjoyed to the theatre and the ballet. Traditional stories from around the world are read. The literary culture of this country is celebrated.

MATHEMATICS

65. There has been a very good improvement in mathematics since the inspection in 1996 when teaching and learning were poor and what pupils achieved was also poor. Then, the assessment of pupils' progress was inadequate and the mathematics curriculum did not meet statutory requirements. In 1998, a further inspection, carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors, showed the subject had improved and pupils were achieving satisfactorily. Since 1998, mathematics has

improved further. It has, for instance, implemented a good numeracy strategy for all pupils and this has further raised the standards pupils achieve.

66. Pupils of all ages are now achieving very well as a direct result of the teaching they receive and the quality of curriculum and assessment in place. Girls and boys are performing equally well. The needs of higher and lower attaining pupils are very well supported and all make very good progress.
67. By the age of 14, pupils know the value of numbers up to 1000. Higher attaining pupils make accurate additions using numbers up to 20 and they divide groups of objects into halves and quarters. Lower attaining pupils add together numbers up to 10 and know odd and even numbers. All pupils recognise some two and three-dimensional shapes, for example, in a Year 9 group several pupils knew the chart they were working with was a rectangle divided into four further rectangles. They measure the sides of two-dimensional shapes and calculate their perimeters. Pupils know minutes and hours and most can set clock hands at the hour and half-hour. Pupils gather and sort information collected from a traffic survey, which they use to make a computer generated block graph. Their reading of the graph is accurate in confirming the most to the least frequent colour of car in their survey.
68. By the age of 16, higher attaining pupils solve problems involving money using simple additions, subtractions, multiplication and division, for example, mentally calculating the change left over after spending a sum of money. They know a percentage is a fraction of 100 and that 75 per cent is three quarters of a sum. Pupils use calculators to work out percentages such as 25 per cent of 60. They are much less confident in mentally calculating fractions of sums such as three-quarters of 840. Lower attaining pupils recognise balance scales and know they are for weighing. They understand heavier and lighter in relation to objects and test their own estimations using weighing scales. Since 1999, Year 11 pupils have been entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement examination. All of the eight pupils entered in 1999 passed - one with distinction and five with merits. In 2000, all of the nine pupils entered passed - four with distinction and four with merit.
69. Teaching and learning throughout the school are very good. The major strengths in teaching are the very good planning, the methods used and the assessment of pupils' gains in learning. The mathematics scheme of work is very well structured and has been developed in very good detail. This has been extended recently to good planning for numeracy. Basic number skills and their use in solving problems are taught effectively. Planning is used very effectively by teachers. They build skilfully upon what pupils have achieved already and each step in their work ensures pupils' learning is thoroughly consolidated. Activities are varied appropriately for the higher and lower attaining pupils. In a group of lower attaining Year 8 and 9 pupils, for example, some learned the positions of the hour and half-hour on a clock face while others went on to learn that a half-hour is 30 minutes, which is half of 60. Teachers' expertise in mathematics varies between being very good to satisfactory and is good overall. Those teachers not so familiar with the subject, for example, a teacher who stood in for the absent mathematics teacher, are very effectively supported by the high quality of planning and the classroom assistants.
70. Lessons start well with very clear explanations of learning objectives and a productive pace is maintained. Teachers and their assistants work together effectively. Teaching assistants, like teachers, know pupils well and exercise much initiative in following the lesson and helping pupils learn. Very good questioning of pupils confirms whether they understand what is required and good links are made between one lesson and the next. As a consequence, pupils proceed confidently with a new area of learning. Following earlier familiarisation with balance scales and weighing, for example, a lower attaining Year 11 group was questioned thoroughly on their knowledge of heavier and lighter objects together with investigating the effects both have on weighing scales. By the end of the lesson the pupils understood the meaning of heavier and lighter and used this vocabulary accurately. Each lesson is rounded off very well with the teacher summing up the work done. This opportunity is used effectively to test what pupils have learned. For example, Year 9 pupils compared their predictions of the most popular colour of cars with their traffic survey findings expressed in a block graph. This exercise showed clearly the very good progress made by pupils towards understanding estimations and measurements.
71. Pupils are managed very well and the very high expectations set by teachers are well met by

them. In the very best lessons the teacher greets pupils as they arrive with instructions on the equipment and materials they will need for the lesson, which they are left to organise. This helps pupils settle quickly and engage well with the work planned.

72. Mathematics is led and managed very well by a very effective co-ordinator who, since the inspection in 1996, has put into place a policy and scheme of work that has lifted the quality of teaching and learning considerably. This work accounts for the significant improvement in the standards pupils are now achieving. The mathematics classroom is a stimulating and very well organised space with very good resources. Opportunities for promoting pupils' numeracy are identified in the curricular planning for all subjects. The assessment of what pupils know and can do in mathematics is very good. Pupils are tested regularly on what they have been taught and the results are used to track their progress over time. This is generating patterns of performance that contribute to accurate predictions of results. In the Certificate of Educational Achievement examination in Year 11 and will eventually help set school targets on pupils' performance. The information is also shared with all teachers and helps them plan appropriate numeracy activities. They have been trained for the school's numeracy strategy by the mathematics co-ordinator. She also supports teachers by regularly monitoring their mathematics teaching and by providing exemplar mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

73. There has been a good improvement in the teaching and learning of science since the previous inspection. Because of very good management, which has led to the development of well structured planning of what should be taught, science is taught effectively and pupils achieve well.
74. By the age of 14, pupils are developing a good range of scientific skills and knowledge. In their experimental work on drawing up a scientific model to measure the length of shadows or investigating the properties of magnets, teachers challenge the pupils well and this enables them to understand the principles underlying scientific experiments. This progress means that, by the age of 16, pupils are able to undertake more complex work such as building a model helicopter and measuring its performance. In this experiment pupils displayed their confident use of computers to support the recording of evidence and the production of graphs.
75. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they make consistently good progress from what is initially a low level of understanding. The increasing emphasis that teachers place upon pupils designing their experiments and working independently leads to pupils making good progress in enquiry and recording skills. All pupils enjoy the practical and experimental work, participating with enthusiasm and discussing their results confidently. Pupils with additional needs benefit from good quality support which enables them to play a full part in lessons and to make good progress.
76. In Year 11, pupils take the Certificate of Educational Achievement examination in science. In 2000, the eleven pupils entered all passed – 5 with merit and 5 with distinction. These are good results that reflect the good progress pupils make by the age of 16.
77. The quality of teaching is good overall and often very good when taught by the science co-ordinator. The pupils' good progress is a consequence of strong teaching. There is close liaison between the science co-ordinator and the non-specialist teacher, which results in joint lesson planning, which is very good. The teaching is based on very good subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask questions that challenge the pupils. Discussion is well led and teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking and their results to further reinforce the pupils' understanding. This occurred in a Year 11 lesson on dissolving substances in water and the teacher emphasised the need for careful measuring and the need to explain results that did not fit the pattern. This leads to pupils putting forward clear and logical explanations for these results. The teaching is also characterised by the use of a wide range of resources that arouse and maintain pupils' interest. This is one of the reasons why pupils throughout the school enjoy science lessons.
78. Very good quality assessment procedures have been devised. They are used effectively in measuring both pupils' knowledge and skills, thus enabling the content of lessons to be relevant

to their needs. Science is very well managed and this is a key element in the very good progress made since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

79. The improvement in art since the inspection in 1996 is good. There is now a much firmer foundation for the subject in having a teacher for art and a room dedicated for the purpose. The art teacher has developed a good curricular plan, where one had not existed, and is continuing to update this in line with the new National Curriculum. Pupils' work is now assessed well. While the element of the teacher determining what pupils' work will look like remains evident, pupils continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Year 11 pupils are now entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in art and design.
80. Pupils of all ages are achieving well, which is a good improvement on the satisfactory standards achieved in 1996. They thoroughly enjoy art, sustain considerable efforts and work meticulously. Up to the end of Year 9, pupils extend their skills well in drawing, using colour and modelling clay. They have expanded their knowledge of art especially about the ways visual elements, such as line shape, texture and pattern, can be used imaginatively to create good artistic results. When asked about the meaning of the word 'texture' Year 7 pupils give single word explanations such as 'rough'. By Year 9, pupils describe texture using well-structured sentences for explaining a range of surface qualities and the interest texture lends to surface. They use their knowledge well in selecting materials to achieve a visual effect. One pupil explained clearly how the coloured fabric and sequins he had chosen would give the effect of fireworks on the Bonfire Night theme. The highest standards are reached in modelling clay, where pupils' achievements are very good. They roll and cut clay, for example to make a good tile shape. The modelling of surface features such as flowers and textures is very competent. By Year 11, modelling is done with very good skill and experience of clay. Pupils explore ideas through the investigation of art, for example, drawing from North American Indian totem poles, to guide their clay constructions. The six pupils entered in 2000 for the certificate of Educational Achievement all passed – three with merit. There are 21 pupils entered for this year's examination and the standards they are achieving suggest even better results.
81. Teaching and learning are good overall. The teacher has a good knowledge of art and uses this effectively to develop pupils' vocabulary. Good opportunities are made for promoting pupils' literacy and pupils learn and recognise key words. Equally, questioning pupils on the shapes made in clay is a good example of how their mathematical knowledge concerning a cube and rectangle is reinforced. The teacher's skill in using clay provides pupils with many good pointers on rolling and cutting to make a good tile and, out of this, they learn to make an evenly proportioned tile shape. Lesson planning is very good. It takes careful account of pupils' different abilities. In a Year 9 lesson, lower attaining pupils are supported effectively in developing their ideas with structured planning sheets made by the teacher. Activities are securely based on work done in previous weeks so that over several lessons pupils are consolidating their knowledge and skills well. The teacher focuses appropriately on teaching pupils about the basic visual elements, such as line pattern and texture, which go into making good work.
82. Lessons are well organised and pupils are very well managed so that work gets off to a clear and brisk start. Introductions are lively and informative. Time is very well used and expectations are kept high by, for example, the teacher frequently returning with the whole group to, the lesson objectives, evaluations of their work and pointers for improvements. These actions achieve pupils' better concentration and a clearer focus on aims. However, the teacher's contribution is at times over-prescriptive and leaves too little scope for pupils to decide the direction of their ideas in response to the lesson topic.
83. Art is benefiting from the very good leadership and management of the co-ordinator. Most of what is in place, which amounts to very good provision, has been achieved in the short period of time the co-ordinator has been in post. The hard work continues on the development of curriculum and the subjects' resources. The new art room is packed with exciting and colourful visual stimulus. Most of this is pupils' work, which is displayed attractively. There are many artefacts on loan from the museum service that support the current topic on texture. All of this creates a very good

atmosphere for learning to which pupils respond very positively. Art resources are of a wide variety and lead to pupils experimenting effectively. There is a good collection of books and large illustrations of artwork.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. The improvement in design and technology since the inspection in 1996 has been good. Pupils' achievements, the curriculum and assessment as well as accommodation and resources were all less than satisfactory then. The recent appointment of a subject co-ordinator for technology has led to good developments in curricular planning. Most requirements are now in place and provide a reasonably broad and balanced technology curriculum. More planning is in process for extending further the learning opportunities in designing and making products with wood and plastic. The co-ordinator of food studies has been in post since 1996. Curricular planning in this aspect of design and technology has advanced much further and is very good. Good procedures for assessment are in place and are still developing in technology. They are very good in food studies. Pupils' progress is assessed at the end of each project and there is provision at the same time for them to make their own evaluations. In food studies, pupils' skills with utensils and processes is monitored and charted very closely. Both the accommodation and resources are good in technology and food studies.
85. Pupils of all ages are achieving very well in the whole of design and technology. By the age of 14, they develop ideas for a moving toy into drawn designs. Designs are mainly sketches rather than more precise graphic work. Pupils know about different systems for making components move, for example, by the use of liquid or air pressure. For example, in a mechanism using air pressure to make components move, a Year 7 pupil knew the part that drew air in, how the air was pressurised and driven forward resulting in the component moving. By Year 9, pupils design and make a badge with flashing lights incorporating a simple electrical circuit. All know how to lay a copper track circuit and solder the joints together securely. Higher attaining pupils realise the solder completes the electrical circuit. All pupils have basic skills for translating their designs into products. They mark out shapes sometimes by using measurement and cut these carefully with knives or saws. They know to secure their work with a vice or clamps and know how to sand rough edges smooth and drill holes.
86. By the age of 14, in food studies, pupils modify basic cake recipes to meet a specification that the cake is healthy for teeth. Pupils know to reduce the sugar content and add healthy ingredients such as carrots or fresh fruit. Pupils are well organised and they use equipment and utensils skilfully. Most operate an oven and timer independently. They cut, chop and mix ingredients safely and hygienically, for example, they are aware of the risk of salmonella from eggs and wash their hands after handling one. By the age of 16, pupils independently plan, prepare and present a two-course meal specified in the Certificate of Educational Achievement examination. They know what is a healthy diet and set out the food they make in a visually attractive manner. They know about key constituents of foods such as fats, carbohydrates and protein and investigate food packaging for this information. Pupils use word-processing for writing and recording their work. In 2000, all of the six pupils entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement passed – one with distinction and three with merit.
87. Teaching is very good overall. The teachers' expertise in technology is good and it is very good in food studies. Both teachers communicate enthusiasm for the subject and they see clearly the ways technology and food studies benefits pupils' personal and educational development. They set very high expectation for all pupils. There is a very strong emphasis, through very good planning both in technology and food studies, of pupils taking charge of their own learning, working independently and helping others. There is equally good attention to pupils acquiring skills in using tools and utensils safely and hygienically. As a consequence, pupils' learning is very good in respect of them using well-organised, safe and healthy approaches to making products. Lesson planning also focuses sharply on increasing pupils' knowledge of design and technology. Using the example of a powered model car, the technology teacher helps Year 8 pupils understand the operation of a drive mechanism and learn the vocabulary of switch, motor and fuel source. Lessons are very well organised, in particular good use is made of interesting and age-appropriate resources, which challenge and excite pupils, for example, incorporating electrical circuits into working models. The computerised video link with a neighbouring

technology college is an exciting and successful venture for all involved. Through this, pupils get an explanation and see a good demonstration of the vacuum forming process. Pupils who have difficulty reading use good visual aids in food studies to help them plan and carry out their work. For example, pupils write out recipes using an alphabet of symbols available on computer and plan meals using pictures of ingredients. Those pupils who read well are given good opportunities in food studies to read out information on food hygiene. Pupils are managed well, more so in food studies where relationships are better established.

88. The management of both aspects of design and technology is very good. Both co-ordinators have started with very little in place and have developed the provision effectively. This is now very well established in food studies. For example, curricular planning extends to setting three levels of challenge in lesson activities to reflect the broad spread of pupils' ability.

GEOGRAPHY

89. There has been very good improvement in geography since the inspection in 1996. At that time standards of achievement were poor and the subject lacked clear direction. There were no structures in place to monitor the subject. All of these shortcomings have been addressed successfully.
90. Standards of achievement are good. By the age of 14, pupils recognise features such as rivers and mountains on a map. They use grid references and follow directions using the four points of the compass. Pupils know the countries that make up the British Isles. They identify their position on a map and name and spell their capital cities. They make comparisons between villages and towns as they study maps of different scales. Pupils' subject vocabulary develops as they learn about primary and secondary industries such as those associated with wood and wool. Lower attaining pupils know that Bristol and Liverpool are ports. They respond very positively to challenging work such as following trade routes on the atlas then drawing them on their own maps. Higher attaining pupils show impressive recall of air, land, water and noise pollution. Discussion is good as they help each other select relevant information from reference books. *"When people dump chemical waste it harms sea life and other animals"* reported one pupil. The basic skills of reading and writing develop well as pupils show willingness to read aloud or word process letters of protest about de-forestation of the Amazon region.
91. Year 10 pupils are achieving well because their work is interesting and relevant. Year 11 pupils are following a humanities course and do not study geography separately. By the end of Year 10 pupils show some understanding of the effects of global warming on wildlife and grasslands. They compare tropical, temperate and desert climates and follow the course of a river, considering the use of land surrounding it. Pupils acquire the vocabulary to help them describe more accurately tropical rain forests and local woodland. They identify carnivores, decomposition and ecosystems and use a digital camera to very good effect when studying the different levels of woodland in the school grounds. During Year 11, pupils understand how the use of land changes over time through practical activities associated with the study of the local area. They take photographs and compare features now with features in Rowde fifty years ago. They understand something of Britain's heritage when they visit an industrial mill in Trowbridge and broaden their knowledge of world affairs and maps as they consider America's foreign policy.
92. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils. In a Year 8 lesson, having maps showing fewer roads for lower attaining pupils helped them identify routes successfully whilst higher attaining pupils were given maps marked with major roads as well as trunk roads and motorways. Lower attaining pupils in Year 10 could demonstrate their learning about the rainforest because written prompts helped them select relevant information. There are very clear expectations, which are met, that much will be achieved in individual lessons and over time. Resources are prepared with care and books are of good quality, giving status to the subject in the eyes of the pupils. Their moral and social development is good as they are given opportunities to discuss issues facing the world such as the siting of a dam or cutting down of rainforests. Teachers arrange interesting and relevant fieldwork and visits such as those to Wild Court Rainforest or a working wood factory. Procedures for assessing pupils work are good. There are end- of- topic assessments, which are increasingly being allocated National Curriculum attainment levels and samples of work are kept

to give evidence of progress.

93. Pupils make very good progress with literacy during geography lessons because teachers provide very good opportunities. Pupils read aloud, selecting information from a wide range of sources including graphs and the Internet and write for a range of purposes. Language development is good through the extension of subject vocabulary and the frequent chance to take part in discussion about a range of issues. Planning for the use of high quality support staff could be even more efficient in some lessons.
94. The management of the subject is satisfactory and improving. The co-ordinator is new to teaching but is already having an impact on the subject. She is building up good quality resources that are well supplemented by the local library and museum service. Whole school policies for monitoring and assessment are supporting the subject well. There is planned updating of the subject policy and hopes that video conferencing will assist in developing the subject further. High quality displays celebrate achievement and support learning. The curriculum is broad and balanced and, with its emphasis on opportunities for practical activities, it is relevant to the needs of the pupils. The local area is well used to support teaching and learning, with even more use of the school's own extensive grounds planned. Pupils are able to sit the Certificate of Educational Achievement in humanities in Year 11. The work planned about the local area is meeting the needs of pupils.

HISTORY

95. At the time of the 1996 inspection history was unsatisfactory. This was because standards of achievement were poor, the requirements of the National Curriculum were not being met and work in history was not monitored or evaluated. Since that time improvements in the subject have been good. All aspects of history are now satisfactory or better.
96. The standards achieved by all pupils are satisfactory. By the age of 14, pupils show a lively interest in mediaeval realms. They understand how William I kept control of England and the importance castles played in helping him. Pupils explain the importance of the buffalo to Native Americans and name some of the tribes such as Cherokee and Apache. They recognise similarities and differences between them and identify their homelands on a map. Pupils display a sound knowledge of this country's past. Having been stimulated by a visit to a local museum, pupils join in a lively discussion about the life of the working classes in 1900. Using this knowledge and photographic evidence, they compare life then with life now, noting especially the differences in diet.
97. Standards of achievement continue to be satisfactory up to the age of 16 when, this year, pupils will sit the Certificate of Educational Achievement examination in humanities. Pupils use methods of historical enquiry as they listen to tapes of music from the 1950's and understand the roots of pop culture. A much more effective and relevant unit of work enables pupils by the end of Year 11 to demonstrate knowledge of primary and secondary sources. They show empathy as they study how life and care for the elderly has changed over time in the village of Rowde. They evaluate photographs, which they take themselves, and compare them with those taken fifty years ago. Interviewing a local pensioner and consulting the Vicar about local information helps them compare their lives with those of residents, fifty years ago.
98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, work is challenging and builds well on pupils' previous learning. Practical activities engage interest as was seen when a mediaeval catapult, on loan from the local museum service, was demonstrated to good effect. Teachers provide very good opportunities for the improvement of basic skills. Pupils discuss their work with interest; they read aloud from books and worksheets and present their writing in a variety of forms. Support staff contribute positively to learning as was seen when a pupil on the autistic spectrum was sensitively helped to participate in all activities. Assessment of work is good both in the short term and over time. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress but they display some uncertainty about subject knowledge and occasionally provide work sheets of little value. This was seen when, as part of one lesson, pupils completed a word search of words associated with American pop culture.
99. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new in role and would benefit

from greater subject knowledge. However, he is keen and already monitoring the subject through the collection of samples of work from pupils of all abilities. The curriculum provides a breadth of learning opportunities and is being planned well. The intentions for what is to be taught to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is in need of review to ensure that it is always relevant to their needs. Well planned visits in the local area and satisfactory resources, well supplemented by the local museum service, contribute well to learning. History provides good opportunities for moral, social and cultural development through activities such as discussion about working conditions of the poor or visits to a local antique fair or museum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. The subject is now becoming more established across the whole curriculum, although this is not yet fully achieved. Some staff are not confident in their ability to teach the knowledge and skills involved through their subjects. However, planning is in place for teachers to undertake further training. All pupils now have planned regular access to computers in information and communication lessons and the quality of teaching and learning in these lessons is now very good. Newly established assessment and recording systems are good.
101. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are achieving very well in information communication technology lessons but do not make as much progress as they might in the subject overall because it does not form a sufficient part of the curriculum in every subject. Therefore, learning is not consistently extended and consolidated.
102. By the age of 14, pupils key in their work, print it and save it. They use a word processor successfully to plan and redraft their work. Pupils increasingly understand that a control device must be programmed using instructions. They learn to successfully control a floor and a screen turtle. Lower achievers work in pairs to programme a simple robot to follow a set route. Pupils produce graphs in a variety of forms. They are familiar with spreadsheets. They use a variety of tools and programmes to present their work in striking and original ways.
103. By the age of 16, pupils use a modelling programme, for example, in designing a bathroom and a kitchen. They move the furniture and appliances by clicking on to the icons. Most manage to keep within budget. A striking feature of their attainment is the high standard of discussion between pupils as they talk about the suitability of the items they have chosen and whether they are safe or not. All produce a floor plan, although low attaining pupils need help for this. Almost all pupils recognise the difference between a floor plan and a 3D model of the same thing. They understand how to use the "wall view" to add curtains and other accessories. Pupils confidently print their work and say what they have spent. They are beginning to evaluate their work and say if they have managed their budget well.
104. Teaching in information and communication technology lessons is good and pupils are learning well, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The teacher has a thorough knowledge of the programmes she teaches and explains procedures carefully. All lessons are well supported by simple, accessible instruction sheets. These, with the teacher's individual help and advice, ensure pupils' success. Pupils are very interested in the subject and are self-motivated. This enables them to concentrate and helps them to learn. Pupils take great pleasure in realising that they can produce writing to a professional standard using a word processor. They enjoy the striking visual displays they make and this motivates them to make further effort. Activities are well pitched to pupils' abilities. Support staff make a well co-ordinated and effective contribution to attainment
105. The planning of what is taught in information and communication technology lessons is good. It promotes pupils' literacy and numeracy well. The use of computers in some other subjects extends and consolidates learning, particularly in science, but not all subjects use them effectively to promote learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

106. Since the last inspection, the French co-ordinator has effected an excellent level of improvement. Standards of achievement in relation to pupils' abilities are now excellent. The time allowed for the subject is now generous and gives pupils sufficient opportunities to practice and consolidate their skills through regular use of the language. The quality of learning is now excellent. Teaching is now excellent with very good use of French in lessons by the teacher and support assistants. The management of the subject is now excellent. Its planning of what is taught is very good and fully supports the excellent learning of all pupils.
107. By the age of 14, pupils know the names of pet animals and can read and say them. They have some knowledge of French vocabulary with which to name features which may be found in a town. Pupils ask simple questions about what a town has to offer to a tourist. They are able to answer the questions using good French. Pupils confidently label the main features of the town plans they make. They read these words with an acceptable French accent. Working in pairs, pupils sustain simple dialogue as they ask each other, and answer, questions using vocabulary they have previously learned. In Year 9, pupils confidently enter into dialogue with the teacher, using and consolidating their knowledge and understanding of sentences in French. Pupils independently use simple French reference books to support very simple research. Higher attaining pupils unselfconsciously report to the class what they have found out, using appropriate vocabulary and correct constructions.
108. By the age of 16, pupils know something of French café culture. They have some knowledge of the food and drinks on offer, and can ask for them and request the bill. Pupils have all handled French money and are becoming increasingly familiar with it. They have some idea of what the various denominations are worth in pounds and pence. Pupils have a good knowledge of numbers in French and use French to facilitate a simple monetary operation. They say, "*I haven't any change*" using good French. Pupils know the names in French of the clothes they wear. They write a dialogue in French between themselves and a shop assistant, which could take place if they were buying a tracksuit. Pupils include in this the greeting and goodbye. They understand and act on the instructions in French, which they are consistently given in lessons. Pupils understand them well and increasingly respond to them using French words and phrases. At the end of every lesson, pupils' performance is assessed in French by the teacher, which they understand very well.
109. Ten pupils were entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in French in 1999. All pupils passed – 7 with distinction and 3 with merit. In 2000, all 10 pupils passed - 9 with distinction and 1 with merit. These are very good results and pupils are on course to do as well this year.
110. Teaching and learning in the subject is excellent. In a Year 7 lesson, the teacher instantly caught the pupils' interest and attention by showing them delightful pictures of pet animals. They were thus highly motivated to learn their names in French and this enhanced progress. The simple strategy of allowing pupils to say the vocabulary loudly in unison and then softly led to their enjoyment; it kept them firmly on task and helped consolidate their knowledge. Pupils eagerly put up their hands to say the names of the animals in French. The teacher took good care to shape the quality of their accent as she repeated their responses. Interest and excitement rose as the teacher produced a plain plastic bag. She took soft toys from the bag one by one, giving the class, meanwhile, the simple constructions to ask what they were and say what they were. When pupils successfully identified the animals in French they were allowed to press the button on a pop up toy rabbit, which made a pinging sound. This enraptured pupils, which made doubly sure that they remembered all the names. A boy who became overexcited at this juncture was managed surely and sympathetically and soon started learning again. In this lesson, pupils responded to the good French used by the teacher more and more. They did not notice that it was not English. When Kim's game was introduced and pupils had to identify and name the animal, which had been removed from the table, concentration was absolute. Learning in this lesson was of a very high order.
111. In a lesson in Year 11, learning was of a high standard because learning objectives were clear and shared by the class. Skilful questioning elicited confident and correct oral responses. The teaching assistant was used very effectively, repeating key words and phrases using good

French. A well-chosen and attractive textbook further supported learning. The teacher and teaching assistant spoke good French in the classroom and circulated usefully giving high quality help and instruction. Real clothes were brought out for pupils to say what they were in French and read the prices in francs from the tickets. Pupils conducted buying and selling using authentic French money, which further improved their learning. The teacher made good use of a recording of a native French speaker who named and described a variety of clothes. The pupils listened intently to this and further improved their accents. Pupils made excellent leaps forward in their knowledge and understanding in this lesson because of the very level of interest and the quality of their concentration. The teacher and teaching assistant were excellent role models for the pupils as they spoke fluent French to facilitate the activities. The lesson took place against a background of well-spoken conversational French from their teachers, which reinforced and extended their knowledge of the language.

112. The management of the subject is excellent. The curriculum, which is very good, is to be supported this year with a residential visit to France. Assessment of the pupils' progress in the subject is excellent and forms the basis for the high quality curricular planning, which underpins the excellent progress in lessons. The classroom further motivates pupils and interests them greatly because it is beautifully decorated and contains a number of well-labelled French artefacts.

MUSIC

113. Music has improved very well since the last inspection. It is firmly in place in the curriculum and is delivered in a stimulating and exciting way, which enables pupils to make good progress. The teaching provided by the visiting teacher is a further factor in ensuring the good progress of pupils.
114. By the age of 14, pupils have learnt to create percussion rhythms and compose simple melodies to create images such as transport by train or the firing of a rocket. Older pupils can produce music in more complex forms, such as Javanese music, and can use a range of musical forms, such as pop music and band music to explore feelings and reactions. The teacher's emphasis on the use of technical terms means that pupils readily understand words such as tempo and rhythm. The recordings of pupils' music accurately emphasise their confidence and progress.
115. Despite the lack of a music specialist, teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The hard work of the teachers, combined with effective support from the visiting specialist teacher, results in lessons which are imaginative and captivating. Pupils are asked to evaluate their performances and work closely as a group. An example of this was seen in a Year 11 group, which composed a range of individual percussion sounds and then played together as a group.
116. There is now a very structured approach to the teaching of music and much work has gone into devising curriculum planning of sufficient quality for it to be adopted by other schools as a model. Assessment procedures are now in place. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish music in the school and her commitment, together with that of the part time teacher, is largely responsible for the very good progress that has been made.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. Improvement since the inspection in 1996 is satisfactory. Physical education has maintained its quality of teaching but several of the issues raised in 1996 have yet to be effectively addressed. The school has done much to broaden the range of the curriculum available to pupils. It remains hampered by having no qualified teacher to co-ordinate the subject. More importantly, the shortage of a teacher and lack of a gymnasium in the school is depriving pupils of their entitlement to dance or gymnastics.
118. All pupils enjoy the games and swimming that the school provides. They co-operate well with each other. Pupils up to the age of 14 learn to swim in the local swimming pool and make good progress. By the age of 14 pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres and many gain distance awards as well as personal survival certificates. By the age of 16, pupils show increasing confidence in balancing and holding position and good teaching provides them with effective challenges. Pupils are given freedom to plan their own work and movements but this is hindered by the large size of the group and the need to use facilities at the local sports centre.
119. The teaching of games is good and is focused on developing both skills and knowledge. Pupils achieve well in games because of the systematic way in which skills are taught. This was well illustrated in a Year 11 lesson where the teacher's effective planning was successful in developing pupils' skills in passing and controlling the ball. Pupils concentrated well. Their concentration was helped by the skilful demonstrations by the teacher and a well-structured lesson, which built effectively on previous skills and presented a developing range of challenges. The well-planned deployment of support staff was enhanced by their enthusiasm. This enabled pupils with special needs to play a full part and to make good progress.
120. The headteacher is currently acting as temporary co-ordinator and ensures that teaching is of good quality. However, much still needs to be done in developing the curriculum and establishing assessment procedures. The school has so far been unable to appoint an appropriate member of staff. However, the lack of facilities for gymnastics or dance, first referred to in the 1996 report, remains still to be addressed. Until that is achieved and a qualified teacher is appointed to manage the subject, the school is unable to provide efficiently for pupils in Years 7 to 9 the full range of experiences identified in the National Curriculum for physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory improvement. Teaching and learning have both improved. Lesson planning now supports learning. Religious artefacts are now regularly borrowed from the local education authority, so that provision of resources is at least adequate. Assessment is now good.
122. The progress made by all pupils is satisfactory. By the age of 14, pupils have at least a basic knowledge of the events of Holy Week. In a lesson on courage they understood that Jesus was courageous to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem because he knew that he would die there. In this lesson, pupils gave examples of the personal courage of people known to them. They wrote an account of how they had felt sorrow, and what would make them feel better. They connected their feelings of sorrow and healing with the sorrow the disciples felt when they knew that Jesus was about to die. In a lesson in Year 9, pupils achieved some comprehension of the complex concept of the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. In this lesson they also realised that one of the functions of Holy Communion is to help us to remember Jesus after his death. Besides Christianity pupils have also studied Judaism and Buddhism and this has consolidated their understanding of religion.
123. By the age of 16, pupils connect the Passover with the Last Supper. They have read St Matthew's gospel, which describes the events of Holy Week, with at least a basic understanding. Some pupils respond to these events with real empathy. Pupils know the terms "Eucharist", "Communion" and "Mass" and connect them with the Last Supper. Pupils answer the question, "Why do Christians still celebrate the Last Supper?" They describe these events using the correct vocabulary. By the age of 16, pupils have knowledge of other religions. Pupils do not always show great interest in the subject. Some do not concentrate well. They lapse into silliness from time to

time, so that they make less progress than they should.

124. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Two of the five lessons observed were good because they were well planned and presented. In a Year 9 lesson, for example, the teacher told the story of Jesus' crucifixion movingly. She explained difficult concepts such as feelings of sorrow very carefully, and so made them entirely accessible to the pupils. All learning was supported by carefully selected vocabulary to help pupils express feelings. They responded positively and thoughtfully, and made good progress. The telling of the story of the Passion was interesting, accessible and held pupils' interest. The teacher illustrated the concept of sorrow by a genuinely moving anecdotal tale, to which pupils listened with great concentration. This improved their understanding. In a lesson on the Passover, key vocabulary and understanding of the symbolism of the Passover meal was very well explained. In this lesson, pupils filled in gaps in the biblical text and so derived a flavour of the prose. Pupils do not make the same progress in other lessons because the expectations set by the teacher are too low. In these instances the teacher fails to catch the pupils' interest and imagination. Pupils do not play a sufficiently active part in the lessons and do not settle to the written tasks.

125. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and is based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus. However, the plans for what should be taught are not finalised although this is in progress. There is a programme of useful visits to churches and other places of interest.