

INSPECTION REPORT

WINCHELSEA SCHOOL

Guernsey Road, Poole

LEA area: Poole

Headteacher: Mr R Barnsley

Acting headteacher during the inspection:
Mr G Moore

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sue Aldridge

OIN: 8810

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 May 2002

Inspection number: 194109

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
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Guernsey Road Poole Dorset
Postcode:	BH12 4LL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Brown
Date of previous inspection:	July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9147	Sue Stock	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27424	Alan Dobbins	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Design and technology; Religious education.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
2512	Brian Emery	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Mathematics.	Efficiency.
12641	Pauline Lyseight-Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; English; Special educational needs.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
113955	Sue Taylor	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Personal, social and health education; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
9147	Mike Whitehead	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Physical education.	Assessment.
15971	Mike Pye	<i>Team inspector</i>	Support.	Support.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Winchelsea is a mixed, day, community special school for pupils from three to sixteen. Of the 110 pupils on the school's present roll, most have moderate learning difficulties, 19 have severe learning difficulties, 10 have emotional and behavioural difficulties, 8 have autism, and one pupil has physical difficulties. There are twice as many boys as girls, and only three pupils from an ethnic minority group; there is also one traveller. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, and attainment on entry is very low. Just over a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. Since the last inspection, the school has established links with a local secondary school, and pupils in Years 8 to 11 go to this school for their science, design and technology, and physical education lessons. In April 2001, the local education authority designated the school as one in need of intensive support. During a mini-inspection, commissioned by the local education authority in December 2001, the headteacher left the school and has been on sick leave since then. Following some internal re-organisation, a member of support staff, who had been in charge of the school's nursery, left the school and has been on sick leave since. A teacher is also on sick leave. Since January 2002, the school has received intensive support from an local education authority senior adviser and a headteacher acting as a consultant. The school is subject to reorganisation proposals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Teaching is good, and pupils achieve well. School improvement has been limited in the past by weaknesses in leadership and management. The school is now well led, but some weaknesses in management remain. The cost of educating pupils at Winchelsea is high compared with similar schools nationally, and so the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils achieve well; secondary-aged pupils achieve particularly well in design and technology.
- Teaching is good across the school, and all staff show a determination to provide the best possible learning experiences for pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, and their work, are very good; so is their behaviour. Very positive relationships between all members of the school's community help to create a productive and harmonious learning environment.
- The school very successfully promotes pupils' personal development.
- Led well by the reconstituted senior management team, staff have worked hard as a team, since January 2002, to maintain the school's strengths and rectify weaknesses,.
- The school makes very good use of new technology.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The present staffing difficulties have placed a heavy burden on some staff, and resulted in subject managers having little time to carry out and develop their roles. Weaknesses in the management of science affect achievement in the subject.
- The governors, who have not been given enough information in the past, do not have a sufficiently well developed role in steering the work of the school.
- The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory.

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

Since the inspection of 1997, improvement has been satisfactory overall, although the most significant changes in leadership and management have occurred in the last five months. Secondary-aged pupils now have access to suitable specialist facilities. There is now a good ratio of teachers to pupils. Learning resources have been improved in several subjects. The amount of teaching time has been increased to meet recommendations. Since January, the senior management team has established a clear educational direction for the school, and a suitable action plan has been drawn up to show how remaining weaknesses will be tackled. Good support from the local education authority has been helpful. Teachers have increased their skills and expertise in planning for pupils with a wide range of ability, and assessment has improved. There are now good opportunities for external accreditation of achievements.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By Year R	By Year 6	By Year 9	By Year 11	Key <i>very good</i> A <i>good</i> B <i>satisfactory</i> C <i>unsatisfactory</i> <i>D</i> <i>poor</i> E
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	
reading	B	B	B	B	
writing	B	B	B	B	
mathematics	B	B	B	B	
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

Pupils achieve well, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has set fairly challenging targets for raising achievement, but it is too soon to say whether these are likely to be reached. Children at the Foundation Stage achieve well in all the areas of learning. Secondary-aged pupils achieve very well in design and technology; this is linked to access to specialist teaching and facilities. Achievement in swimming is also very good. In science, pupils in Years 8 to 11 do not achieve as well as others, because information on what they have learned up to this stage is not passed on, and teachers lack expertise in

teaching pupils with learning difficulties. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory. In music, achievement is generally good. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have not had music lessons for a term and a half, but total teaching time is sufficient, and their achievement is satisfactory. Achievement of pupils with challenging behaviour is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are most enthusiastic about their school, and are very keen to improve and succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are most co-operative and sensible in class. They are welcoming, polite and helpful to visitors, and behave well around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is a strong sense of mutual respect between all members of the school community. Pupils take increasing responsibilities as they get older, and the family atmosphere promotes learning well.
Attendance	Good. Figures compare well with those of similar schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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 good overall; it is good in English, mathematics, science, and personal, social and health education. Particular strengths at the Foundation Stage are high expectations, teaching of basic skills, knowledge and understanding of children's particular needs, and detailed planning. Across the school, teachers have very good subject expertise. This has a particularly positive impact on learning in design and technology, together with the good use of specialist facilities in the local secondary school. However, in several subjects, there is still room for improvement in the planning of suitable tasks for pupils of different abilities, and the management of challenging behaviour. Most teachers are skilled in teaching communication, including literacy and numeracy, and teachers use new technology very well to support learning across the curriculum. The school meets the needs of most of its pupils well. A small number of pupils with very challenging behaviour, who are taught individually, for the safety of other pupils and staff, are not appropriately placed in this school. Pupils make very good efforts in lessons, and older pupils are involved well in evaluating their learning, particularly through self-assessment of key skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Most pupils have a good range of learning experiences. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, and good provision for careers education. Productive links with the community enrich the curriculum. At present, pupils in Years 8 and 9 do not have music lessons because the acting headteacher does not have time for this. Pupils who are taught individually are disapplied correctly from the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Personal development is promoted very effectively. Arrangements for encouraging moral, social and cultural development are very good. Provision for spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are given good personal support and guidance. Staff keep a close check on pupils' progress and personal development. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. Arrangements for managing pupils with behaviour difficulties, whilst satisfactory, are at an early stage of development. Assessment is good; the school stores electronically information about pupil' attainment levels. Provision of speech therapy is satisfactory.

The school works very well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The school is led well by the acting headteacher and senior management team. The school's action plan identifies all the areas for development that it should, and since January 2002 considerable progress has been made in putting it into practice. However, the recent nature of developments in leadership and management, coupled with the school's present staffing difficulties, limit the extent to which subject co-ordinators can improve provision. There are weaknesses in policy making, which adversely affect monitoring of provision.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and skilled. They recognise that they have not had the skills to act as critical friends, and their role in shaping the direction of the school is unsatisfactory. They do have the will and the capacity to improve on this. The recent governors' annual report to parents did not meet requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Target setting for raising achievement, and action taken to support the process, is good. The school also compares its results with those of a small group of similar local schools. There has been some limited use of national comparative data.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has used additional funds well, and has made effective use of support and advice from the local education authority. However, financial planning is over a short term. The principles of best value are applied in a satisfactory manner.

Staffing is satisfactory; the present difficulties mean that one teacher is responsible for two groups of pupils. Learning resources are good. Accommodation is unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are high expectations of pupils.• Teaching is good.• Children like coming to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents did not feel that children got the right amount of homework. Some felt that too much is given.

Inspectors agree with parents' very positive views of the school. They find that teachers regularly give suitable amounts of relevant homework, and that this helps pupils to learn.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well in most subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils were found to make satisfactory progress in most subjects. Improvements in achievement are linked to better planning, particularly for pupils of different abilities, to the introduction of nationally recognised external accreditation for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and to the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Since the last inspection, teaching time has also increased. Boys and girls, pupils of different prior attainment and ethnic origins all achieve equally well. For the small number of pupils who have very challenging behaviour, are taught singly and attend part-time, achievement is satisfactory. These pupils are not appropriately placed in this school, as their needs are very different from those of all other pupils.
2. The school has established a productive link with a local secondary school, which enables pupils in Years 8 to 11 to have their design and technology, physical education and science lessons in specialist facilities. This has helped to raise achievement in design and technology and physical education. In science, teacher's lack of knowledge of what pupils have learned before, combined with limited expertise in teaching pupils with learning difficulties means that pupils do not achieve as well as they might, and their progress slows. This particularly affects the development of their investigative skills.
3. There are no differences in the achievements of boys and girls, or pupils of different abilities, and those with autism achieve as well as others. However, a very small number of pupils with challenging behaviour do not achieve as well as others, as they are often withdrawn from classes to minimise the disruption to the learning of others. Nonetheless, their achievement is satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to develop strategies to manage better the small number of pupils with challenging behaviour, and is seeking external support to do this.
4. The school has set fairly challenging targets for improving achievement. As these were set recently, it is not yet possible to say whether the targets are likely to be met. However, suitable action has been taken to support pupils in making progress towards them. For example, the school has organised pupils into groups of similar attainment for some of their literacy and numeracy lessons, and this is working well.
5. Children in the early years class get a good start to their education. When they first join the school they have a limited vocabulary, and some have little speech. They achieve well in all the areas of learning, making good progress towards the early learning goals. None of the children achieve these goals, because of the level of their learning difficulties, but by the time they reach the end of their reception year they have a suitable means of communication, understand about books, and are beginning to acquire early writing skills. All join in with number rhymes and songs, and the higher attainers count to 10. Children take turns, and work in small groups. They explore objects by using their senses, build structures, and control computer programmes through a roller ball or mouse. They acquire independence skills, such as dressing themselves, and can move in different ways, responding to commands to *start* and *stop*. They work creatively, making patterns for example.

6. Pupils in Years 1 to 11 achieve well in English and mathematics. Standards in both of these subjects are broadly similar to standards achieved by pupils in similar schools nationally. Achievement is promoted well by the teaching of pupils in groups of similar attainment, and through suitably modified forms of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies (NLS and NNS). The impact of the NLS is most evident in Years 1 to 6. Here pupils have been systematically taught skills to enable them to recognise letter sounds, and they use these to help them read and spell correctly. In Year 9, lower attaining pupils do not yet have such skills, and rely on an adult telling them words they do not recognise. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening across the curriculum helps to promote progress in this vital skill. By the time pupils reach Year 11, they are confident enough to offer their views on the characters they have encountered in class texts. They are able to use dictionaries and thesauruses, and all write well enough to complete application forms, and to write a personal statement for their record of achievement. Last summer, ten pupils achieved an English Certificate of Achievement at Level 3, and two achieved the same certificate at Level 2.

7. In mathematics, pupils in Year 2 count and recognise numbers to ten, they recognise coins, and develop an understanding of shape, space and measure. By Year 6, pupils understand and use mathematical vocabulary, such as *more than*, *less than* and *between*. Higher attainers know some of their multiplication tables. By Year 9, pupils can give the correct change from a £10 note. By Year 11, lower attainers use their mathematical skills in practical and social situations. For example, they read bus timetables. Higher attainers are able to identify and describe *reflex*, *acute*, and *obtuse* angles. Last summer, two pupils achieved AEB Numeracy at Level 1, three achieved AEB Numeracy at Level 2, and five achieved AEB Numeracy at Level 3.

8. In science, pupils in Years 1 to 7 achieve well. By Year 7, most pupils know about fair testing, for example. In Years 8 to 11, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The subject is not monitored well enough, and information about pupils' past achievement is not passed on to staff who teach pupils in Years 8 to 11 at a local secondary school. Teachers at the local secondary school have limited skills in teaching pupils with pronounced learning difficulties, and they do not give pupils enough opportunities to conduct their own investigations. As a result, progress in developing investigative skills is limited.

9. Achievement is good overall in information and communication technology, history, geography, art, French, physical education, and personal, social and health education. In music, most pupils achieve well; for those in Years 8 and 9, who do not currently have music lessons, achievement is satisfactory. These pupils will, by the end of the year, have had as much music teaching as pupils of the same age in similar schools nationally. In religious education, achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to the school and to their work. Very good relationships between all members of the school's community reflect the caring ethos of the school. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. The pupils' personal development is very good because of the climate of mutual respect and careful planning to promote personal and independence skills. Attendance is good, and is above the national average for similar schools. These findings represent an improvement since the previous inspection.

11. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and this is a view shared by the parents. A group of pupils who are members of the School Council spoke confidently and with evident pleasure of their helpful and supportive teachers and their favourite lessons. They were particularly proud of the way all the different age groups get on well together. In lessons, pupils are keen to get on with their work because they are motivated by the tasks they are given to do. For example, in a Year 7 geography lesson pupils were fully involved with their learning because they were excited by their project on the future of Poole, and by the opportunities to use a range of learning resources, such as a camera and a tape recorder. This created a busy and expectant atmosphere because the teacher made learning fun. During a sex education lesson in Year 10, in which sensitive personal issues were being discussed, the pupils responded well and asked sensible questions, because the teacher treated them with respect and understanding. The majority of pupils show positive attitudes to their learning; they work sensibly, concentrate well and try hard to succeed.

12. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. In lessons most pupils behave very well because they enjoy their work; most are well managed by staff, and respond accordingly. Pupils become fully engrossed in their learning and this results in very good behaviour. In a Year 11 art lesson, pupils worked with extreme care and focus, encouraged by their very supportive teacher. Occasionally, some pupils can become distracted and lose concentration, which results in the flow of the lesson being disturbed. However, there are high expectations throughout the school of the pupils' good behaviour. This feature results in a happy and busy working atmosphere, which benefits all members of the school community. Pupils and parents alike do not consider bullying to be a problem in the school, and there have been few exclusions. At lunchtimes and playtimes, the pupils get on well together. The pupils are friendly and welcoming and respond very positively to visitors. The older pupils take care of the younger pupils, and this contributes to the family atmosphere which pervades the school.

13. There are very good relationships between the pupils, which are built through all the different age groups socialising together and supporting each other. For example, Year 10 pupils work alongside Year 5 pupils to help them with their reading. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson, a pupil spontaneously offered to help another who was using the computer.

14. The pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to increase their independence. For example, pupils were seen organising resources for lessons, running the school tuck shop, acting as classroom helpers or serving on the school council. They listen well to their class teachers and to each other; they get on well together, sharing resources if necessary, and creating a purposeful working atmosphere. For example, when a group of Year 3 pupils was preparing sandwiches for their visit to Studland Beach, individuals patiently waited their turn to choose a filling and all worked with care. A particular feature of their personal development is their keenness to learn and the way they respond to the challenges they are set. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson, pupils worked very well together to carry out their experiments on friction. Generally, pupils concentrate well and try their best. Another impressive aspect of the pupils' personal development is the mutual respect between adults and pupils, and its effect on the pupils' developing self confidence. In a Year 9 religious education lesson, pupils gave thoughtful and mature views on showing care for others.

15. Attendance is good, and is above the national average for similar schools. The level of unauthorised absence compares very favourably with that in similar schools nationally. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time. Overall, the pupils' very good attitudes, values and personal development make a very strong contribution to their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is good. Inspectors saw a total of 86 lessons; teaching was excellent in three, very good in 22, good in 41 and satisfactory in 20; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when a small number of unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teaching is good in all subjects except religious education, where it is satisfactory, and it is also good in each of the key stages.

17. Teaching of children at the Foundation Stage is good. Particular strengths are the detailed planning, and the quality of teaching of basic skills. Staff have high expectations of children's work and behaviour, and children respond well, by co-operating with adults and making a great effort to improve their skills. In fact, across the whole school, pupils generally work very hard at all the tasks set for them. They are keen to succeed, to find out things themselves, and to improve on their previous best. This was evident in the work of pupils in Years 1 and 2, who were seen finding out the names of fruits by independently using dictionary software, and of those in Year 10 who were carrying out an assessed task in French. Pupils know that their successes will be publicly acknowledged and celebrated, and this is a powerful motivator.

18. Most teachers have very good subject expertise, know their pupils very well, and are skilled and experienced in teaching pupils with learning difficulties. Since the last inspection, staff have increased their expertise in teaching pupils with autism. This means that several pupils with autism are now successfully included in classes with their peers. Only two are taught in a discrete group, and they have opportunities to mix with their peer group, in physical education for instance. Teaching of pupils with autism is good. Staff use suitable methods, such as visual timetables to help pupils anticipate changes. They also place a strong emphasis on encouraging the development of communication skills, and personal and social skills. Planning is very detailed, and is faithfully implemented by support staff, who make a strong contribution to teaching the pupils who form a discrete group.

19. There are several pupils with challenging behaviour. Two are taught singly, and one of them attends part-time only. Because of absence, and attendance patterns, it was possible to see only one such session. The teaching has a number of good features. Teachers adopt a flexible approach to teaching these pupils, who are disapplied from the National Curriculum. The planning centres mainly on literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills, which is appropriate. Teachers know these pupils well, and allow them to choose and negotiate subject matter, activities and the location of lessons. Planning incorporates tasks that capitalise on pupils' interests. For example, one pupil's interest in cinema led to planning the conversion of a fiction story into a film script. Lessons emphasise work-related learning and the use of information and communication technology (ICT), which is popular. These strategies are successful in securing pupils' co-operation, as it makes their learning relevant and enjoyable.

20. Teachers build very good relationships with pupils, and manage most of them well. However, teachers are in the process of extending their skills in managing challenging behaviour, and on several occasions inspectors found that pupils were withdrawn from lessons as an early option when behaviour became disruptive. This was effective in minimising the disruption to learning for the rest of the class, but was not effective in ensuring the entitlement of those with challenging behaviour.

21. Since the last inspection, links with a local high school enable some Winchelsea teachers to use specialist facilities for their lessons. The combination of good subject expertise and suitable facilities and resources has a particularly strong impact on learning in design and technology in Years 8 to 11. Teachers plan suitably challenging tasks, and pupils use a wide range of materials. In one such session, pupils were competently using

computer operated sewing machines to stitch their own designs on to a fabric bag. In swimming, specialist teaching and access to good facilities have a strong impact on pupils' achievements. In science, pupils in Years 8 to 11 are taught by staff from the local secondary school. They too have good subject expertise, but they have limited skills and expertise in teaching pupils with pronounced learning difficulties. They are not provided with sufficient information about what pupils' attainments in science are, and there is no joint planning between these teachers and the staff at Winchelsea. As a result, pupils do not build on their investigative skills as well as they might whilst at the local secondary school.

22. From Years 1 to 11, teachers develop pupils' communication skills well. Staff make good use of subject-specific vocabulary, and pupils learn the meanings of words associated with different subjects. This was seen particularly in science and music. There are good opportunities for pupils to reinforce their reading, writing and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enable pupils to learn across the curriculum. In music, teachers make very good use of ICT, to enable secondary pupils to compose, perform and record music.

23. Most lessons proceed at a good pace, and pupils achieve well because they concentrate and work hard throughout. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They use a good range of resources, and involve pupils in tasks well. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 6, pupils were presented with a wonderful array of traditional Indian garments and jewellery, with which they dressed themselves. This activity kept them well occupied, and they asked questions about the items of clothing, showing their interest and curiosity. The activity linked well to the visit to a Sikh temple, planned for later in the term.

24. At the last inspection, teachers were criticised for not planning a good enough range of activities for the wide spread of pupils' attainment. This situation has now improved. Teachers know the levels reached by pupils in all subjects, and most use this information well to set tasks that will extend pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Grouping pupils for literacy and numeracy works well, as it has narrowed the range that each teacher needs to plan for. However, inspectors saw a small number of lessons in which higher attainers were not fully challenged to deepen their understanding. For example, teachers make good use of relevant homework tasks, but some still give the same task to all pupils.

25. Many teachers make good use of the last section of a lesson to review pupils' learning, but few share with pupils the learning objectives at the start. In literacy and numeracy, teachers generally use the plenary session well. For pupils in Years 10 and 11, there is very successful encouragement of self-assessment of key skills as part of pupils' accredited courses. These pupils have opportunities to plan and review the challenges they select as part of the Youth Award Scheme. Some good practice, where pupils' were given responsibility for their learning, was also seen in an art lesson for primary pupils.

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

26. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils is good overall. All National Curriculum subjects are taught to primary aged pupils, and there is a suitable balance of time within and between subjects. In Years 10 and 11, the learning opportunities are also good, with all the required National Curriculum subjects taught, as well as geography, art and music in Year 10, and history, art and music in Year 11. A good curriculum is provided for pupils in Year 7. In Years 8 and 9, pupils are not timetabled for music at present, due to the school's current staffing difficulties. However, these pupils have had a term's music

already, and lessons are set to commence again after half-term, so pupils will have received sufficient music teaching by the end of this academic year.

27. Provision for pupils in Years 8 to 11 has been enhanced since the last inspection by establishing a link with a local secondary school, so that pupils are regularly taught in specialist facilities for science, design technology and physical education. This also gives an increased opportunity to socialise with other young people in another school. Some alternative vocational provision is available at college for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are struggling with the school curriculum.

28. Religious education and personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education and drugs awareness, are taught as required. A good programme of careers education begins in Year 8 and continues through to Year 11, with work experience and college placements in Year 11.

29. The school provides very good enrichment through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which include residential trips for pupils in Years 7, 9 and 10. Lunchtime activities include a car building project, concert rehearsals and pottery. Primary aged pupils have an opportunity to attend Cubs and Brownies on a Friday afternoon.

30. The school has a good programme of personal, social and health education, which is taught as a discrete subject. The focus is on healthy, safe lifestyles and developing personal confidence and responsibility. Staff frequently reinforce personal and social skills and ideas through many other aspects of the curriculum. Sex education and the provision of information about drug misuse are handled in an informative, relevant and sensitive way. There are links with the careers programme, which covers personal goals and money skills.

31. Preparation for transition to adult life is good, and includes careers education and guidance, work experience, and vocational education. In Years 9 to 11, pupils experience a comprehensive programme of carefully graded activities in careers. These include choosing their "dream job" by researching a database and a web site, planning for their transition review, action planning with the Connexions Service, attending college link courses and two periods of work experience in Year 11. Pupils in Year 10 have opportunities to attend "taster" courses at a local college.

32. The school has good links with the community, which contribute well to pupils' learning. There are activities organised by charitable organisations, local businesses take part in the careers convention, and volunteers support pupils when they attend activities out of school.

33. There are constructive links with partner institutions. These are well illustrated by the careers convention, which is held with two other special schools. There is also increasing liaison with the local middle school, vocational ties with the college of further education, and the strong links which have developed with the local secondary school. The latter ensures that secondary pupils have access to specialist teaching areas.

34. The school ensures that all pupils enjoy full access to the curriculum wherever possible. There is a very small number of pupils whose difficulties are severe enough to be taught away from other pupils on their own individual programmes of work and who have been properly disapplied from the National Curriculum. These pupils are provided with a curriculum that meets their most important needs, but they are not appropriately placed in a school such as this.

35. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural education is very good; provision for their spiritual development is good. This represents a considerable improvement since the

previous inspection when arrangements to promote spiritual and cultural development were judged to be satisfactory.

36. Spiritual awareness is promoted well through both planned experiences and incidental opportunities. Assemblies, which match the criteria for acts of collective worship, are well planned and make a considerable impact. They are skilfully prepared to ensure that pupils' own experiences are linked to the more profound meaning of religious belief. On one such occasion, the idea of celebration was illustrated by reference to birthdays, The Golden Jubilee, and Christian and Sikh festivals. Pupils reflected upon these themes, and readily responded by offering up their own prayers, which confirmed their understanding. In lessons, although opportunities for spiritual development are not explicit in teachers' planning, the skill and sensitivity of the teaching results in spirituality becoming evident. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson, there was a moment of hushed expectancy as pupils waited to discover the outcome of their experiments. In a Year 4 art lesson, pupils were excited by their work on ancient Egyptian artefacts and gasped in awe at the illustrations in their reference books. The strong caring ethos throughout the school, and the mutual respect which is evident, make a very positive contribution to the spiritual climate in which the pupils learn.

37. Provision for moral and social development is very good. There is a clear moral code in the school, which enables pupils to feel safe and confident enough to express themselves. Pupils receive clear messages about what is expected of them in lessons, and during play and lunch times. The pupils understand and appreciate the rules that are in place to ensure their well-being. These are supported further by a well planned programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which enables pupils to consider such issues as making sensible choices in relation to smoking and contraception. Moral issues are also tackled very well. For example, in a Year 9 religious education lesson, pupils talked with empathy about caring for more vulnerable members of society, such as the elderly. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their social skills by taking responsibilities, most notably representing their peers on the school council, as well as opportunities to work and socialise with pupils from mainstream schools. There are several residential trips at home and abroad, which enable pupils to become more independent and self-reliant. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together in a mutually supportive way. For example, during a Year 8 religious education lesson, pupils worked well as a team to record their work about a Sikh wedding, using sophisticated equipment with care.

38. Provision for cultural development is very good. Pupils have the opportunity to appreciate cultural diversity, through the study of great world faiths in religious education, and through collective worship. A particular strength lies in the way teachers make the pupils' learning relevant to their own experiences. For example, during an assembly on the theme of celebration, the teacher introduced the Hindu celebration of Divali alongside Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, as well as secular celebrations such as birthdays. Pupils benefit enormously from the skills of an Indian teacher who brings Indian culture to life through imaginative and lively lessons. In one such lesson, the pupils prepared to celebrate a Sikh wedding, using authentic artefacts and foods. The pupils also have the opportunity in Year 10 to study French culture through a residential trip, which gives them genuine experiences of French life. There are good contributions from other subjects, such as art and music, when pupils are given a wide range of experiences. During the inspection, Year 7 pupils used an African drum to help them compose a rap, for example.

39. Overall, the school provides pupils with relevant, imaginative and rich experiences, which make a very good contribution to their moral, social, and cultural education, and these are strengths of the school's provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Overall, the school's arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic performance are good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are also good and are applied consistently for pupils in all classes. This shows satisfactory progress and most of this has taken place during 2002.

41. The acting headteacher has introduced a new system for the assessment of pupils' academic performance, since he took this position in January 2002. This system is used throughout the school and gives a clear picture of the achievement of all pupils in all subjects. The information is held in electronic form, and can be accessed from the school's computers through its Intranet system. One of the many strengths of this system is that it is tailored to meet the wide range of ability shown by pupils across the school. In some cases, pupils attain at a level below Level 1 of the National Curriculum. The school uses the 'P' scales (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 2001) very effectively to assess achievement in small steps, and to give a clear picture of progress for each pupil. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' achievement and progress are now good, as all pupils are assessed against suitable criteria.

42. Teachers generally make good use of this information when they plan their lessons in order to make sure that the content and level of difficulty suits the pupils, giving them sufficient challenge whilst being achievable. Information is also being used when the future curriculum is being planned.

43. These good innovations are being monitored carefully by the acting headteacher. They are working well and are highly valued by the teachers as they are now confident that their marking levels are in line with those of their colleagues. The school is also working towards a system whereby other schools can take part in scrutinising pupils' work to ensure consistency in levelling within the region. This will help schools to compare their results more reliably.

44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are satisfactory, and pupils are rewarded for good attendance. Attendance registers are kept in accordance with statutory requirements. The school is swift to follow up reasons for absence on a daily basis. There is an appropriate partnership with the education welfare officer to support those pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. However, arrangements to monitor and record whole school attendance, so that accurate figures are readily available, are less secure.

45. The annual reviews are completed thoroughly, and clear priorities for development are set. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the school did not meet the requirements to review each pupil's statement annually. Objectives in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are plainly written, and linked well to priorities identified at their annual reviews. Objectives are referred to in teachers' day-to-day planning. Pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored well by staff.

46. The school has good relationships with the many agencies which support the pupils and ensures that timely contacts are made. Procedures for dealing with child protection remain good and are in line with those of the local Area Child Protection Committee. Two

senior members of staff have designated responsibility for child protection. They work closely together; staff know who they are and what actions need to be taken if there is a concern about a pupil. Staff receive regular training and new staff are made aware of school procedures.

47. Health and safety matters are dealt with by the appropriate governors' committee, and there is a formal policy. These are improvements since the previous inspection. The committee has agreed an action plan with the correct priorities. This means that there is now a clear programme for addressing these issues in school. A major risk assessment has been carried out, and the school, through the responsible member of staff, takes swift action to address any issues which arise. For example, the fire safety procedures have improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils are helped to be aware of health, safety and hygiene matters through formal teaching either at school or at a nearby further education college. Staff also reinforce these matters through the routines which they set for working together in class.

48. Teachers know their pupils very well. In classrooms and around the school they take care to ensure that pupils are safe and happy. Staff are observant, defusing potential conflicts quickly and treating pupils with respect and friendliness. Records of accident, medical concerns and incidents of abusive behaviour are kept up to date. Staff are good at managing the behaviour of most pupils so that disruption in lessons is as brief as possible, and the school works closely with other agencies to provide programmes for pupils who find it difficult to manage their own anger. During the inspection an incident of verbal abuse between pupils was dealt with quickly, with a clear and sensitive explanation given to the pupil about why such language was unacceptable.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents have very positive views of the school; they appreciate and support the school in nearly all areas of its work. In particular, they believe that staff have high expectations of pupils and that the teaching is good, and most feel that their children enjoy going to school. They feel welcomed by the school and that the school is well led and managed. They believe they have a productive partnership with the school and that they are well informed about their children's progress. Some reservations were expressed over the amount of homework their children receive. The inspection concurred with the parents' positive views and found that homework is given in suitable amounts, and that it helps to promote learning.

50. The school has very good links with its parents, who are well supported by the school's flexible approach to catering for the needs of all its families. It uses questionnaires well to monitor parental concerns. Parental input is sought and valued. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through the sharing of their children's individual education plans (IEPs), by attending their children's annual reviews, and through their children's annual reports, which together give parents a comprehensive view of how their children are progressing. Less formal contributions are made by the homework diaries which, when used well, build a supportive link between home and school and reinforce what the pupils are learning; they also help parents to monitor their children's personal development.

51. These very good links are at the heart of what the school does well, through its commitment to do its best for its pupils and to react to the concerns and needs of their families. To this end, the school has made a commitment to develop a programme to enhance the parenting skills of those families in need of support. The main thrust of the school's work with its parents is to build a secure partnership and inform parents so that they can support their children. For example, staff have run one information and

communication technology (ICT) training session for parents, they also lend educational software free of charge, as well as story sacks and numeracy games.

52. The strength of this partnership is reflected in the way the parents voiced their strong support of the school at the parents' meeting. As families are scattered over the wide area that the school serves, parental support in the school is mainly confined to helping with one-off activities, such as residential visits and day trips. However, parents are keen to support the activities of the Friends of Winchelsea, such as the Summer Fayre. Large sums of money raised have enabled the school to improve its resources, such as the multi-sensory room, as well as contributing towards the funding of several residential trips.

53. Parents receive good quality information on general school matters through the school's prospectus as well as through regular newsletters. However, there is little detailed information on the curriculum as a whole, which would further enable parents to support their children at home. The most recent governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements in several respects. It omits information on parent governors, progress in the action plan from the last inspection, school security, arrangements for disabled pupils, an account of staff professional development, a comment on the success of the school's special educational needs policy, information on pupils' achievements, and destinations of school leavers.

54. Overall, the school has maintained the very good partnership with its parents as reported at the time of the previous inspection. These very good links make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The mini-inspection at the end of 2001 identified serious weaknesses in leadership and management. Too little progress had been made in those areas identified as key issues at the last full inspection. Since January 2002, considerable progress has been made. A suitable action plan has been drawn up to address outstanding concerns. This has clear targets for improvement, as well as a means of identifying success to signal an end to the school's need for intensive support. The acting headteacher, well supported by the senior management team and local education authority (LEA) personnel, has led staff well in effecting improvement. However, much of the change is recent, and has not had time to become firmly embedded in the school's practice.

56. Overall, improvement in addressing the key issues from the inspection of 1997 is satisfactory. The school has set fairly challenging targets for raising achievement, and its good assessment procedures will be helpful in monitoring and evaluating progress towards these targets. Monitoring of teaching is satisfactory. There has been some focused monitoring of teaching of literacy and numeracy by external personnel, and subject managers check teachers' plans and pupils' work. However, direct observation of teaching is underdeveloped. Taught time has been increased since the last inspection, and it now meets recommendations for all age groups.

57. Subject co-ordinators have extended their roles since the last inspection. They now contribute to whole school development planning by producing a subject action plan. However, they do not have enough time to extend their roles further. For example, there is not enough time for them to monitor teaching in their subjects across the whole school. This is affecting achievement in science. Weaknesses in provision for science at the local secondary school have not been picked up because the science co-ordinator does not have time to monitor teaching at the secondary school.

58. The school's policies are not always helpful in guiding its work. For example, the school's curriculum policy has been recently developed, yet it does not take account of up-to-date guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. It does not set out what time should be allocated for each subject, or how this should be different for different classes or groups of pupils. The policy does not describe clearly enough how the whole curriculum is monitored and evaluated. Although governors are attached to different subject areas, there is no indication in subject policies of the purpose of this attachment, or their role in monitoring and evaluation.

59. Governors have between them many skills useful to their role, and they are very supportive of the school. However, in the past they have not been kept well enough informed. For example, the governors were not aware until some time after the LEA monitoring visit that the school had been deemed to be in need of intensive support because of lack of progress in addressing the key issues of the 1997 inspection.

60. Governors recognise that in the past they were not aware of the sort of questions they should be asking. They have yet to take advantage of training in school self-evaluation offered by the LEA. As a result, governors have had a very limited role in shaping the direction of the school, and this is unsatisfactory. However, they have the capacity, the willingness and the structures to improve in this key area. They have a suitable committee structure, and individual governors are assigned to subjects. They are beginning to increase their understanding of the curriculum, and now that there are clear targets set for improving standards, they are in a better position to evaluate the school's work.

61. On paper, there are good numbers of teachers and classroom assistants. The ratio of teachers to pupils is much better than at the time of the last inspection; this ratio now compares favourably with those of similar schools, and is in line with the recommendations of the Department for Education and Employment Circular 11/90. All Winchelsea teachers are experienced in dealing with pupils' special educational needs. Amongst the staff, there are teachers with expertise in all subjects, except music and French, and they have enthusiasm and considerable skills gained in courses they have attended. Teachers' subject expertise is very good overall. Teaching staff are also employed to support individual pupils, taught singly, and whilst this works well, the pupils concerned are not appropriately placed in this school, and the teaching arrangements utilise accommodation that could be used for other purposes, such as small group work or independent study.

62. At present, the school has considerable staffing difficulties. The headteacher, a class teacher, and a classroom assistant are away on long term sick leave, and there is an acting headteacher, acting deputy and a reconstituted senior management team. All of these staff had considerable management responsibilities before, and now these have been added to. Staff absence means that there is no more time available for staff to carry out additional management responsibilities. This limits monitoring activities, such as classroom observations of teaching. Present staffing levels also mean that one teacher is responsible for two groups of pupils, one group in the early years, and another small group of pupils with autism. This represents some improvement since the last inspection, when a member of support staff had sole responsibility for the nursery class, but it is still not satisfactory. Although the LEA has provided good support for the school since the headteacher left, this cannot continue indefinitely, and the present arrangements are not sustainable in the long term. Because of the proposed re-organisation, the school faces a challenging time in the next two years, and it is crucial that staffing difficulties are resolved as soon as possible.

63. Teaching assistants have considerable experience. Many have suitable qualifications. All work well with their teachers and make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching. They take a full part in in-service training programmes to extend their skills, learning about

first aid and how to manage challenging behaviour, for example. They make a strong contribution to school life as well, by running a number of extra-curricular lunchtime activities, for example. Administrative staff support the work of teachers and the senior managers very well.

64. The arrangements for induction are being formalised so that new staff will become effective in their work more quickly. This is another activity that has had to be curtailed whilst more important areas are dealt with. The school's arrangements for performance management are satisfactory.

65. Teachers, classroom assistants, administrative staff and lunchtime supervisors have experienced a good range of in-service training, much of which has been presented in school, on issues that have been identified as relevant. Over the last two terms, the in-service programme has become more focussed. Throughout the school the links with the school development plan are clearer, and procedures are beginning to operate to disseminate information gained from taking part in training. Both are having a positive effect on school development.

66. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Since the last inspection there has been too little change. The rolling programme for refurbishment has resulted in the replacement of windows in the main building, but little else has changed. There remains the continued absence of specialist facilities for science and for the resistant materials and textile aspects of design and technology. Physical education still has to make use of poor changing facilities and the small, multi-purpose hall. These factors act to prevent full access to the Programmes of Study in these subjects. This is especially so for those in Year 7 and beyond. The toilets generally, but especially those for Year 5 pupils, are unsatisfactory. Generally, classrooms are small and some are oddly shaped. Both of these factors limit the range of strategies that teachers can use. For example, it is difficult to organise small group work or have pupils take responsibility for their own learning. In design and technology, tools such as saws, hand drills, hammers and screwdrivers have to be transported to classrooms, and be used without the support of benches or stabilising equipment such as clamps or vices.

67. Access to some classrooms is through others. In these classrooms, the movement of pupils and staff regularly causes disruption and distracts pupils from their learning. The Foundation Stage area is shared with a small class of pupils with autism. The very close proximity of these two different groups of pupils, in an area that is essentially one classroom, disrupts the learning of both groups. Despite the best efforts of teachers and classroom assistants, the portable classrooms do not provide an appealing environment for learning.

68. The new ICT suite is very good, and the centrally located library is well used to support teaching and learning in most subjects. Very good use is made of the local secondary school to ensure that older pupils gain access to the programmes of study in science, design and technology and in physical education. This well-established link allows pupils to experience the full range of the Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) Programmes of Study in these subjects and, through taking appropriate accredited awards in Year 11, gain recognition for the extent of their learning over their time at school. The quality and range of displays are very good. Staff celebrate the successes of pupils very well; there is a very high quality display of pupils' ceramics work in the foyer, and of textiles in the library, for example. The accommodation is very clean and free from graffiti. Site security has been improved, but there is still room for further improvement.

69. Generally, resources to support teaching and learning are good. In ICT they are very good. They are good in history and geography, food studies, religious education, and personal and social education, and in the Foundation Stage. For pupils in Year 7 and

beyond, they are unsatisfactory in science, in the resistant materials and textiles elements of design and technology and in physical education. The use of the specialist teaching facilities and the very good resources for these subjects in the local community college limits the adverse effect on pupils' learning.

70. The school's strategic use of resources is good. A healthy surplus was carried forward at the end of last financial year. However, no savings were made from long-term sick leave, because they continued received normal salaries, and cover was required. The governors have highly efficient financial control arrangements that enable them to manage the budget prudently. However, governors have not been empowered in planning for the current financial year as the LEA has determined the budget and there has been limited consultation with the governors. The proposed budget allows for additional money to be spent on recruiting staff, with a view to resolving staffing difficulties, and leaves a small contingency sum.

71. An improvement since the last inspection is the manner in which spending decisions are considered carefully to ensure value for money, and consideration is given to the impact of spending on pupils' learning. A fully costed development plan is in place. Previous surpluses have been used to strengthen areas identified in the improvement plan. Grants that are provided for specific purposes, such as those used for increasing computer hardware, and teachers' skills in ICT, are managed well and have had a positive impact on pupil's learning.

72. The administrative officer, finance officer and clerical assistant are very efficient and they make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school.

73. The use of ICT to support the curriculum and the management systems of the school is very good, and has had a good effect both on pupils' learning and on the efficiency of the school.

74. Best value arrangements are sound. The school is a member of a family of similar schools, which allows comparisons to be made, parents are widely consulted, and some information in the PANDA (Performance Assessment and National Contextual Data) is used for purposes of comparison.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

75. The governors and staff should:

- Improve the management of the school by:
 - * resolving the present staffing difficulties;
 - * providing subject managers with sufficient time to monitor and evaluate provision in their subjects;
 - * developing and agreeing procedures for monitoring, evaluating and supporting teaching that occurs off the school's own site;
 - * giving all pupils the same opportunities to learn and make progress in music;
 - * giving all pupils equal access to teaching by qualified teachers.

(Paragraphs: 26, 57, 58, 62, 155)

- Extend the role of governors by:
 - * empowering them through the provision of relevant information;
 - * providing training for them in school self-evaluation;
 - * ensuring that their role in monitoring and evaluating every aspect of the school's provision is set out clearly in school policies, and;
 - * ensure that the governors' annual report to parents meets requirements.

(Paragraphs: 53, 69, 60)

- Improve the school's accommodation to address the weaknesses identified in this report.

(Paragraphs: 66, 67)

76. Governors should consider including the following minor points for inclusion in the action plan:

- agreeing with the local education authority (LEA) a set of admissions criteria for the school;
 - reducing the reliance on withdrawal as a means of managing pupils with challenging behaviour.
- (Paragraphs: 1, 61, 20)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	22	41	20	0	0	0
Percentage	3.4	25.6	47.7	23.3	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	110
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	39

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	7.5	School data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

As fewer than 10 pupils were eligible for testing in Summer 2001, results are not shown here.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Eleven pupils were eligible for testing in Summer 2001

TEACHER ASSESSMENT

Percentage at each level

	W	1	2	3	4	Pupils disappplied	Pupils absent
English	26	66	6	0	0	0	0
Mathematics	26	46	26	0	0	0	0
Science	13	20	46	20	0	0	0

TEST RESULTS

Percentage at each level

	Below Level 3	1	2	3	4	Pupils disappplied	Pupils absent
English	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mathematics	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Science	87	0	6	13	0	0	0

W represents pupils who are working towards Level 1, but have not yet achieved the standards needed for Level 1.

* represents pupils who were not entered for the tests because they were working below Level 3 in English, mathematics or science; pupils awarded a compensatory level from the tests; and pupils entered for but not achieving a level from the tests.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Twelve pupils were eligible for testing in Summer 2001

TEACHER ASSESSMENT

Percentage at each level

	W	1	2	3	4	Pupils disappplied	Pupils absent
English	0	27	45	27	0	0	0
Mathematics	9	18	45	27	0	0	0
Science	0	18	27	54	0	0	0

TEST RESULTS

Percentage at each level

	Below Level 3/4*	1	2	3	4	Pupils disappplied	Pupils absent
English	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mathematics	73	0	0	27	0	0	0
Science	46	0	0	54	0	0	0

TEACHER ASSESSMENT

Percentage at each level

	W	1	2	3	4	Pupils disappplied	Pupils absent
Design and technology	0	9	63	18	0	0	0
Geography	9	27	36	27	0	0	0
History	0	0	27	72	0	0	0
Information technology	0	0	63	36	0	0	0
Modern foreign languages	0	0	45	54	0	0	0

W represents pupils who are working towards Level 1 but have not yet achieved the standards needed for Level 1.

* represents pupils who were not entered for the tests because they were working below Level 3 in mathematics or science and below Level 4 in English; pupils awarded a compensatory level from the tests; and pupils entered for but not achieving a level from the tests.

Attainment at end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Pupils eligible in Summer 2001

External accreditation	Percentage achievement
Youth Award Scheme Bronze Level	100
Youth Award Scheme Bronze/Silver Level	75
Youth Award Scheme Silver Level	17
AEB Numeracy Level 1	17
AEB Numeracy Level 2	25
AEB Numeracy Level 3	42
English Certificate of Achievement Level 2	17
English Certificate of Achievement Level 3	83
Technology Certificate of Achievement Level 2	8
Technology Certificate of Achievement Level 3	92
Science Certificate of Achievement Level 3	92
French Certificate of Achievement Level 3	100
NEAB Unit Scheme – History Module	100
NEAB Unit Scheme – Parentcraft Module	100
Trident Work Experience Certificate	100
Basic Food Hygiene Certificate	83

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	99
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	4	0
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**Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes:****YR – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.3
Average class size	10

Education support staff:**YR – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	440

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	974115.00
Total expenditure	932730.00
Expenditure per pupil	7461.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	31016.00
Balance carried forward to next year	72401.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

110
32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	16	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	31	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	28	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	31	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	22	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	19	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	25	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	69	28	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	32	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	22	6	0	3

Other issues raised by parents

Several parents wrote of their concerns about the proposed reorganisation of the school. In particular, they expressed fears about their children being bullied in mainstream schools.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

77. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below that expected for their age in all areas of development. The range of their learning difficulties is considerable. Some have little speech, others have only a very small vocabulary. Many find it difficult to express their views or ideas and some find it hard to sit and listen for all but short periods of time.

78. Overall, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It has improved since the last inspection, especially in the range and detail of the planning. Children achieve well and make good progress against each of the early learning goals. However, because of the severity of their learning difficulties, only a few reach these by the end of their time in the Foundation Stage.

79. Although teaching is good overall and sometimes very good, the considerable management responsibilities of the teacher, and the need for her to oversee the progress of pupils other than those in the Foundation Stage, limits her effectiveness in promoting children's progress towards the full achievement of their early learning goals.

80. The teacher has a very good knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals. She knows the children very well and is very sensitive to their needs. She has high expectations for their learning, which are reflected in all aspects of her teaching, but especially in the very good quality of the planning. Long and medium term planning documents provide very good support for lesson plans, which are formed to meet the particular needs of all pupils. In this, the very good deployment of the classroom assistants helps. Regularly, they provide support and encouragement for individual children. They are equally good when they lead lessons. They sign and use pictures and other symbols very well. The balance of activities is good, and results in children having regular opportunities to be directed in their learning, but also to make choices. Assessment is well done and children's attainment is recorded regularly. This information is used well in setting targets in each of the learning areas. Planning also identifies individual targets not covered by the six areas, such as putting on a coat without help. The good quality of the teaching realises learning that is ordered, well controlled and progressive. Children quickly accept their role as learners and routinely try very hard. They enjoy the successes they gain and have fun in their lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

81. The base for the Foundation Stage provides a stimulating, friendly and safe environment in which children respond well and grow in confidence. The excellent relationships between all staff and the children, and well-established routines such as circle time, help children feel secure as they become increasingly independent and aware of the needs of others. Routinely, they take turns, share equipment and work in small groups. Interactions promote their confidence and self-esteem. Those with the most advanced personal, social and emotional development persist for good lengths of time on activities they choose, such as playing with blocks to construct a tower. They play well with others and have learned to dress and undress themselves. They enjoy taking part in new activities. Those with less well developed skills are more comfortable playing by themselves, but

readily engage in established classroom routines, such as completing the register at the beginning of the day.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

82. Work in this area is mainly focussed on speaking and listening, often with the aid of additional strategies, such as the use of signing, symbols and, occasionally, picture exchanges. A small number of children speak in simple sentences when they describe, for example, what they had for lunch. They join in the singing of nursery rhymes and make the correct actions at appropriate times. Some do not communicate spontaneously or initiate communication with staff or other children. They have difficulty remembering and joining in the singing of even the simplest rhyme. The very good application of the principles of the National Strategy for Literacy has resulted in all children being very interested in Big Books. A small number read along very well, and know that words and pictures convey meaning and that words travel from left to right in straight lines and move through a book from the front to the back. They know up to twenty words, which they recognise from flashcards and when they appear in stories. Some know that the author is the person who wrote the story and that a bubble on a picture holds the words of a character in the story. The children are given good support in developing the early writing skills of mark making, scribbling and colouring within small areas. The best at writing hold a crayon or paintbrush well enough to form dots, lines and circles. They copy written words with good accuracy, and write their first and last names without support. Others hold a pencil only briefly before discarding it. They have not yet established whether they prefer to use their right or left hand.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

83. The principles of the National Numeracy Strategy are put into practice well in lessons. Routinely, children are given many opportunities to explore objects by size, weight, colour and texture. In the lessons that focus on mathematical development, counting strategies are encouraged and the concepts of shape and position introduced. In other lessons throughout the day, counting is encouraged. For example, the number of children in class is counted when the morning register is taken, or the number of ducklings in a family in a Big Book story. As a consequence, most children show a good interest in number, and respond well to familiar number rhymes and songs. By the end of the Foundation Stage, those best at counting are able to sequence numbers to 10, rote count to 30 and count objects to 10. They complete simple addition sums with objects such as blocks. The lowest attaining children point to numbers with help, and extend a finger to a number when counting to five.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

84. This early learning goal is developed, primarily, through pupils taking part in a wide range of physical and sensory activities. Good links are made with science when seeds are planted, when mini-beasts are explored as toys and when live beetles and snails are collected from the school field. Children explore, through their senses of touch, smell and taste, a wide range of natural and man-made objects, such as fruits. A small number of children are able to describe the weather for the day, by using simple words, sounds, signs and symbols, and they know what clothes they should wear to suit the weather. They confidently control simple computer programs, using a roller ball or mouse. The highest attaining children show a natural curiosity. For example, they enjoy building structures from large blocks to see how high these can go before they fall down. They learn to ride a good range of tricycles and explore the sounds and sensations associated with the ball pool. They show an early understanding of time by using the visual timetable to explain the school day.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

85. Children's progress towards this early learning goal benefits from the good sensory areas within the classroom, the outside play area and the good use that is made of the ball pool. In lessons in the hall, children are shown how to move in different ways. For example, they take giant strides or small steps, and start and stop on command. They adjust their speed, direction and body shape easily and smoothly. The development of fine motor skills is promoted in all lessons, through hand-over-hand support, then modelling, before children complete their tasks without support. Lunch and break times are used well in promoting independence and the development of fine motor co-ordination. As a result, children learn to feed themselves, ride tricycles and use other large equipment. The children are required to change into shorts and tops for gymnastics in the hall, and this helps develop their dressing skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

86. Children are given many different opportunities to work creatively, using a wide variety of materials and equipment. Through cutting, tearing and gluing they explore pattern making with different shapes, colours and textures. They use different materials for painting and for making three-dimensional collages. Music is used very effectively to create different moods, to attract and maintain pupils' attention and, through the use of rhymes, to promote learning, especially counting. Some children have developed a good understanding of cause and effect, by providing soils and grasses for snails to be 'warm' in their home, for example.

ENGLISH

87. The provision for English is good overall, and pupils of all ages achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented, and its impact is particularly evident in the classes for primary aged pupils. In Years 1 to 6, pupils are systematically learning the sounds of letters and are using what they learn to help them when they spell or read. The school has successfully put into practice a system of placing pupils in groups of similar ability for some of their reading sessions, and this works well.

88. The youngest pupils listen to each other and speak readily in front of the class; they enjoy repeating together rhymes and rhythms from stories. By Year 2, pupils help each other to recognise their names, and they listen intently while deciding on the beginning sounds of words. Pupils in Year 6 make simple responses to clear questions. Their understanding of events, and of what is read to them, is usually better than their skills in reading and writing. They are very willing to talk about their work. Pupils enjoy reading and are interested in what they read. By Year 2, pupils will choose a book with which to settle when they have finished their writing. Pupils in Year 6 use clues from the pictures, as well as the words on the page, to help them to understand what they read. Higher attaining pupils can name their favourite authors, and talk about the books that they have read with vivid recall. By the time they are in Year 6 most pupils learn about the shape of letters and how to recognise letters. They practise tracing over words and letters, and progress to writing on or within lines, and, by Year 6, pupils' writing is in a neat, un-joined style. Pupils

at this stage generally use both upper and lower case letters correctly, and their sentences end with full stops. Lower attaining pupils are not always able to read back what they have written. This is because their writing is not usually independent but is a written copy of the words that they have asked adults to write for them.

89. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 cover the full range of English activities, including drama. The National Literacy Strategy is beginning to make an impact on learning, with its strong emphasis on pupils knowing the sounds of letters and letter combinations. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 tend not to use their knowledge of letter sounds enough to help them to read new words, and are inclined to wait for the word to be given to them. Their confident use of a computer program to help them to improve their spelling, writing, and understanding of their reading helps them to make progress. By Year 11, pupils are better at understanding what they are reading, and know when a sentence that they have read aloud does not make sense. However, they are not yet ready to offer alternative, suitable words. Higher attaining pupils make good progress when they are rewriting their work to improve its quality, and they pay careful attention to spelling and punctuation. Pupils are especially good at writing about their own lives, feelings, and why they respond as they do in certain circumstances; there are some good examples of pupils writing about historical events.

90. By Year 11, pupils' work in accredited courses is good. They are introduced to poetry, contemporary texts and classic plays, and are able to identify the main characters from their texts. However, pupils' understanding and use of grammar and punctuation is not yet consistent, nor is their use of full stops and capital letters. Their speaking and listening continues to develop well, and leads to pupils offering views on characters from the texts that they read together. In one lesson for younger secondary pupils, reference texts were not well enough matched to pupils' capabilities, and led to pupils achieving less well than they might have done. However, by the time pupils reach Year 11, they are practised in using dictionaries and thesauruses.

91. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Very good relationships, and the emphasis on speaking and listening, encourage pupils to contribute frequently in lessons, and to share their views and experiences with each other. Teaching is highly organised; suitable resources are available, and teachers ask questions that help pupils to deepen their understanding. The change to teaching English in classes where older pupils are grouped according to their attainment level generally results in pupils making good progress. This is most effective when teachers adapt the planning for each group to match the pupils' current attainment and then provide resources that are best suited to them. Planning for teaching the National Literacy Strategy is generally good. Teachers are good at promoting shared reading and writing. They take care to choose texts that will interest pupils and then use suitable methods to develop and sustain pupils' interest in reading and in reading activities. In a very good lesson in Year 9, pupils were working with the haiku, a form of Japanese poetry. They were able to give a good list of suitable words that fitted the haiku style, and were able to count the syllables in the words - a key point of haiku being the number of syllables in the finished piece.

92. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together and their partnership leads to effective teaching and learning. This is particularly successful when teachers share their planning with learning support assistants, and identify where their support will be most useful. A very good example was seen in a class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, where the excellent quality of the teacher's planning gave very clear guidance of how each learning support assistant could work with individual pupils. The learning support assistants not only carried out these tasks to a high standard but also contributed fully to the assessment of pupils' progress through the lesson.

93. Assessment of pupils is thorough and regular, and pupils' main areas for development can be clearly tracked from their statements through to their individual education plans, which are then effectively turned into day-to-day teaching plans. The recently appointed subject leader has started to analyse patterns of pupils' performance.

94. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has a clear view of what needs to be done next. She has already improved the range and quality of books for pupils to read, and for teachers to use in their teaching, and is enthusiastically promoting the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The library facilities are satisfactory and are used regularly by pupils; classrooms have small stocks of books for pupils to read and to refer to. There is good use of a software package, which pupils can use independently, for borrowing and returning library books.

MATHEMATICS

95. Provision for mathematics is good at all key stages, and boys and girls achieve equally well, as do pupils of different attainment levels. This good achievement is the result of teaching that is good overall, and often very good. Pupils' positive attitudes and the use of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) across the school contribute well to high achievement. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are taught mathematics within groups according to their attainment levels, and this arrangement is effective in promoting progress in the subject. A library of homework materials also helps the pupils make progress.

96. The adoption of the NNS framework in all mathematics lessons has provided teachers with a structure which enables them to give a clear introduction to the lesson objectives. It also reminds pupils of previous work they have already mastered, particularly in mental and oral skills. Group work enables pupils to be carefully monitored and encouraged by teachers and classroom assistants, and the plenary sessions are used effectively by teachers to assess and reinforce learning. After these, pupils are clear about the work they have undertaken.

97. By Year 2, pupils are counting and recognising numbers up to ten, have some understanding of matching numbers to items, and know the names of simple shapes, such as a triangle. In a class of Year 1 and 2 pupils, the higher attaining pupils showed that they knew that six is two more than four, and that two is less than eight. In work with money, they knew that if they spend 5 pence from a 10 pence piece, they will have 5 pence left. Lower attaining pupils were able to accurately count a number of objects, and write the correct number on to a work sheet. Pupils also have some understanding of early concepts of shape, space and measure.

98. By Year 6, pupils are familiar with multiplication tables, and the higher attaining pupils have mastered at least their two and five times tables. Pupils' understanding of correspondence has progressed. For example, most members of a Year 4 class were able to count objects aloud up to ten, and then show the correct number of fingers and write the number. Pupils' mathematical vocabulary is good; it enables them to correctly use and understand terms such as *more than* and *in between*. In a Year 5 class, pupils were able to indicate that five is *more than* four, *less than* six and is *in between* four and six. Although the lower attaining pupils in the class found this difficult, they were able to use the appropriate vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, pupils have undertaken work on shape, space and measure, have some understanding of time, and know how to use and apply mathematics in simple practical situations, when making purchases from the tuck shop, for example.

99. By Year 9, pupils have increased their confidence in addition and subtraction with larger numbers, and they can calculate the correct change required from a £10 note when

making a purchase in a shop. In a Year 9 class, a higher attaining pupil was able to correctly describe, and write, seven hundred and twenty nine pence. In this oral lesson, all pupils found difficulty in working out how many 2p coins would be required to make 70p, but with good teaching, based on their previous work on notation and fractions, they understood that there are some simple ways of carrying out a calculation of this kind.

100. Pupils' use and understanding of time is developing slowly. For example, in a Year 8 class, although most pupils had some understanding of time of the day, and higher attaining pupils could tell the time to quarter hours, many pupils had difficulty ordering the months of the year correctly. However, effective questioning enabled the class as a whole to construct the correct order. For example, the teacher asked such questions as, 'What month is your birthday?' and 'Is February in the summer or the winter?' In a mixed Year 7, 8 and 9 class of lower attaining pupils, many showed the beginnings of sound understanding of estimation. The teacher in this class had a good range of strategies to help pupils understand. For example, there was encouragement, such as 'Go on guess! Guessing is important!' and 'Use the number line.' As a result, pupils' ability to estimate the number of cubes on the table improved. In a Year 9 lesson, higher attaining pupils were able successfully to estimate distances in a series of experiments. Skilled teaching had set up investigations such as 'Shove halfpenny' where pupils estimated how far their coin had travelled, and investigations where the pupils estimated then measured the lengths of a series of classroom objects. Pupils responded very positively to this work, and some were able to estimate accurately, and describe where their coins were. For example, one gave the following description, 'My coin is five centimetres from the line, and it is the nearest.' Pupils make good progress in all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum.

101. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils are working within some aspects of the Programmes of Study for their age group. This is a tribute to the progress that pupils have made in earlier years. In a Year 11 class, pupils were able to describe *reflex*, *obtuse* and *acute* angles, and prove that the sum of angles in a triangle always equals 180 degrees. Lower attaining pupils are developing well their ability to use mathematics in practical and social situations. In a Year 10 class, pupils were able to estimate how long it would take them to travel to the swimming pool in the town centre. They could read the bus time table and calculate what time they would need to leave home in order to be at the pool by 14.30; a few of the class also understood that time would have to be allowed to walk from the bus station to the pool. A feature of this lesson was the good links made with geography; pupils used a street plan to check the route from the bus station to the pool, for example. Such practice gives tasks relevance and makes them meaningful to pupils. A wide range of accreditation is achieved by pupils in Years 10 and 11, including Associated Examination Board (AEB) Numeracy Levels 1 – 4, and by the time they leave the school most pupils are able to use mathematics confidently in a wide range of practical settings.

102. The good quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is having a clear and positive impact on pupils' achievements in the subject. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) well, usually using the planning format of the strategy to very good effect. The only weakness in planning for the subject is that very occasionally the three part planning process is not followed sufficiently closely, or the objectives for the lesson specified with sufficient clarity. A major feature of the good teaching seen was the very high quality of the relationships between pupils and teachers. Other strengths of the teaching were good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs), good cross-curricular work, and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in mathematics lessons across the school.

103. The curriculum is broad and very relevant to the pupils' needs. Although there is a strong emphasis on number work through the use of the NNS, as a basis for all mathematics teaching, other aspects of the subject are not ignored. Shape, space and

measure receive good focus, particularly from Year 6 onwards, and the use and application of mathematics and data handling increase as pupils move through the school. Good use is made of ICT in mathematics lessons, to construct tables for example. Across the school, mathematics is used as an opportunity to encourage pupils to think and act independently. For example, in a Year 9 class, pupils had to decide for themselves what was the most sensible way to make up an amount of money from the range of coins available. This practical approach to mathematics is a major strength of teaching.

104. Leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator is good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, and through implementation of the NNS, has introduced consistency into the teaching of the subject throughout the school. A strong feature of the leadership of mathematics is the introduction of the homework library of activities and resources which pupils may use at home. A good policy document, which guides teachers well, is in place. Assessment, teaching approaches and modification to the National Curriculum are all included. Planning for the subject is by use of the NNS format, and this approach usually provides comprehensive detail in the planning.

105. Improvement in the subject since the last inspection is good. Pupils' achievements are now good across the school, whereas previously they were often satisfactory, and the continuing improvement in the leadership of the subject is a strength.

SCIENCE

106. Overall, standards are about the same as those found in similar schools nationally, and achievement is good for pupils in Years 1 to 7, and satisfactory for pupils in Years 8 to 11. Pupils aged 16 are expected to complete an externally accredited course for the Certificate of Achievement. There is no discernible difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Schemes of work for Years 1 to 7 have been developed since the last inspection, and these provide detailed planning for each lesson, and give statements for pupils' achievement which allow for precise assessment, through the use of "P" levels and National Curriculum levels. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

107. By Year 2, pupils recognise and name body parts and are beginning to develop ideas about "when I'm poorly". They can identify common light sources, and know that ice is *cold*. Higher attaining pupils are able to carry out practical work to identify objects that are attracted to a magnet, and can care for a plant and know that it has grown. Lower attaining pupils are able to concentrate for short periods and can listen to sounds.

108. By Year 6, pupils identify living things and know that they need food, air and water. They know that liquids can be poured, that water is changed into ice by freezing, and that putting the ice in a hot place can reverse this change. Higher attaining pupils are able to carry out an investigation to determine how many sheets of paper are needed for it to become opaque. Many pupils understand the concept of a fair test and can predict the outcomes of investigation. Lower attaining pupils need help to record their work. They know the difference between plants and animals, can name materials made of plastic, glass, wood and metal, and know when sounds are loud or soft. Pupils of this age are becoming increasingly aware of health issues; they know that drinking a lot of alcohol and eating a lot of fatty foods are unhealthy, for example.

109. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils know that chemicals can be represented by symbols, and that some substances are metal and some non-metal. They identify solids, liquids and gases. They can test for starch and can make electrical circuits to test for substances that are electrical insulators. All pupils know that there are substances called acids and alkalis and that litmus can be used to test for them. Lower attaining pupils have difficulties with recording their work, but frequently use computers for this. All pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to make posters to display information and to show the results of their investigation. For example, the number of pupils with certain shoe sizes was represented as a bar chart.

110. By Year 11, all pupils can carry out investigations as part of their coursework. Their knowledge of the functioning of the body is increasing and they know that carbohydrates give us energy, that lungs take in air, and kidneys get rid of waste. Pupils understand melting, evaporating and condensing and know that the earth orbits the sun and the moon orbits the earth. All pupils know that objects move if an unbalanced force is applied. Higher attaining pupils know what a thermometer is used for and that when petrol is burned in oxygen to give carbon dioxide it is called combustion. They can also construct a chart and a bar chart to display their results.

111. Overall, teaching is good. It is good in Years 1 to 7, but satisfactory overall for pupils in Years 8 to 11. In Years 1 to 7, the teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent, and in Years 8 to 11 the range was satisfactory to very good, with more lessons being satisfactory.

112. The teachers' knowledge of their subject is very good overall, characterised by the setting of clear objectives and effective planning, precise questioning on previous work, and presentation of work that challenges pupils. Teachers prepare good resources, which are relevant to the pupils' experience, and use them well to enliven learning. Graphs and tables are used to analyse results and pupils measure distances and take averages. Correct scientific vocabulary is used wherever possible, and pupils are encouraged to use words such as *nocturnal* and *exoskeleton*. Pupils in Years 8 to 11 produce posters and plot bar charts to display results; in Years 1 to 7 it is mainly used to find out information. All teachers have high expectations and expect pupils to do their best. Since September 2001, pupils from Years 8 to Year 11 have been taught at a local secondary school by the college staff, who teach these pupils enthusiastically, provide challenging work for them, and allow them access to sophisticated equipment. However, sometimes the work is not sufficiently broken down, and links are not made effectively with work previously covered, which denies some opportunities to reinforce learning. This is directly related to the lack of information given by the science co-ordinator about what the pupils have done previously, although information is provided about their learning difficulties. The effect of this lack of knowledge about pupils' attainment is that teachers at the secondary school are prescriptive about investigative work and reluctant to allow pupils to design their own fair tests and predict. This inhibits the development of investigative skills. Despite this, the teaching is satisfactory and the pupils are making satisfactory progress.

113. The good lessons are characterised by the development of small step thinking and making links with previous knowledge. The teachers expect pupils to learn and to behave very well in lessons, which they do. Lessons are well structured, with precisely focused questioning which enables pupils to recall what they know and to discuss how this links with new work. Teachers engage pupils in discussing the sequence and purpose of practical activities. Lessons contain carefully chosen activities which keep pupils fully occupied and interested, and are usually well paced to ensure pupils have time to make sense of what they are learning. Higher attaining pupils are able to design their own investigations and control variables, and carry these out in a group. Lower attaining pupils receive targeted support from teachers and classroom assistants, who work well as a team to provide a

consistent approach. Pupils behave very well in lessons and are courteous and co-operative. They form constructive relationships with one another and with adults. These very good relationships enable them to work together as members of groups to plan their work and carry it out.

114. Schemes of work throughout Years 1 to 11 cover the National Curriculum. The subject is managed by a teacher who takes responsibility for having an overview of the curriculum, checking what pupils are taught and planning to ensure that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. The staff at the local secondary school are given little information about what the pupils have done before, but are provided with a brief outline of the work to be covered. They plan their own schemes of work from this, with little knowledge of how it may build on pupils' experiences. They establish this through effective questioning in lessons. Additionally, there are no formal links established to feed back on pupils' progress to the staff at Winchelsea, who should be monitoring their pupils' progress.

115. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and use assessments to plan for the next teaching steps. However, no attempt has been made to link the assessment systems in Years 1 to 7 with those in Years 8 to 11, although higher up the school assessment is linked to National Curriculum Levels. Homework is used to reinforce the work done in lessons and to encourage pupils to find out information, although sometimes it is not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils.

116. Subject co-ordination continues to be unsatisfactory. There is not enough time for the current co-ordinator to carry out liaison work with staff in the secondary school, or to monitor planning and pupils' progress. There is no linking of the work done in Years 1 to 7 with that done in Years 8 to 11, and no continuity of assessment. Although the role of the co-ordinator is more precisely defined since the last inspection, there continue to be inconsistent strategies across all age groups for monitoring pupils' learning and progress.

117. There is a satisfactory range of resources for pupils in Years 1 to 7, but there is no specialist science room for these pupils, which is unsatisfactory. However, pupils in Years 8 to 11 benefit from access to purpose-built laboratories, good resources and technical support staff. The staffing for science is good, and classroom assistants have good knowledge of the subject. The lack of specialist accommodation for older pupils no longer restricts the curriculum as it did at the last inspection.

118. Improvement in science since the last inspection is satisfactory because, despite the continuing co-ordination difficulties, older pupils now have access to better accommodation and resources through working at the community college.

ART AND DESIGN

119. The provision for art and design is good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. A specialist art room has been set up, and this is an improvement. Sound achievement in Years 1 to 6 has been maintained. In Years 7 to 11, achievements are good, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection, when achievement was unsatisfactory.

120. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, and good in Years 7 to 11. All pupils are offered opportunities to take part in art activities using paint, papers, textiles, clay, wood and photographs. They make steady progress in acquiring skills. During the inspection, a lower attaining pupil with complex needs in Year 2 responded to the combined art, music and design and technology topic, primarily using touch. The teacher used a

digital camera to record his work in progress. As pupils get older they are offered more challenging art assignments. A very good lesson in Year 4 was focussed on pupils making necklaces, bracelets or pendants from clay. The lesson progressed at a brisk pace. Pupils reviewed their previous work on the Egyptians, leafed excitedly through the very relevant information books which their teacher had passed around, drew preliminary designs into their sketch books, and began to wedge their clay to get the air bubbles out of it. In this lesson, the pupils used the learning from previous lessons well. They showed understanding what 'to design' means, and looked forward to making their beads or pendants. In this lesson, staff were enthusiastic and knowledgeable; they consistently used specialist language. For example, staff referred to *firing* the clay. Their expectations were high, and pupils sought to meet them. This ambitious and challenging lesson led to pupils making good progress at a brisk rate, and to excellent behaviour, as pupils were so engaged and interested in what they were doing.

121. In Year 11, pupils doing an accredited course were designing a decorative body piece. The art room was enveloped in a mood of intense concentration and calm. Pupils were making their sculptural pieces out of plaster-soaked gauze draped over paper or wood and paper forms. All pupils were working individually, with care and control. They talked with interest and self-knowledge about their work, and how they would improve on it if they were to do a similar task again. One boy was making a shield, another a two-pronged head-piece, and one girl was making a one-eyed, corrugated-chinned, no-nosed mask to which she planned to attach horse hair, which she had already collected. This variety indicates the freedom to explore ideas that the pupils were exercising. All the pupils appreciated each other's work and gave open praise. The excellent quality of pupils' learning in this lesson was well matched by the excellent quality of teaching. This was best demonstrated by the high expectations of the teacher who, in the final group session of the lesson, asked pupils to explain the change from a drawing to a sculptural piece. She then linked the homework very well with the focus of the lesson, and encouraged the already high productivity of the pupils by offering to supervise them if they wished to carry on their work during lunchtimes.

122. On occasions, pupils rush their work and so do not do as well as they might. The continued use of sketchbooks, and of self-assessment sheets, should help pupils to evaluate and improve their own work further.

123. The subject leader has only recently taken on this post and is already providing authoritative and dynamic leadership. Her high expectations of pupils mean that some will be entered for GCSE art in future. The subject co-ordinator has identified well-judged priorities for action.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. The provision for design and technology for pupils up to Year 6 is satisfactory, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress working with a range of materials and components. From Year 7 onward, the provision is very good; teachers with good subject knowledge and high expectations teach pupils at this stage. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are taught in good quality specialist facilities in a local secondary school. Pupils between Years 7 and 9 follow a curriculum that covers the full range of the subject. Those in Years 10 and 11 are very well prepared for an externally accredited award in resistant materials and food studies. Pupils' achievements between Years 7 and 11 are very good, and have improved since the last inspection.

125. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning to use simple hand tools for cutting and fixing, such as scissors, staple guns and glue guns, when they make puppets or when they explore textiles through the project on Joseph's Coat. They gain

their first experience of the importance of the link between design and making, when they make artefacts such as wind up toys and vehicles, of different designs. The highest attaining pupils are at P Scale level 5. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' making skills extend over a range of topics that cover the full range of the Programme of Study. These include designing and making moving monsters, money containers, hats and many different sandwiches. By the end of Year 6, the highest attaining pupils have progressed to Level 2 of the National Curriculum. They work well to a design brief, use tools accurately to link three and four different materials, and evaluate their work honestly. The lowest attaining pupils are less innovative and confident in matching their designs to the design brief. Their making skills are less well developed, and they attain P Scale Level 7.

126. Teachers without specialist qualifications of the subject teach pupils in Years 1 to 6. They receive very good advice from the co-ordinator, very good long and medium term planning documents, and specific help with lesson planning. The choice of design and making tasks reflect the high expectations of the co-ordinator. For example, pupils in Year 5 make a moving toy out of plywood, with dowels for axles and a cam gear to make the movement asymmetrical. However, there is a lack of specialist facilities to support teaching and learning in resistant materials and textiles, and a paucity of resources such as clamps, vices, hand tools and sewing machines. This limits pupils' achievements, despite the ambition of the lesson plans and the good effort of teachers and classroom assistants.

127. During Years 7 to 9, pupils show a better understanding of designing and making. For example, in food studies they plan, prepare and cook a range of dishes. They show improved preparation skills by working with increased speed and accuracy, especially when peeling and cutting vegetables. Teachers' high expectations for cleanliness, behaviour and health and safety are reflected in the careful way in which pupils work, and in their appropriate dress in lessons. Lessons are clearly introduced, well planned and prepared, so pupils know what is expected of them. Plenary sessions are used well to review the extent to which the learning objectives have been achieved and to confirm the progress made by each pupil. Numeracy skills are regularly reinforced in lessons, in tasks such as the measurement of distance for cutting, and in the weighing and measuring of ingredients. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. The highest attaining pupils work independently and with increasing accuracy. By the end of Year 9, they are at National Curriculum Level 3. For example, in resistant materials they measure accurately, cut wood to a specified length, and use a variety of hand and power tools, such as drills and saws. In food studies, they select the correct equipment for cutting or mixing, and know how to set the oven for use. In textiles, they use computer-operated sewing machines for design and manufacturing, when they embellish a bag with their initials or name, for example. The lowest attaining pupils are at National Curriculum Level 1 in each of the elements of the subject. They refine their skills through careful observation of teachers' very good demonstrations. As they proceed through this stage, they pay increasing attention to the quality and presentation of their finished work, and talk more confidently about possible improvements that could be made, using suitable technical language.

128. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making very good progress toward gaining the AQA certificate in resistant materials and food studies. By the end of Year 11, the highest attaining pupils progress to Level 3H and the lowest attaining pupils reach National Curriculum Level 2. The quality of completed work of the highest attaining pupils is very good. For example, pupils made professionally finished puff pastry snacks with their own choice of fillings. They demonstrate their ability to use a wide range of equipment, including soldering irons and burners in resistant materials, and mixers in food studies, completing their tasks to a very good standard. Increasingly, pupils work independently with due regard to hygiene and health and safety while following a design brief or recipe.

129. The subject is very well led and managed by a specialist teacher who has considerable subject knowledge and expertise. Resources are unsatisfactory for pupils between Years 1 to 6, and very good for those from Year 7 onward who take their lessons at the local secondary school. There are good and deliberate links with other areas of the curriculum, especially English, through the very good planned use of keywords. Assessment procedures are good and include a mix of P scales and National Curriculum levels. Teachers record the attainment of pupils accurately, and use this information well to help with lesson planning.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Provision in geography is good. The quality of teaching is good and this in turn ensures that the pupils learn well. Very good use is made of the local environment when planning the curriculum. Pupils and staff benefit from the abundant variation in geographical features, which are present within a short distance of the school.

131. By Year 2, pupils recall visits that they have made on school trips, look at postcards of different places and then, with the help of the teachers, identify on a map the places from which the cards have come. By Year 6, pupils are able to make judgements about the buildings that they see and the probable use to which they are being put. In a Year 5 lesson, careful planning ensured that pupils were grouped according to their ability. Activities were then matched well to pupils' existing skills. The teacher and teaching assistant moved around the groups offering help and support to the pupils. The lesson ran smoothly and all pupils were busy recalling their visit to Swanage in the previous week. One group focused on a group of men they had seen playing football, drew pictures, then wrote captions to go underneath the pictures. The writing required a lot of help and support from the staff in order to ensure success. The majority of pupils worked well and enjoyed the lesson, though there were a couple of pupils who were less well motivated and wasted some time in general chat. By the end of the lesson, it was clear that pupils had made sound progress as they had understood the different features of coastal areas and compared them correctly with inland areas. Pupils were beginning to understand basic features of maps.

132. Year 9 pupils enjoy learning because much of it is based on football league tables. This captures the imagination and interest of the pupils as they identify different teams, find their home town on the map and plan journeys to matches. Pupils also identify their places of birth on the map, which makes their learning personal to them. By Year 11, pupils are developing a good awareness of their environment. Their studies include a traffic survey, and pupils find out how traffic may be damaging the environment. They also learn how it may be possible to minimise this damage.

133. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers know the levels at which pupils attain, and they use this knowledge well to plan suitable activities in lessons. The subject is very well managed. The subject action plan is very well written, and takes account of the issues from the previous inspection report. All issues have been addressed, including schemes of work, assessment procedures, and clearly identified fieldwork projects. The schemes of work are comprehensive; they clearly meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum, and are in line with National Curriculum requirements. Schemes of work are written for individuals when this is necessary. Resources for teaching geography are now good, which is a clear improvement since the last inspection. They are well organised and carefully managed by the co-ordinator.

134. Overall, teaching is good and the pupils learn well because of this. They enjoy the activities and visits that are arranged. There is an annual residential visit to France, and the teachers make sure that there are also many cross-curricular experiences. There are strong links with the teaching of French, personal and social education, and the mathematical issues of budgeting, to mention only a few.

135. Pupils behave well and show very positive attitudes towards learning. They develop very good relationships with the teachers and with each other. Pupils try very hard during lessons; they concentrate very well and often work well with each other. They are also able to work independently.

HISTORY

136. Provision for history in the school is good. Teaching is good overall and pupils learn well. It is clear that by Year 2, pupils are beginning to understand how people and places change because of the passage of time. They understand basic chronology and listen to stories of famous people from the past. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of topics and events such as the Fire of London and the Anglo Saxons. Pupils are able to do simple research using artefacts, pictures and the computer. They enjoy a visit to the museum, where they show a lively interest and ask questions. They move on to study the ancient Greeks and learn to write their own name in Greek letters. They develop their thinking further when they try to identify any Greek influence that there may be in their own lives.

137. In Years 7 to 9, pupils study local history, and discover the famous smugglers that lived in and around Poole. They discover Isaac Gulliver, the gentleman smuggler of Dorset, and how he landed his ill-gotten gains in Alum Chine, which leads directly to the heathland for quick dispersal. They also learn about Corfe Castle in Tudor times, and how its destruction came about. To help bring history to life, pupils visit the Victorian Working Farm nearby, the electricity museum, and the waterfront museum. They also learn about the Great Exhibition in Queen Victoria's reign.

138. The management and co-ordination of history is sound. A satisfactory range of learning experiences is provided and there is a good system for assessment of pupils' work. The school has very strong links with the community, including one with a local technology centre. Here pupils are able to experience living in an Anglo Saxon Village. There is equality of access to the subject for all pupils. The school makes good use of computers to collect information and analyse details of pupils' progress.

139. Teachers plan a wide variety of lessons which keep pupils' interest high, and they learn well because of this. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and their confidence is well rewarded in class as pupils make a very good effort. The teachers make good use of computers and the Internet, and this leads to enhanced experiences for the pupils as they are able to do some historical research themselves. In one lesson observed, pupils were accessing information from the Internet and printing hard copies and photographs to support their studies.

140. Resources for teaching history are good. There is a good selection of artefacts, and there is a wide variety of resources in the community nearby. The school makes very good use of the community to enrich the historical experience of the pupils. The school is fortunate in its position in the midst of an historically rich area of the country.

141. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and it is planned over a yearly cycle through topic study. For pupils up to Year 9 the topics are mainly a term in duration, but for pupils in Years 10 and 11 the topics are sometimes only half a term. Assessment procedures are good and are in line with those in the rest of the school. Results from assessment are used well to make sure that individual work planned is suitable for the pupils, and it also has a great influence on the planning of the subject for the future. There has been satisfactory improvement in provision since the time of the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

142. Provision for ICT is good across the school, and boys and girls achieve equally well, as do pupils of different abilities. There is no significant difference in pupils' achievements across the different areas of ICT.

143. By Year 2, pupils are familiar with a wide range of communication resources, and their ability to communicate through technology is good. In a Year 2 history lesson, pupils were able to access the Clipart programme to obtain images from a CD-ROM and print a picture of the Queen. In another Year 2 lesson, in science, pupils used the computer independently to find the names of different fruits. Higher attaining pupils are building up their basic keyboard skills, using introductory software programmes. Most pupils can switch on a computer and their early access skills are good ; most can find the Internet Explorer programme, for example.

144. No discrete ICT lessons are taught in Years 3 to 6. However, scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and pupils' records indicated that ICT is widely used across the curriculum, and that pupils make good progress. Pupils make use of the Internet and the Intranet facilities to support and enhance their work in a range of subjects. Their ability to locate information is good, and they are beginning to master ways of displaying information, such as using tables and graphs in maths and science. They can model situations using the My World programme, and good word processing skills enable them to use the Clicker programme, for supporting their work in literacy sessions. Higher attaining pupils use the library database, and they search independently for activities.

145. By Year 9, all pupils are becoming more independent in the use of computers, and the higher attaining pupils can set up and use communication and research programmes with minimal support. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, all pupils were able to design on screen a poster showing a range of uses for electricity. In another science lesson, as part of their study into individual differences, pupils were able to plot the shoe sizes of members of the class and produce a database of the results. In a Year 7 music lesson, pupils recorded music on to a computer; in a Year 8 religious education lesson on Sikhism, a higher attaining pupil photographed a Sikh wedding re-enactment using a digital camera, then down loaded the images to a computer. Using the Clicker programme he produced prints of the topic for a display.

146. By Year 11, all pupils are competent in basic computer use and they make good use of opportunities offered by ICT in a wide range of applications. Higher attaining pupils are particularly skilled at using ICT to enhance their learning. For example, they use the Internet and search for information in data bases in their careers work. Although lower attaining pupils are less competent with word processing, they are still able to search and locate information. During a Year 11 English lesson, pupils were studying 'OfMice and Men.' They located information on the literature and produced displays, using a programme that explored the characters in the book. A key feature was the manner in which use of ICT was built into the central planning of the lesson and not added on as an extra activity. In another Year 11 lesson, in French, pupils used the CD ROM 'Let's learn French' to write about their

recent visit to France, and to check the names of every-day things such as the French names for shops, transport and locations. This programme also added pronunciation, and the displays included the word in English, and French, with a picture of the spoken word. Pupils used this programme confidently, and by using their word processing skills were enabled to produce an impressive diary of their visit. In a Year 10 ICT lesson, pupils were focusing on improving their general word processing competence, using bullet points, tabulating, a cut and paste sequence and a spell checker. Good teaching enabled them to add these processes to their already wide range of skills, and to produce work of high quality.

147. Teaching of ICT, both in specific subject lessons and across the curriculum, is good. It is never less than good and is very good on occasion. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in the use of a wide range of ICT applications. The routines for using computers in classrooms are taught very well, and this has clearly had a very positive impact on pupils' confidence and competence; the manner in which pupils approach tasks using ICT is testament to the skilled teaching and preparation they receive from an early age. They are very keen on using ICT in all subjects, and teachers make full use of their enthusiasm. Teachers are skilled in the way they present pupils with an effective mix of instruction and demonstration, as well as appropriate and interesting tasks that raise pupil's achievement, maintain interest and promote good learning and behaviour.

148. The ICT curriculum is broadly based, relevant to pupils' needs, well balanced and extremely well resourced, and it meets all National Curriculum requirements. These features of the curriculum have had a very positive impact on pupil's learning. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are addressed through a scheme of work that provides thorough coverage of the four main requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT. There is a particularly strong emphasis on word processing and information retrieval and interpretation. Examples were seen in a number of lesson across the curriculum where pupils used skills they had learned within the ICT curriculum; these skills then enhanced their work and achievements in other subjects.

149. Leadership in the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is highly skilled and knowledgeable, and his enthusiasm for the subject has rubbed off on pupils and staff alike. The high standards in ICT found at the time of the last inspection have been more than maintained, and some important new developments have occurred. For example, the school has introduced use of the Intranet and Internet, software to support the focussed development of literacy and numeracy skills, and new systems to support school management. Resources are of very high quality and are extensive. The school has broadband Internet access, managed through the South West Grid for Learning. Every classroom contains a networked multi-media personal computer (PC) and colour printer, the library contains a Junior Librarian data based system, and computers are available in other areas of the school, such as the upper primary resource area. There is a total of 38 PCs in the school, in addition to video and digital cameras, which are used widely and effectively.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

150. Provision for French is good, and pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, accreditation has been introduced, and this acts as a powerful motivator for pupils, who are keen to achieve the learning objectives for certificates. The annual visit to France for pupils in Year 10 gives strong relevance to pupils' French studies, and adds to their enthusiasm for learning the language and about the culture. Links with France have been strengthened, giving older pupils more opportunities to develop personally through their French trip. For example, pupils now have opportunities to play unihoc and football with pupils from the link school, and to go on outings with them. These good improvements have helped to raise achievement, which was satisfactory at the last inspection.

151. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils in Year 7 have had little experience of French, but they are exposed to a good variety of learning experiences and soon gain confidence in speaking and listening. Whilst there is a good emphasis on this important skill, suitable opportunities are also provided for reading and writing in French. The teacher is not a linguist, although she has attended a course at a local college to improve her skills. Good use is made of interactive CD-ROMs as well as recordings of native speakers, and this helps pupils to learn vocabulary and to develop correct pronunciation. By Year 9, most pupils can give and return simple greetings, understand written information such as a café menu, and can write short sentences, using a French dictionary as a source of support.

152. A particular strength of teaching is the way in which the subject encourages personal development, including communication, through literacy and numeracy. Through their studies, pupils learn to tell the time, read important signs, understand clothes sizes, handle money, and know what important information they need to include on an identification card, in case they get lost. In preparation for the visit to France, pupils agree class rules, and they work together to plan their itinerary. A broad programme of experiences is provided, including work-related learning, such as visits to a cheese factory. The pupils also visit Omaha Beach. Here, several were moved by the sight of gravestones of young soldiers not much older than themselves. Good use is made of the digital camera for recording pupils' experiences.

153. Assessment is good. Pupils' attainment is assessed through end-of-module tests, and in Years 10 and 11 pupils know exactly what objectives they need to reach in order to achieve certificates. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard in lessons, particularly in achieving correct pronunciation. There is good marking of pupils' work, with helpful comments, and evidence of achievement is carefully annotated and kept for moderation purposes. By Year 11, pupils have been awarded a number of Certificates of Achievement in French. In fact, the last group of school leavers all achieved a certificate at Level 3. Pupils' achievements are also recognised through the Trident Personal Challenge, as they satisfy requirements for this by speaking in French during their visit to France.

154. Leadership of the subject is good, and has helped raise achievement. There is a clear policy, good quality planning, an audit of resources and a clear action plan in the co-ordinator's well maintained file. One area planned for future development is the use of video conferencing to extend further the useful link with pupils at the school in France.

MUSIC

155. Provision for music is good overall; it is good in all years except Years 8 and 9, where pupils currently do not have music lessons. This is a result of the school's current staffing difficulties. The subject co-ordinator for music is the acting headteacher, and lessons in these year groups have been temporarily suspended to enable him to concentrate on leading and managing the school. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 are currently practising to take part in an annual concert, but this is an optional lunchtime activity, which means that access to this is not assured. It is the school's stated written intention to resume music lessons for pupils in Years 8 and 9 in June. This will give music in these two year groups a time allocation of just under four per cent of the whole curriculum; this is satisfactory, as it is in the middle of the range of times allocated, at this stage, in similar schools nationally.

156. In all other year groups, achievement in music is good. Music has a high profile in the life of the school, and there are many extra-curricular and whole school opportunities for pupils to perform, and to appreciate the performances given by visiting musicians. For example, pupils perform in assemblies, in whole school productions, and in a performing arts week. A wide range of types of music, from many lands and cultures, is played in assemblies. During the inspection, an assembly on the theme of racial tolerance featured the music of a South African group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

157. Across Years 1 to 7, teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. In a lesson for younger primary pupils, there were well chosen songs, linked to literacy work. Good signing by the teacher and classroom assistant helped pupils to recall the names of animals on Old MacDonald's farm. High expectations were seen in lessons for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. Older pupils had been introduced to musical terms and helped to understand and remember them with games and nicknames for notes. As a result, higher attainers recognised a 'walking note' as a *crotchet*, and a 'slow elephant walking' as a *minim*. They could also name a *stave*, *treble clef* and a *pentatonic scale*.

158. Throughout this session, pupils were very well behaved, and hung on the teacher's every word. Very good behaviour management helped to channel pupils' enthusiasm, keeping them on task. By Year 6, pupils have a clear grasp of fast and slow, and can sing with control. They clap with rhythm, and some can successfully play the pulse of a song. They show great enjoyment of music.

159. Teachers' use of new technology is a particular strength, as it motivates pupils and helps them to produce a professional standard of recording. In a very successful lesson for pupils in Year 7, pupils were able to work together, under the teacher's guidance, to rehearse and record a rap song, using the computer and a multi-media software package, as well as a drum synthesiser and an African drum. They were very well motivated in this task because they knew that ultimately they would be able to produce a class compact disc (CD), and to share their performance with others. The task of designing a simple inset for their CD case was set as a homework exercise. In the same lesson, pupils used a karaoke software package to sing along with songs of their choice. This worked very well; pupils followed carefully as the 'cursor' moved from syllable to syllable, helping them to read the words and sing the lyrics.

160. This lesson incorporated good opportunities for pupils' personal development. For example, pupils were able to explore the importance of the moral and social message of their rap, entitled 'The Litter Rap'. The teacher carefully pointed out the difference between 'wrapper' and 'rapper', and the classroom clock was used to enable pupils to calculate the number of beats per minute in their piece of music. The teacher successfully encouraged

pupils to work together in a simulation of a studio. One pupil took on the role of 'producer', another acted as the 'sound engineer'. Once a recording had been made, pupils were able to evaluate this. One suggested that pupils needed to be closer to the microphone, for example.

161. Leadership in the subject is good. High standards in the subject have been maintained since the last inspection, and the use of new technology has been increased. Guidance from QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has been taken into account in the planning for the subject, and plans reflect the wider opportunities, outside lessons, that are provided. There is a suitable policy, although arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the subject are not detailed enough. There is a good inventory of learning resources, and a suitable action plan for the subject, which has further inclusion as one of the development points.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. The quality of provision in physical education is good. Teaching is good and this results in good progress by all pupils. The school makes very good use of facilities within the community and within local schools. However, the accommodation at Winchelsea School is unsatisfactory for the teaching of physical education.

163. By Year 2, pupils are developing throwing and catching skills. They also perform action routines to music and learn traditional movement songs, including 'Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes' and 'The Grand Old Duke of York'. The teaching is good, and pupils learn the names of the movements that they perform. They link actions to the appropriate language and develop their fine and gross motor control. Records of pupils' achievements tell how they are gaining in confidence and thoroughly enjoying learning to swim. When the weather does not allow pupils to run outdoors, they practise their relay exchanges in the hall, which functions as a dining hall, sports hall, general thoroughfare and assembly hall.

164. By Year 6, pupils have gained in confidence and maturity and many of them are able to discuss their own performance in different events. They discuss simple tactics to be used in team games. Great emphasis is placed on the teaching of swimming, and the school uses the facilities of neighbouring schools.

165. By Year 9, pupils are fully involved in a variety of team games, including football, netball and unihoc. They also compete in cross-country running, and continue to develop further skills in swimming. Teachers plan lessons carefully to make sure that all pupils are able to benefit fully from the opportunities on offer. The most able pupils are challenged to improve still further whilst the less able pupils are supported and encouraged as they make gradual progress. Teaching assistants play a vital role in the development of the pupils as they work in close harmony with the teachers and pupils.

166. By Year 11, pupils continue to make good progress. In one swimming lesson observed, pupils entered the pool quietly and sensibly, taking careful notice of the teacher's directions. The teaching assistant took responsibility for two beginners in the shallow end; these pupils gained in confidence and gradually moved further away from the edge of the pool. There was a group of three pupils who were being assessed for their 'improvers' swimming award. The 'borrowed' swimming facilities were of excellent quality but had to be shared with pupils of the host school. Nevertheless, it was a very worthwhile lesson, which brought pupils into the community to share facilities. Progress in swimming for all pupils is very good. Lessons are well planned and organised.

167. Physical education throughout the school is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is well qualified and experienced, and plans the scheme of work to meet the individual needs of the pupils. Assessment procedures are good and are a part of the whole school system, making possible to identify the progress made by pupils. This information is used when planning lessons and in the long term planning of the curriculum. In this way the school is effective in accommodating the changing needs of the pupils.

168. There is a wide range of activities planned for the pupils during the week. There is usually at least one inter-school fixture each week, including football matches, netball matches, cross-country, and tag rugby events. There are also athletics events and an annual residential week in South Wales. The subject enjoys a high profile in the school and is enjoyed by pupils. Much of this is due to the large variety of awards that are presented to the pupils. Some are 'internal' awards which are produced by the school, particularly for swimming. However, the school also makes many nationally accredited awards for sports activities. These include Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) awards for personal survival and water skills. The school also presents the National Physical Education Games Skills (PEGS) awards at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Staff and pupils are also involved in the Special Schools Sports Association (SSSA), and many of the inter-school fixtures are arranged through this association.

169. There has been satisfactory improvement in the physical education provision since the last inspection. However the accommodation remains unsatisfactory. The hall is used for many different purposes. Its use as a dining hall means that it cannot be used during the last period of the morning as tables are being put out for lunch. The hall also doubles as a meeting and assembly hall, and is a thoroughfare offering access to many classrooms. There are, on the other hand, sufficient resources available for teaching physical education, and these are readily available.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. The provision for religious education is satisfactory. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Lessons in religious education make a very positive contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils. One reason for this is the quality of curriculum planning, which is firmly rooted in the locally Agreed Syllabus, 'Religious Education Visions'.

171. By the end of Year 2, the highest attaining pupils are able to recall the major elements of the Christmas story. They recognise Jesus as a special person, and know that the Bible is a special book. The lowest attaining pupils sit and enjoy calming music, and are beginning to understand that a lighted candle is a symbol. They have learned that harvest, Christmas, Easter and Shabbat are important celebrations, but do not fully understand why. By the end of Year 6, the highest attaining pupils have learned important facts about the life of Jesus, such as where he was born and how he died. They know that Sikhism is a different religion, with its own special person, and they recall with good accuracy some parts of the life of Guru Nanak. Lower attaining pupils know that churches and temples are the special places to which people go to talk with their God. They know many of the facts that the highest attaining pupils have learned, but have greater difficulty in understanding concepts such as belief and symbolism.

172. By the end of Year 9, the highest attaining pupils have a good understanding of the major world religions. They have achieved this through discussion and by celebrating the festivals of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. They know the names of the holy men in the different religions and the names of the places where they worship. They have a much better understanding of faith and belief and how these affect

such things as dress styles and the routines of daily life. They understand the notion of charity and that it is good to help others when possible. By the end of Year 9, the lowest attaining pupils talk confidently about Jesus, know that prayer is a way in which they can talk to him, and know that the Bible is his way of talking to them. They are aware of other religions and know some facts about these, especially the names of the spiritual places. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow the units 'Beliefs and Values, 'Faith in Action' and 'Moral Issues' from the AQA course. They learn about the practice of religion, the power of faith in guiding life decisions, and moral issues such as capital punishment and ethnic cleansing. By the end of Year 11, they have achieved a satisfactory knowledge of the major religions and a sufficient understanding of concepts such as belief and faith to help guide their own decisions on what is right or wrong.

173. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some lessons good. In a good lesson on Sikhism, the very good presentation by a local Sikh resulted in pupils quickly gaining knowledge of the seven tenets of the Sikh religion. Where teaching is good, the teacher has the ability and the resources to convert abstract concepts into meaning for the pupils. In these lessons religious education becomes a subject that is real to pupils and is not made up of issues they have difficulty in fully understanding.

174. The co-ordinator is beginning to lead the subject well. She has worked well to develop the subject, which is now well resourced, especially with artefacts. Outside speakers are very well used, as are visits to the places of worship of different religions; these strategies bring difficult aspects of the subject into the realm of pupils' understanding.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

175. Provision for the subject is good, and pupils of all ages achieve well in PSHE. Good planning and teaching, in conjunction with effective classroom management, contribute to this good learning. There are detailed programmes of study, which incorporate sex and relationships education, drugs education and careers education for pupils in Years 9 to 11, as well as topics such as keeping healthy and staying safe.

176. By Year 2, pupils have made good progress with the development of social behaviour. Most pupils will begin to remember to wash hands before a meal, try to brush their hair, and blow their nose. Some pupils will be able to understand the rules of games, for example hide and seek.

177. By Year 6, pupils have learned about the dangers of smoking, and can name some organs and know their functions. A few pupils know in more detail how the body's organs work. For example, they know that breathing involves taking air in through the nose, and out through the mouth, and they understand role of the diaphragm in that process.

178. By Year 9, pupils begin to look at the kind of person they are and what they like and dislike. They begin to look for a match between themselves and the kinds of work that might be available. They continue to work on health education, learning about the importance of oral hygiene, for example.

179. By Year 11, pupils' knowledge about work and seeking a job is increasing. They write a curriculum vitae and look at all aspects of job applications, including filling in an application form. Later they attend mock interviews. They have some understanding of contraception and are learning to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour. They record their achievements in their use of key skills.

180. The quality of teaching is good in PSHE lessons and there is good linking of topics to activities in other areas of the curriculum, thus allowing ideas to be reinforced. Good planning, effective question and answer sessions to assess pupils' learning, and a strong emphasis on making choices contribute well to the good teaching. The teachers know their pupils well, and understand each child's stage of social and emotional development, and so teach at an appropriate level. As a consequence, the pupils behave well in lessons. They show respect for one another, listen to their teachers, take a willing part in activities, ask questions and behave in a mature manner.

181. The curriculum is good because it builds well on previous knowledge and incorporates sex and relationship education, drug awareness, some citizenship, careers, health education, keeping safe, and using money. Assessment procedures throughout the school are good. Pupils' achievements are accredited in Years 10 and 11 through the Bronze and Silver Awards of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

182. The leadership and management of personal, social and health education are satisfactory. The curriculum covers current requirements well, but sex and relationships education, and other aspects of the curriculum, need to be mapped together to ensure efficient coverage. Resources for teaching PSHE are accessible and meet the requirements of the curriculum well.

183. This area of the curriculum was not previously been inspected. However, innovations since the last inspection include the introduction of sex and relationships education and a comprehensive careers programme.