

INSPECTION REPORT

**St James Church of England (Voluntary Aided)
School**
Farnworth

LEA area : Bolton

Unique Reference Number : 105266

Headteacher : Mr David Bowes

Reporting inspector : Ms Christine Ryan
12934

Dates of inspection : 11th – 15th October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707979

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

© Crown Copyright 1999

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Under the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and the Education Act 1993, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Comprehensive
Type of control :	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils :	11 - 16
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Lucas Road Farnworth Bolton Greater Manchester BL4 9RU
Telephone number :	01204 700008
Fax number :	01204 793743
Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr Peter Noone
Date of previous inspection :	April 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms Christine Ryan Rgl	Science	Attainment and progress Teaching Efficiency
Mrs Christine Gattie Lay Inspector		Equal opportunities Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr B Willcock	History	Curriculum and assessment Leadership and management
Mr G Gill	Personal and social education Key Stage 4	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr C Goulding	Special educational needs Physical education	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr S Bradberry	Mathematics	
Mr D R Wood	English	
Mr D J Wood	Science	
Ms M Fasciato	Design and technology	
Ms M Timmis	Information and communications technology	
Ms S Wareing	Modern foreign languages	
Mr D Howarth	Geography	
Ms D Bell	Art	
Mr P Room	Music	

As the school is voluntary aided, responsibility for the inspection of religious education lies with the governors which they arrange for separately.

The inspection contractor was:

Manchester Metropolitan University
Didsbury School of Education
799 Wilmslow Road
Didsbury, Manchester M20 2RR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1 - 2
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 3 - 16
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 17 - 22
Attendance 23 - 24

Quality of education provided

Teaching 25 - 31
The curriculum and assessment 32 - 43
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 44 - 49
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 50 - 54
Partnership with parents and the community 55 - 60

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 61 - 67
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 68 - 75
The efficiency of the school 76 - 80

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics and science 81 - 115
Other subjects or courses 116 - 186

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 187
Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The school is very well managed. The leadership of the headteacher is of high quality. With the support of the senior management team and governors, it provides clear educational direction for the school.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is strong and sustained.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and has raised standards to meet the national norms at 16.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding and provision for social development is very good.
- Almost all pupils attend regularly and behaviour is very good.
- The school has a very positive ethos: it creates a caring and supportive Christian environment in which pupils are keen to do their best.
- Relationships, both within the school and with the wider community, are excellent.
- By the age of 16, all pupils have a secure foundation in literacy and numeracy.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Assessment is not always used effectively to inform curriculum planning, especially at Key Stage 3.
- The timetable produces difficulties at both key stages: in particular, the time allocated to science in Year 7 and at Key Stage 4, and to modern foreign languages at Key Stage 3 is below that normally found.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development does not match the very high quality established for their spiritual, moral and social development.
- In English, information and communications technology, science, history and modern foreign languages the work does not always stretch pupils sufficiently.

The school has many more strengths than weaknesses. It is a good school where the quality of teaching is good. The school is led and managed very effectively and it has developed a particularly strong partnership between pupils, staff, governors, parents and the community. A particular strength is the outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, which underpins the very good behaviour evident throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and staff and among pupils themselves are excellent.

The few weaknesses identified will form the basis of the governors' action plan, a copy of which must be sent to every parent and carer.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made considerable improvements since the last inspection:

- GCSE results have improved substantially and are now in line with those found nationally.
- Pupils' academic performance is closely monitored and appropriate targets are set for the end of each key stage.
- The quality of middle management is very good. Planning and budgeting support the school's aim of raising attainment of its pupils.
- The school development plan is of good quality. It is closely monitored and evaluated by key staff and the governing body.
- Provision and use of ICT is much better than previously.
- All statutory requirements are now met.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations in 1998:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>well above average</i> <i>A</i> <i>above average</i> <i>B</i> <i>average</i> <i>C</i> <i>below average</i> <i>D</i> <i>well below average</i> <i>E</i>
Key Stage 3 test	C	D	
GCSE examinations	C	C	

Results in Key Stage 3 tests (English, mathematics and science) are close to the national average, but overall they are lower than achieved in schools with similar intakes. Pupils' performance in English is in line with the average in similar schools, in science it is below, and in mathematics it is well below.

Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 4 and the proportion gaining GCSE passes at grades A* to G is in line with both national averages and the average for similar schools. Results have improved significantly since the last inspection. Results for 1999, for the higher grades A* to C and grades A* to G are in line with the national average for pupils at age 16.

The strongest subjects at GCSE are mathematics, music, geography and physical education; art is currently the weakest subject.

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of the 174 lessons seen; in over 30 per cent of lessons it was very good or better. In less than 2 per cent of lessons, it was unsatisfactory.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality
Years 7-9	Good
Years 10-11	Good
English	Good
Mathematics	Good

Very little difference existed in the overall quality of teaching across the different subjects of the curriculum. Music and physical education had the greatest proportion of lessons where teaching was very good or excellent. The very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was not confined to a particular subject or key stage.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good in lessons and around the school. Four pupils permanently excluded, which is broadly in line with the national average.
Attendance	Good: the rate of unauthorised absence is low and the school continues to work with parents to promote good attendance.
Ethos*	The school has a very positive ethos: it provides a caring and supportive Christian environment.
Leadership and management	Very high quality: the leadership has a strong commitment to improvement and a clear vision for the school that is shared by all staff and the governing body.
Curriculum	Good overall: it provides breadth and balance for all pupils equally, and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Extensive extra-curricular opportunities are available. The timetable cycle shortens the time available in some subjects.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good: support is well planned to give pupils good access to the whole curriculum.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good overall: provision for pupils' moral and social development is outstanding and for social development is very good. Provision for pupils' cultural development, whilst satisfactory, is relatively weak in comparison to the high standards of the others.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall: sufficient well-qualified staff for the present curriculum except for insufficient technician support in ICT; the shortage of accommodation for science and technology will be alleviated when new buildings are completed next term. PE facilities are inadequate; stocks of books and equipment, particularly computers and other ICT hardware are good; library provision is barely satisfactory.
Value for money	Satisfactory overall: most pupils gain academic awards and they make good progress at each key stage; costs per pupil are higher than average for similar schools.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual pupils are well cared for and supported by the headteacher and staff. • Pupils are very happy in the school and make good progress. • It provides a well-ordered environment; good standards of discipline and behaviour; bullying is rare and effectively dealt with. • It involves pupils in lots of activities and encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school. • It enables pupils' to achieve a good standard of work. • It provides good quality education throughout the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework is not always used effectively. • They are not alerted quickly enough to pupils' unsatisfactory work or failure to make proper progress.

Overall, parents have a very positive view of the school, which is supported by the findings of the inspection. The school is very welcoming to parents and pupils and the links are strong with the local community. The proportion of positive responses from parents far outweighed those which expressed concerns. Homework is used effectively by most teachers to reinforce work in the classroom and to extend pupils understanding. Pupils' work is marked regularly but does not always identify clearly enough for parents and pupils their strengths and weaknesses in the subjects.

Key issues for action

In order to raise standards further and improve the quality of education, the governors, senior management team and the teaching staff should:

- Ensure a more consistent approach to assessment procedures across the departments of the school so that:
 - teachers' planning is based more directly on pupils' prior attainment, especially at Key Stage 3. (Paragraphs 41, 87, 104, 110, 121)
 - pupils can more readily compare their strengths and weaknesses in different subjects. (Paragraphs 40, 86, 109, 121, 139, 158)

In addition to the key issue above, the following minor points for improvement should be included in the action plan:

- Extend the range of teaching approaches in some subjects to provide harder work for pupils and to encourage them to learn independently. (Paragraphs 77, 84, 108, 112, 125, 163, 169, 182)
- Review the timetable so that all subjects have sufficient time to implement fully the relevant National Curriculum programmes of study and GCSE syllabuses. (Paragraphs 34, 112, 164)
- Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development so that it more closely matches the very high quality established for their spiritual, moral and social development. (Paragraph 49)
- Improve the library so that it provides greater support for pupils' private study and the development of their information skills. (Paragraphs 75, 88, 167)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. St James's Church of England School was founded to provide a Christian education for young people in the Farnworth area of Bolton. From 1989 until 1 September 1999 it was a Grant Maintained school and it is now a Church of England Voluntary Aided School. At the start of the present term, a fire at the school caused serious damage to the whole of the administration block, and many computerised records were destroyed or damaged. In addition extensive building work taking place makes movement around the site difficult. To its credit, the work of the school has continued uninterrupted and staff and pupils have together overcome the difficulties. Of the present roll of 930 pupils (434 girls and 496 boys), the majority come from the South Bolton areas of Farnworth, Harper Green and Burnden. However the school has an extensive catchment area and draws an increasing number of pupils from Halliwell to the north of Bolton and from Westhoughton. The present school intake, recently raised to 200 each year, is drawn from 51 primary schools. Families come from a wide range of social and employment backgrounds, although most from areas that have higher than average levels of unemployment and social disadvantage. Only 9% of pupils' claim free school meals, broadly in line with the national figures. Most pupils are from white ethnic heritage, although 12% are from other ethnic origin and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools. Assessment on entry indicates that pupils' attainments are in line with those expected for the age group, although the intake contains the full range of ability and has a low proportion of very high attainers. Nineteen pupils have statements of special educational need and the school has identified a further 239 pupils (28%) for whom it provides additional help. The latter figure is above the national average

2. The school has aims which focus on high achievement. The aims are supported by objectives to which the work in the classroom can be directly related. Current development priorities include:
 - increasing support for teaching and learning
 - improving the use of assessment
 - extending opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves and each other
 - further supporting the professional development of staff
 - raising the profile of St James's as a Church School.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	108	79	187

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	60	62	60
	Girls	62	47	44
	Total	122	109	104
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	66(60)	59(66)	57(69)
	National	65(56)	60(59)	56(60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	33(29)	30(41)	19(31)
	National	35(23)	36(37)	27(29)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	22	60	70
	Girls	29	44	60
	Total	51	104	137
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	44(70)	81(81)	74(75)
	National	62(59)	64(63)	62(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	24(41)	47(53)	39(50)
	National	31(28)	37(37)	31(29)

1

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	93	85	178

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of pupils achieving standard specified	Boys	26	83	87
	Girls	42	81	82
	Total	68	164	169
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	38.2(41.3)	92.1(95.1)	95(96.6)
	National	44.6(43.3)	89.8(88.5)	95.2(94)

Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or

units and percentage of *such pupils* who achieved all those they studied:

	Number	% Success rate
School	33	97.0
National	N/A	N/A

Attendance

Percentage of half days(sessions)

missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year :

		%
Authorised	School	8.0
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	0.6
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age)

during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	53
Permanent	4

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	30.4
Satisfactory or better	98.2
Less than satisfactory	1.75

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

3. Pupils throughout the school reach levels at and sometimes above the national average for their age. Most, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning at each key stage. Since the previous inspection in 1994 the improvement has been good in pupils' attainment at both key stages. In 1997 the school set a realistic target of achieving a ten per cent rise over the following five years and in 1999 it exceeded its 2000 target of 45 per cent of pupils attaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C. Over the same period the attainment of pupils entering the school has also improved and it is now broadly typical for that of secondary schools nationally, although it still receives fewer of the highest attainers.
4. The 1998 National Curriculum tests results at Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science were close to the national average. In English the proportion reaching the higher level (level 6) was at the national average although in mathematics and science it was below. The 1999 national figures are not yet available. However, a comparison between the school's 1998 and 1999 results shows that standards have been maintained with slight rises in mathematics and science at the higher level.
5. In GCSE in 1998, over 38% of pupils gained 5 or more A* to C passes, which was below the national average and well below that for similar schools. However, during the period from 1996 to 1998 pupils attainment shows a rising trend. The 1999 results show that the proportion of pupils attaining higher grades has improved from 1998 by almost 9%. The number of pupils who gained five or more A* to G grades was in line with the national average and was in line with the average for schools with similar intakes. In 1998, thirty-three pupils entered for vocational qualifications and all but one obtained a pass at Foundation NVQ or Intermediate GNVQ levels.
6. The progress that pupils make has improved since the previous inspection. In all subjects at Key Stage 3, and in all subjects except for art at Key Stage 4 pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. Overall progress is never less than sound in more than nine out of every ten lessons. Indeed, in more than six out of ten lessons pupils' progress is good or very good and, on occasions, outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress throughout the school. Care is taken to ensure that they receive suitable work and careful support in order to achieve successfully identified targets. In the very few lessons when pupils' progress is unsatisfactory, it is usually because over-supportive teaching makes too few demands on pupils. In art at Key Stage 4, pupils' progress has been hampered by previous difficulties in staffing.
7. In English, pupils make good progress at both key stages. Pupils read and write confidently, and express their ideas clearly in discussion, for example prior to writing their own scripts in Year 7 or when discussing poetry and plays in Year 9. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils talk and write at length about the literature they have studied. In some media studies lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to work independently of the teacher and so make slower progress than they should.
8. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and good progress at Key Stage 4. By the age of 16, most pupils have well developed skills in handling numbers and statistics, seeking information, solving problems and communicating information in charts, tables and graphs.

9. In science, pupils make good progress at both key stages. They acquire a wide range of scientific knowledge and by the end of Year 11 they confidently explain abstract scientific concepts. However, pupils at Key Stage 3 make slower progress in developing investigative skills, in part because the limited time allocated to science in Year 7 means that the foundations are not securely laid.
10. Pupils make good progress in information and communications technology (ICT) at Key Stage 3. They use computers with appropriate skill for word processing, data handling and information searches. By the age of 14 their attainment is typical of that found nationally. At Key Stage 4 pupils do not study ICT as a separate subject but use their ICT skills in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. They continue to develop their basic computer skills and also become familiar with more advanced software. Where ICT forms a specific part of GCSE and GNVQ courses pupils make good progress and in other subject areas their progress is satisfactory. By the age of 16 pupils' attainment in ICT is at the level found nationally for pupils of similar age.
11. Pupils' literacy skills are good at both key stages. Standards of reading and writing are above average and support productive learning throughout the school. High standards in speaking and listening make a very good contribution to pupil learning in many subjects of the curriculum.
12. Pupils' numeracy skills are also good. Pupils demonstrate agility in mental arithmetic and they handle statistical information presented numerically and graphically. Their use of these methods and a range of other numerical skills underpins their learning across the curriculum.

Other subjects of the curriculum:

13. The attainments in national tests and examinations are confirmed in the lessons observed and the scrutiny of pupils' written and other work. Most pupils at Key Stage 3 are on course at least to reach the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Virtually all pupils are likely to reach the national standards in design and technology, information technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages and art. A majority of pupils are on course to reach levels above the national expectation in music and physical education.
14. At Key Stage 4, the observation of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' current and earlier work confirm that most pupils are on track to achieve the national average level of attainment by the end of the key stage in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics, geography, PE and music, attainments are consistently above average throughout the key stage. In history, information technology, modern foreign languages and design and technology, the great majority of pupils are on course to meet the national expectations by the end of the key stage. In art, attainments are currently lower than that found nationally for pupils of this age.
15. No significant differences exist between the performance of girls and boys at Key Stage 3 or in most subjects at Key Stage 4. In science, the proportion of girls attaining the higher grades is sometimes below that found nationally and lower than would be expected based on their prior attainment. However, the indications in lessons are that girls achieve as well as boys.
16. Within this generally positive picture, some scope exists for further learning gains to be made, particularly by high attaining pupils, in those aspects of subjects which require pupils to apply and use their knowledge and understanding independently of the teacher. They use this skill well, for example in English to write and perform scripts and in geography where pupils of all abilities use advanced data analysis techniques to describe and explain patterns of traffic movement. In other subjects, pupils are less confident in investigating or drawing conclusions for themselves. For example, they have difficulties in designing and interpreting their own investigations in science. Their ability to formulate their own ideas is less well developed in some aspects of design and technology than in others.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

17. The previous inspection report said that pupils behaved very well and that the school was an orderly and happy community. This continues to be the case. In and out of lessons, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good at both key stages.
18. Their response to the teaching and the work set is very good or excellent in about a third of lessons and at least good in approximately three-quarters. It was unsatisfactory in only three of 171 lessons observed. Pupils behave very well in class, sustain concentration and collaborate effectively with their peers in pairs, groups and the whole class. However, their capacity for personal study is not consistently well developed as opportunities are not always given. Nevertheless, pupils are able to use their initiative to aid their learning in some subjects, such as history and music. In almost all lessons, pupils listen well to one another and their teachers, and they take considerable care in the presentation of their written work. The personal and social education course is highly valued by pupils in all years and it makes a very effective contribution to the development of their learning skills such as speaking and listening, negotiation, research and problem-solving. However, pupils are not consistently given opportunities to exercise skills such as these across all subjects.
19. Pupils' appearance is excellent and a credit to them, their parents and the school. The code of behaviour is displayed throughout the school and very largely adhered to. When not in the classroom, pupils behave very well but not in a subdued manner. Within reasonable bounds, they are allowed to 'let off steam' and this pays dividends when they return to lessons. Pupils feel valued, happy and secure and are courteous and trustworthy. They show respect for one another, for their teachers and other adults, and for property; the school is virtually free of graffiti. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children like school.
20. Members of staff provide very good models for pupils through their own behaviour and attitudes, their consistency and the purposeful, interesting work they set. However, their concern to provide support for pupils in their learning sometimes results in too little challenge in the work. The school's policy on rewards and sanctions is sensitively applied and understood by pupils. The teachers encourage good behaviour by using rewards much more frequently than sanctions and by treating pupils with respect. The rate of exclusions has been in line with national averages for a number of years but the school now aims to reduce the number, in line with LEA and national policies.
21. The school's policy to combat bullying makes clear that such actions will not be tolerated. The policy is supported by an active and successful system of peer mediation which is appreciated by pupils. This year, 23 thoroughly-trained Year 10 pupils act as mediators.
22. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on pupils and that the school achieves high standards of good behaviour. The school's fundamental theme is that of a Christian family and this is supported by a home/school agreement in which all pupils, their parents and the headteacher make signed commitments to carry out their responsibilities. The agreement was drafted by a group of parents, pupils and teachers, and the views of all parents were sought before it was published. The school's excellent ethos indicates that it is very largely honoured.

Attendance

23. Attendance levels are over 90% in all year groups with no significant fall-off in the upper school. There has been little change since the previous report. The incidence of unauthorised absence is low and most authorised absence is due to illness or family holidays in term-time. The school tries hard to dissuade parents from taking annual holidays during term time. It makes clear the benefits of regular attendance both to pupils and parents. Recognition is given to good attendance and annual reports include individual attendance figures.

24. Registers are carefully completed and all statutory requirements are met. The school has clear policies and effective methods for monitoring and encouraging good attendance and punctuality. Registers are analysed prior to weekly meetings with the Education Welfare Officer where individual problems are followed up. Every effort is made to persuade pupils to attend, or improve attendance or to improve punctuality by means of a series of letters, congratulatory card or home visits. Registers are also taken by subject teachers at the start of every lesson. Most pupils are punctual at the beginning of the school day and lessons normally start promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

25. Overall, the quality of teaching is good in almost three-quarters of lessons and very good in over a quarter. It is rarely less than satisfactory. During the previous inspection teaching was found to be of a good standard at both key stages and it has improved still further since then. The quality of teaching is a significant strength throughout the school.
26. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is good in almost three-quarters of lessons and is very good in a third. At Key Stage 4, teaching is of equally high quality and leads to good progress in two thirds of lessons and rarely less than sound attainment and progress in the rest. The strengths of the teaching lie in good knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught. Planning of individual lessons is careful and detailed. It is particularly effective when it identifies precisely what pupils should learn and organises methods and resources accordingly. For example, in history, materials are provided at different levels to enable each pupil to succeed in the tasks set and teachers use frequent ongoing assessment to plan the next stage of pupils work.
27. The teaching is supported by clear policies for each subject and in many cases detailed schemes of work. These offer helpful guidance on appropriate methods and class organisation. They promote effective teaching. The best teaching features a brisk pace which maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning. For example, in music every minute of the lesson is fully used to improve pupils' performance.
28. Expectations in most lessons are appropriately high for the differing levels of attainment within the class and the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is usually good. Lessons, that have a good mix of activities within them, lead to good rates of progress and high attainment. For example, in ICT pupils were required to input a procedure for creating a variety of shapes, this captured their interest and they made rapid progress. Those with statements of special educational need are supported well by the teachers within their classes and they make good progress as a result. For high attaining pupils, extension work is sometimes provided but is often more of the same and does not always add depth to their learning.
29. All teachers have positive relationships with their classes. The best teaching is enthusiastic about the work in hand and praise is used to acknowledge real progress or achievement. Pupils are prompted to think for themselves and come to their own conclusions following clear exposition and perceptive questioning. For example, in mathematics the steps required for the successful learning of sequencing were reinforced through careful questioning and worked examples; and in PE pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their own and others' performance.
30. In the few instances of unsatisfactory teaching, assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses is not linked strongly to planning of the next stage of work. Teachers' planning concentrates on the ground to be covered and fails to allow sufficient scope for pupils' own contributions. As a result pupils' investigative and creative skills are not well developed. For example, in science and modern foreign languages, pupils have difficulty in planning and evaluating their own work and rely too heavily on teacher direction. Although this approach supports some of the lowest attaining pupils, it places a ceiling on what others can achieve. Overall though, the teaching promotes pupils' learning effectively.

31. Homework is used by most teachers to consolidate and extend the work in the classroom. For example, pupils undertake research and planning for their future work in geography and design and technology. Pupils' work is marked regularly, although not always thoroughly. Some provides careful guidance for pupils on their achievements so far and on what they need to do next in order to improve. For example in history, marking not only provides assessment of the standard achieved but also sets targets for further improvement. However, in some other subjects marking is often too general and is of limited help in supporting pupils' progress. The day-to-day assessments of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning are not consistently used by teachers to plan future work.

The curriculum and assessment

32. The curriculum policy statement sets out clear principles for the school's curricular planning. The subjects and courses taught constitute a broad and well-balanced curriculum at both Key Stages 3 and 4. It provides equality of access for all pupils and complies fully with the requirements for the National Curriculum. Arrangements for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are in place. They are helped by support in lessons and there is good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator and subject teachers. All pupils follow a personal and social education programme throughout, which includes effective provision for sex and health education, including the dangers of drugs, and careers education and guidance. Curricular planning is a carefully considered process, involving regular reviews of the effectiveness of the curriculum and the impact it is having on pupils.
33. The length of the taught week in both key stages is 25 hours. This fully meets national recommendations and matches or exceeds the provision made by 90% of secondary schools nationally.
34. The timetable cycle is organised as 25 one-hour lessons. As a result, some subjects have less and others more than is common practice in the majority of schools. For example, at Key Stage 3 English is taught for 16% of the time, compared with a national average of 12%, while science in Year 7 and modern languages throughout Key Stage 3 have 8% of the time available, compared with a more usual 10%. For most pupils in Year 10 science is taught for 16% of the time whereas most schools allocate 20%. The school is aware of these difficulties, which have some adverse affects on the quality of work. For example, in science shortage of time leads to a reduction in the amount of practical work undertaken, and in modern languages lessons occur less frequently than is desirable. Attempts are made to achieve a balance across two or more years, but this is not always possible nor is it always satisfactory. If the school continues to have one hour lessons, and this practice has many advantages and in most lessons the time is well used, it may be more effective to adopt a timetable cycle of two weeks and 50 lessons, in order to gain more flexibility in timetabling.
35. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum is made up of a range of subjects followed by all pupils and occupying 60% of the time, together with a range of options. Within the options, pupils have to include one from several technology subjects and either French or Spanish. Beyond this they choose two further subjects or courses. This arrangement provides each with a broad and balanced programme of work. The school has recently introduced in Year 9 a two-year course for all pupils leading to GCSE in religious education, which they complete at the end of Year 10. While this subject continues to be taught in Year 11, the course then is for one hour each week. The released time is used to provide 3 hours for one of the optional subject blocks, while the other has 2 hours. Unfortunately, the practice of giving the latter a full afternoon each week has not been popular, and the school does not intend to continue this after this year.
36. Several vocationally-related courses are included in the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Business studies is a popular GCSE option which achieves good results. Very good work takes place in beauty therapy, a course which currently leads to school and college accreditation but which may eventually result in NVQ Level 1. A GNVQ course in leisure and tourism has been started

this year. However, the NVQ course in wood trades in association with a college of further education has not been as successful as hoped, and has been discontinued apart from one group of Year 11 pupils who are completing the course.

37. The curriculum is well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For younger pupils, lunch-time activities which provide additional opportunities to extend curriculum subjects and to develop and pursue new interests. For all age groups, sporting activities are offered including team games in the school, fixtures with other schools and outdoor pursuits, the latter often combined with residential experience. Music is a particularly strong feature, and many pupils take part in choral and orchestral music-making. A drama production forms part of the annual calendar, and field study and recreational visits are made in this country and abroad.
38. Overall, the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities constitute a wide range of educational provision which prepares pupils well for the next stages of their education and for adult life and employment. They make an important contribution to the educational standards which are achieved, and provide effectively for the personal and social development of all pupils. Governors take part in a continuing review of the curriculum, through attachment to departments and through heads of department presenting reports at regular intervals to the curriculum and staffing committee of the governing body.
39. The school has a policy which sets out a broad strategy and requirements for assessing the attainment, progress and effort of pupils. Tests of cognitive ability (CATs) are taken by all pupils soon after entry and together with the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum results from primary schools provide a baseline measure of attainment. Annual internal examinations extend this and full records are kept of pupils' attainment and progress. The school intends to introduce computer based systems for recording assessment in order to improve the accessibility of information for members of staff and enable them more easily to see the attainment of the same pupils over the range of their subjects.
40. Although the school policy lays down overall principles for assessment, it leaves considerable latitude in practice to individual departments. The school assessment committee, co-ordinated by a deputy headteacher and consisting of a member of each subject department (by design, not usually the head of department), is a step in the direction of securing greater coherence between departments. The school still has some way to go before this is fully achieved. Different departments have different systems of marking and recording pupils' attainments and effort. Although each provides an explanatory note of its processes which pupils stick in the front of their exercise books, the differences make it difficult for pupils and for their parents to compare their achievements in different subjects.
41. These difficulties are particularly evident at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 marking and assessments are more closely tied to GCSE practice. Variation also exists in the extent to which departments assess and record strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils in the various elements of their work. In some subjects an overall mark, which summarises the pupils' attainment over all aspects of work, is converted to a National Curriculum level. Because it is not based on a cumulative picture of development in relation to the different aspects of work the assessment is less useful as a basis for planning teaching and for providing clear and targeted guidance for pupils.
42. At Key Stage 4, the school is moving towards recording pupils' achievement in relation to a pre-set GCSE target. Science and history are piloting this strategy at present, but the process has not been in operation long enough for any considered evaluation to be possible. However, many pupils reported that they have so far found it helpful, as it allows them to check their own progress easily.
43. A key issue at the last inspection was the need 'to establish a commonly understood set of principles and purposes for assessment'. This has certainly been achieved, but it is not the same thing as the establishment of a common assessment process. What is now needed is that each department should have and use an assessment strategy that allows them to identify the specific aspects of their work in which individual pupils need further help and support.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44. The previous inspection report referred to a sound framework for spiritual and moral development but warned that 'spiritual' should not be equated with 'religious'. The school has made considerable progress since then. The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent and their social development is very well provided for. However, while good provision is made for development of pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions, insufficient attention is given to developing their awareness of the diversity and richness of other cultures.
45. The school's aims place considerable emphasis on the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. The school achieves its intention of having the ethos of a Christian family. Relationships between the pupils and the staff are of very high quality and both have a clear understanding of what the school stands for and what it expects of them. A daily act of collective worship is provided for all pupils, in form, year or main assemblies, all of which follow a weekly spiritual or moral theme. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong through the teaching and example of staff and through the whole ethos of the school. Over 90 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.
46. All subjects are required to include details of their contribution to spiritual and moral development in their handbooks and to demonstrate it in their practice. Some very good practice is to be found throughout the curriculum. In art, spiritual development is strongly fostered through effective study of artists' work and its intentions. Pupils in ICT lessons are made aware of the impact of technology on future job opportunities and ways of life. English literature is used effectively to explore moral issues. Units of work in history for pupils in Years 7, 9 and 10 contribute to their understanding of human spirituality, through the study of the Reformation for instance. A geography display includes a quotation from a German astronaut about the urgent task of preserving the beauty of the earth and of humankind. The moral issues involved in, for example, development and population control are also examined in geography.
47. The only weakness in provision for pupils' social development is that they are too rarely given the opportunity to take responsibility and use initiative. The school recognises this and one of its targets for the current academic year is to improve pupils' ability to take responsibility. It has several good examples to build on, such as pupils organising visits and discos, and members of Year 10 taking part in paired reading with younger pupils. Prefects are attached to forms and assist staff well with supervisory duties. The school council is about to be re-started. In other aspects, the provision for social development is very strong. The art department is involved in a community art project. Pupils discuss social matters while studying English literature. In geography, they consider many social issues, such as the exploitation of resources. Much of the history course develops pupils' understanding of citizenship, for example through study of the electoral and parliamentary system, with comparisons to the present day. Music makes a significant contribution: the school orchestra, for example, is a social as well as musical group. Curricular contributions are complemented by a varied range of extra-curricular activities and by very active involvement in charity work by the school as a whole, by forms and by small groups of pupils. Links with the local community are very strong. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school encourages pupils to get involved in more than just daily lessons.
48. The personal and social education course makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. They think about the difference between right and wrong, develop an understanding of why people behave as they do, and realise the importance of feelings and relationships. Their awareness of life and society is developed within an ethos of mutual support and respect.

49. The school succeeds in its aims of demonstrating concern and respect for everyone and of making every pupil feel valued. However, its very strong contribution to pupils' preparation for adulthood would be even more effective if it gave as much attention to cultural development as it does to spiritual, moral and social development, for example by including it in the school aims and departmental handbooks. Currently, pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions but no co-ordinated policy is in place to help them develop knowledge and understanding of cultures other than their own. The school has some good practice to build on, chiefly in the art department which makes a particularly strong contribution through well-planned projects and reference in all years to artists across time and space. For example, a major project in Year 9 covers South American Indian, Egyptian, Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Aboriginal, pre-Columbian, Mexican and African art and its use in communication. In geography, also in Year 9, pupils study the traditional lifestyle in rural Japan. Some research work on French culture is carried out by Year 7 pupils in modern foreign languages lessons. This department also draws effectively on the language traditions of pupils whose first language is not English.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

50. The school is a caring and supportive Christian environment in which pupils feel secure and are confident that adults are always available for them to turn to for guidance. Each pupil is well-known and valued and relationships within the school community are open and warm. Consideration for others both in and out of the classrooms together with the strong family atmosphere builds confidence and harmony. Pupils academic and pastoral development is monitored closely by form tutors and heads of year. Clearly documented procedures and routines for the day-to-day welfare of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are firmly established and provide useful guidance for staff. The close working relationship between form tutors, heads of year, pastoral secretary, senior management and governors delivers effective and responsive pastoral care.
51. The personal and social education programme covers a wide range of topics including sex and drugs education and makes a strong contribution in providing social moral and personal guidance. For example, it helps to develop speaking and listening skills and encourages respect for the opinions of others so that even the youngest pupils are able to discuss sensitive issues in an open and mature way. Pupils also learn how to gain access to information, to solve everyday dilemmas and problems, and work collaboratively together. They analyse their own strengths and weaknesses, and accept and give positive criticism. Careers education is effectively built into the course and prepares pupils very well for life and opportunities after school. Pupils build up their own progress file and record of achievement. With help, they arrange their own work experience placement during Year 11.
52. New pupils' entry procedures and routines are thoughtfully managed. They settle quickly and develop self-confidence, self-discipline and consideration for others. The school's behavioural code is firmly upheld and makes a strong contribution to the smooth running and the ethos of the school. Pupils discuss bullying issues openly and are confident that incidents which may occur will be dealt with appropriately.
53. The school has an appropriate child protection policy and clear procedures are in place for accidents and emergencies. Several staff are trained in first aid. Safety procedures in lessons are sound. The standard of cleanliness is high throughout the school and litter or graffiti are noticeably slight. Lockers are provided for pupils. Lunchtime arrangements are civilised despite the pressure on space. Pupils appreciate the high standard and choice of food available at breakfast, break and lunchtimes. Pupils with special needs are fully integrated into form groups and many achieve well.
54. Overall pupils are well-supported by the school and by the dedication of teachers and support staff, each of whom provide excellent role models.

Partnership with parents and the community

55. The high quality of relationships with the community, business and other external agencies is a strength of the school. Work placements, visits, community involvement, charity fundraising, visiting speakers and the support of the parent body all enhance the quality of educational provision. These high quality links are well co-ordinated and the involvement of adults other than teachers in the life of the school brings extra benefits to pupils.
56. Parents report that the headteacher and office staff are helpful and very approachable and that they feel welcome in school. They feel well-informed and the school actively encourages parental involvement and two-way communication by means of the home-school partnership agreement and homework diaries. School reports give helpful information on what pupils do well but do not always give parents information on how pupils could improve their performance. The special needs co-ordinator keeps parents well informed of the schools work with their children. They form an effective partnership which makes a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make. Parents take a close interest in their children's homework and support its completion on time. They also raise considerable funds for the school through the Appeals Committee and the parents, teachers and friends association. These provide additional facilities and fund activities which add substantially to pupils' learning.
57. The school has good links with the main contributory primary schools. The headteacher visits all Year 6 classes, staff exchange visits, and pupils come for taster days and interviews. The informal communication is good between schools and they share equipment and facilities. Links with local colleges are strong, vocational courses are taught in school, and college representatives and students visit to talk to pupils.
58. Many visitors come into school, for example the police liaison officer, armed forces and careers education speakers. Links with support agencies such as the educational welfare officer and the educational psychologist are very good and the school nurse visits regularly.
59. Every pupil in Year 11 has a work experience placement in the first two weeks of term which is of a high quality. Many local businesses are involved and they speak highly of pupils' commitment. Pupils have many opportunities to make visits to places of interest in the local area and further afield including visits abroad organised by the modern foreign language department and the science department. Pupils in Year 7 take part in a residential experience. Sports fixtures are arranged with local schools and pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and a wide range of extra curricular activities. School facilities are used regularly by the local community.
60. Overall the strong links with parents and the community have a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

61. The quality of leadership is very high. It provides a vision and clear educational direction for the school and its development. Understanding of the school's mission has been built up successfully among the staff and the wider community. Clear lines of development and a well-ordered set of priorities have been established. Above all, the commitment to improvement is strong. The headteacher has the ability to inspire and enthuse members of staff. All have a clear view of what the school's values and aims are, and are working well towards their achievement.
62. The senior management team, comprising the headteacher, three deputy heads and the school administrator, are very effective managers in their designated roles. They work well as a team. The quality of middle management, including the management of special educational needs, is also very good. The previous report identified weaknesses in planning and budgeting at departmental level but this is no longer the case. Leadership and management of departments is never less than good and, in a high proportion of departments, it is very good. The management structure is hierarchical but consultative. Lines of communication between senior managers, middle managers and other members of staff are very good. As a result, the school achieves a high measure of coherence and consistency in the staff's implementation of policies, which in turn contribute to the school's effectiveness.
63. Curriculum development and teaching are well supported. Departments produce their own development plans, which include curriculum matters and which follow a similar pattern to the school development plan. They are clearly set out and most start with an indication of aims and purposes linked to those of the school as a whole. The best departmental plans contain detailed indications of the resource implications and the criteria by which their achievements can be evaluated. The senior management team provides encouragement and advice and, wherever possible, resources are made available on the basis of these plans. This development planning is the central feature of a comprehensive management process. Increasingly and appropriately, the emphasis is being placed on the identification of specific targets to be achieved by set dates. This occurs at several levels within the school and includes the setting of targets by the governing body for itself within its own development plan.
64. Curriculum developments and other initiatives are carefully monitored. The review of the effectiveness of what has occurred is the first stage in planning for future development. The senior management team is represented on subject department committees and attends their meetings on a regular basis. Internal assessments, including those of pupils with special educational needs, test results and other appropriate externally provided indicators are taken into account as part of the review and target setting process. Monitoring the quality of teaching is less well developed. In some departments teaching is monitored by the head of department but this practice is not yet common to all.
65. The governing body takes an active role in the leadership and management of the school. It has a number of committees in addition to those statutorily required. In addition, a governor is allocated to each of the subject department committees, the meetings of which they attend on a regular basis. On occasions, governors also visit a department during teaching time to observe the effects of departmental planning decisions. Governors receive regular and detailed reports on the various aspects of the school's work, for example from heads of department and the senior management team. They are well informed and knowledgeable about developments and, with the headteacher, share a strategic view for the future development of the school. They have policies in place covering all aspects of the school's provision and they are regularly reviewed. The governors play an important part in the life and work of the school. The school meets all statutory requirements.
66. The school has a very positive and purposeful ethos, which reflects and contributes to its improvement and the achievement of its aims. Emphasis is placed on developing sound and

positive relationships within the school and with the wider community, on supporting pupils and recognising their achievements and, on the commitment to high standards and improvement.

67. There have been many improvements since the previous inspection and the school has responded with good effect to all of the key issues identified in the earlier report. The very high quality of the schools leadership and management places the school in a strong position to secure further improvement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

68. Although the number of pupils per teacher is higher than the national average, the school has sufficient teaching staff for its present curriculum. Subject specialisms are well balanced, and the lessons are few in which teachers are not teaching in their specialist subject. They are well qualified: more than three-quarters are graduates and the remainder all have appropriate teaching and subject qualifications. The balance is good between men and women, and in length of experience. Overall, teachers' qualifications, experience and expertise make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Members of staff teach a higher proportion of the week than is found in most secondary schools. This has in part been necessitated by a growth in the size of the school beyond its accommodation capacity and new buildings, which are currently approaching completion, will enable the school to appoint additional teachers.
69. The school is well served by its non-teaching support staff. The proportion of the budget spent on administrative staff is higher than the national average, although not higher than other former grant maintained schools. A vacancy at present for an ICT technical support assistant is holding up developments in that area of work.
70. The arrangements for staff development are well organised, under the direction of a deputy head. The amount of money available for training has been substantially reduced this year from its recent level. A sum of money is allocated to each department, depending on its size, to support the professional development of teachers in their subject areas. The balance is used to support matters relating to issues and priorities for the whole school, to help teachers develop their management skills and provide training and development for non-teaching staff members and governors. Professional development plans are closely aligned to priorities of the school development plan, and teachers have to show how any proposals for training they put forward relate to these priorities. Although staff who attend courses are required to prepare a report on completing a course, the school has not developed a thorough system for evaluating the impact of professional development activities on the quality of work.
71. Support for the induction of newly-qualified teachers is good. The induction process includes the provision of a senior member of staff as mentor and this person and the appropriate head of department provide both subject and general support and monitor a sample of lessons. Similarly good quality provision is made for student teachers on teaching practice. Although heads of department are expected to hold review discussions with members of their department and to set targets for development, arrangements for the evaluation of classroom practice are not as thorough as they should be.
72. The growing numbers on roll have put increasing pressure on the school's accommodation. Shortages of accommodation exist in design and technology and science, with the result that some lessons have to be accommodated in general purpose classrooms. These deficiencies will be corrected when the building extensions currently underway are completed. The school's administration wing now requires replacement following the fire. The accommodation for physical education, including changing facilities, is outdated and in poor condition. The school is planning to raise the money to replace them.
73. With these exceptions, the remainder of the teaching accommodation is satisfactory and some parts of it are good. Room usage is high, but most subjects benefit from having their rooms located close to each other. The school makes very good use of its accommodation, which is

well maintained. When the extensions and improvements identified above are completed the teaching accommodation will be good. However, the staircases and corridors were built for a school with far fewer pupils, and circulation space is consequently under pressure. Pupils recognise these difficulties and move about the building responsibly and sensibly, but it is far from easy to organise movement at change of lessons.

74. The school's spending on learning resources is high in comparison with the majority of maintained schools nationally, and last year was almost double that spent by the average. As a result, departments have good stocks of books and equipment, and the school as a whole is particularly well stocked with computers and a wide range of other ICT hardware. In spite of this, some shortcomings of resources result mainly from not always making the best use of the available money.
75. The library stock is barely satisfactory in quantity and contains many books which have not seen much use for several years and are not likely to. The range of good quality fiction books in particular needs to increase. The school library is not yet fully developed as a multiple resources centre. The range of reference sources beyond books, for example CD ROMS and wider ICT facilities are slender. Although most departments have large stocks of sets of textbooks, it is not usual for pupils in Key Stage 3 to take books home.

The efficiency of the school

76. In September of this year the school's status changed from grant maintained to voluntary aided. This has resulted in a significantly reduced income over previous years, although it remains substantially above that for secondary schools nationally. The school has responded with a number of planned economies, including staff reductions, and has succeeded in avoiding a deficit. As a result the pupil-teacher ratio is less favourable than the national average for schools of this type.
77. The school spends almost twice the average on the purchase of books, materials and equipment and they are effectively used in most curriculum areas. In other areas spending is less effectively deployed. For example, homework in several subjects is not supported by text and reference books but by photocopied work and information sheets about the topic under study. Although they are adequate for the task in hand they do not encourage pupils to extend their reading in the subjects.
78. The school makes very good use of its buildings and grounds outside of normal school hours for school clubs and community activities. Parents and other supporters of the school make considerable contributions to the school's facilities. These sources of additional income are effectively used by the school to provide pupils with a wide range of learning resources and educational opportunities. Grants for new building work and other specified funds, for example delegated funding for special educational needs, are appropriately used.
79. The process of development planning has been considerably improved since the previous inspection when the planning, monitoring and evaluation of whole school initiatives were unsatisfactory. The school development plan now demonstrates good financial planning at all levels and effective determination of spending priorities. The procedures for evaluating the impact of spending decisions are clear and effective. The governing body and the school's administrator are fully involved in the decision-making processes of the school. Financial guidelines are clear and effective. The governors and the headteacher exercise financial control. School administration is efficient and provides excellent support for the work of the school.
80. Overall, the balance between the higher than average costs per pupil, the good quality of education provided and the average standards achieved, indicates that the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

81. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is at the national average. All pupils are entered for GCSE examinations in English and in English Literature. All pupils achieved a GCSE grade A* to G in 1999 examinations and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades A* to C was at the national average. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards at GCSE were below the national average. The attainment of girls is a little better than that of boys but the difference is less than in most schools nationally. Attainment for the smaller number of pupils entered for examination in Media Studies is slightly higher than for English.
82. Attainment by pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is also at the national average. Results have steadily risen since 1996 despite a lower number of successes at the higher levels in 1999. The attainment of girls, particularly at the higher levels, is greater than that of boys, but in lessons the majority of pupils attain standards which meet national expectations.
83. Satisfactory progress is being made by pupils of average attainment at Key Stage 3, and good progress is made by the highest and lowest attaining pupils. Pupils read and write confidently, and can express their ideas in discussion. In Year 7, pupils work together to write scripts and have the confidence to perform them. Pupils produce writing which is imaginative, shows an ability to organise their thoughts and is increasingly accurate in grammar and spelling. By Year 9, pupils show a thoughtful and sensitive response to the stories, poetry and plays which they are reading, including Shakespeare.
84. At Key Stage 4 progress is good for almost all pupils. The lowest attaining pupils work carefully to improve the accuracy of their writing. They give sensitive personal opinions about literature and read closely to find evidence to support those opinions. The highest attaining pupils talk and write about complex ideas such as relationships between characters in novels and plays and have a good understanding of themes and social and moral issues. They produce extended pieces of writing, using their own time at home to develop the quality of their work. Progress for the very highest attaining pupils is sometimes restricted because lessons are closely structured by the teacher. As a result these pupils do not have sufficient opportunity for independent work in which they can move forward at their own pace. This is particularly the case in some media studies lessons.
85. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Almost all pupils show a real interest in the lessons and keep their concentration. Relationships between pupils and teachers are often excellent and pupils are always polite, very well behaved and trustworthy. Pupils work together well in groups, they respect each other's ideas, opinions and beliefs. Discussion of social issues and moral values is a regular feature of English lessons and pupils participate in a mature and sensitive way.
86. Teaching is at least satisfactory at both key stages in almost all lessons, and is good or very good in the vast majority. All teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Classes are managed well and discipline is very good. The very best lessons are moved forward at a lively pace and show teacher planning which links reading, writing and discussion. The aims of the lesson are made clear to the pupils so that they understand why the learning is important. In all lessons very good use of praise and reward builds pupil confidence and supports progress.

Homework is regularly set and is used to extend learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers exposition to the class takes a long time, the pace is slow and not enough time is available for pupils to work on their own. At Key Stage 3, marking does not always tell pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work, and teacher expectations of what the pupils can do are not always high enough.

87. The English curriculum and procedures for assessment meet the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Careful consideration is given to equal opportunity and access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated into lessons and teachers plan sufficiently well to make sure that their individual needs are met. Curriculum planning by the English department is thorough and a coherent and progressive programme is provided for all pupils. At Key Stage 4, it supports good progress. At Key Stage 3, the quality of assessment varies and assessment information is not always used effectively to plan for the learning of individual pupils.
88. Most English classrooms are of high quality and provide a very stimulating and attractive environment for learning. However, the library is not well provided with resources and when used as a teaching space it is not adequate for larger classes. Pupils have only limited access to information and communication technology during English lessons and most writing on the computer by pupils is done at home.
89. The management of the department is good. Responsibilities are shared and relationships are productive and professional. Regular meetings are used to review progress and to share good practice. Under new leadership the English department has begun to tackle the shortcomings raised in the previous inspection. Improvements have been made in attainment and initiatives have been taken to set learning targets for pupils, develop assessment strategies and raise teacher expectations of what pupils can attain at Key Stage 3. These initiatives are not yet fully effective across the department but the staff are committed to raising standards further and they have the leadership and capacity to do so.

Literacy

90. Many subjects other than English make a very good contribution to pupils' competence in reading, writing and speaking and listening. The school has an active literacy group with staff members who represent the whole range of subjects taught. That group has agreed a policy and discussed ideas on literacy which can help pupils in all subjects. Good work on writing in history develops note-making skills, and in ICT pupils use the computer to improve the content and presentation of their work. Reading is developed in art where pupils find information in books and in computer software. Very good work on speaking and listening is promoted in personal and social education where pupils discuss their lives and opinions. Excellent work is undertaken in geography where pupils present talks and learn about geography through acting out in role. Standards of reading and writing are good and support productive learning throughout the school. High standards in speaking and listening make a very good contribution to pupils' learning in many subjects of the curriculum.

Mathematics

91. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above national expectations. Pupils' results have improved substantially since the previous inspection. In the 1998 GCSE examinations the proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to G and the higher grades A* to C is above the national average. The certificate of achievement results are good and are an effective means of giving lower attaining pupils the opportunity to gain certification at the end of their course of study.
92. Pupils' results in the 1998 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests are close to the national average overall, although the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 6 and above are below the national average. Pupils' performance was well below that found for schools with pupils' from similar backgrounds. However, the results of the 1999 mathematics tests show

improvement over previous years and are in line with the national figures. Overall, pupils' attainment in mathematics at age 14 is now broadly typical of that found nationally.

93. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly typical of that found nationally and they make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 3. By the age of 14 most pupils understand formula and solve equations. They understand regular and irregular shapes and know how to make accurate estimates. High attaining pupils demonstrate more advanced skills, for example, in drawing graphs and in applying percentage calculations. They check their solutions by applying inverse operations and appreciate correlation. At Key Stage 4 pupils' progress is good. Pupils are gaining skills and understanding across a wide range of mathematical concepts, which they apply successfully in coursework investigations. They confidently seek information, pose questions, solve problems and use different means of communicating information. The progress of pupils with special education needs is good at both Key Stage 3 and 4. They breakdown processes into small steps and consolidate basic methods. All pupils make progress appropriate to their ability.
94. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and response are very good in the majority of lessons. Most pupils are motivated to learn. They work with interest and are willing to talk about their work and answer questions. Pupils work well together in pairs or groups and are supportive of each other. They accept that some pupils need more help than others. Pupils show respect for the staff and the school and teachers rapport with the pupils is good. In almost all lessons, pupils listen carefully, complete classwork tasks on time and present their work in a well-organised fashion. Many higher ability pupils show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. However other pupils, especially at Key Stage 3, tend to depend extensively on the teacher and are reluctant to use their own initiative.
95. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. It is good or better in the majority of lessons and very good in some lessons. In lessons where it is effective, teachers' show secure subject knowledge and give good explanations of what is required. Good examples of this were seen in a Year 7 lesson where scatter diagrams were introduced. In Year 9 patterns in number was well presented. In Year 11, the steps required for the successful learning of sequencing and finding the n th term were reinforced through careful questioning and worked examples. Pupils' own experiences are often used to advantage during discussion. Questions are asked which probe understanding. Pupils use calculators in a sensible manner and ICT is used in all years. Work is marked regularly and at its best includes constructive feedback to pupils. The majority of lessons are well planned and prepared with a range of teaching strategies. In most lessons the work is challenging and the pace is good. Effective use is made of support staff and lessons are well managed. The standard of discipline is good. The coursework component is planned carefully at each key stage. Homework is used successfully to reinforce or extend the work done in class.
96. Pupils of all abilities have equality of opportunity, regardless of gender or ethnic background. The department implements the requirements of the National Curriculum. Work is provided to stretch the higher attaining pupils and to support those of lower capability. Pupils are tested regularly after each module and progress recorded and monitored. Good assessment practices ensure that pupils are made aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Difficulties are analysed and work is planned accordingly. The development plan aims to raise standards at Key Stages 3 and 4.
97. The teaching rooms are close together, which helps in the distribution of practical materials, and the quality of wall displays ranges from good to very good. The department is well resourced in most respects. However, full sets of mathematics books for the new scheme are not yet available and few interesting mathematics books are held in the library. The full co-ordination of computer provision for all years is not yet complete. The good work begun in Year 7 has yet to be extended into Years 8 to 11 and not all staff in the department have received adequate computer in-service training.

98. The leadership in the department is strong and supportive. The positive ethos and unity promotes high standards and engenders enthusiasm. Administration is effective and efficient. Consistency across the department has still to be achieved in marking of pupil's work so that all pupils benefit similarly from the high quality feedback given by some staff.
99. The level of support for pupils with special education needs has improved since the previous inspection. The planning and co-ordination of resources is better. This has maximised the benefit to each pupil in accordance with their identified needs. Pupils are effectively supported in the classroom by learning support staff. Effective liaison is maintained between the special education needs co-ordinator and the mathematics staff. Profiles of individual pupils are kept and regularly reviewed. The department responds effectively in placing appropriate demands on all pupils, including the above average attainers, and in providing adequate learning resources.

Numeracy

100. Numeracy in the school is good overall. Quick tests are given regularly and this promotes mental agility. Pupils handle number and measurements mentally, orally and in writing with varying degrees of competence. Pupils apply spatial concepts when necessary and generalise where appropriate. In art, the use of perspective and proportion is evident. Pupils handle statistical information presented numerically and graphically, particularly in geography, information computer technology and physical education studies. A range of numerical methods is used in science and design and technology and, pupils perform basic calculations in French. Generally, pupils recognise when it is appropriate to use a calculator. They know whether answers are reasonable, make sensible estimates and have strategies for checking.

Science

101. Standards in science are close to the national average at both key stages. Examination results for GCSE have improved substantially since the previous inspection. At age 16 pupils are entered for GCSE dual award co-ordinated science or for the separate sciences of biology, chemistry and physics. The schools' results for grades A* to G have been in line with the national average for the past three years. In co-ordinated science the proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades A* to C have made year on year gains, although they are still below the national average. Results for 1999 are following this improving trend and are now close to national averages for grades A* to C and A* to G. Examination results for the minority of pupils taking the separate subjects are also at the national average for grades A* to G. At the higher grades A* to C pupils' performances indicate an improving trend and results are now close to the national average. Over the last four years there have been yearly variations across the three subjects, with results in biology usually close to those found nationally whilst those for chemistry and physics slightly below average.
102. Since the previous inspection, pupils' performance overall in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests has remained close to the national average. The schools results in the 1998 national tests for 14 year-olds are in line with the national average, although they fall below that of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 6 and above are below the national average, although they are in line with pupils prior attainment at Key Stage 2. Results from the 1999 tests indicate that pupils' attainment at the age of 14 is now broadly typical of that found nationally. Evidence from lesson observations and pupils written work indicates that by the end of key stage 3 pupils' performance is broadly typical of that for pupils of this age in the knowledge and understanding aspects of science. Pupils' attainment in the investigative aspects of science is lower.
103. Pupils' make good progress as they move through the school. At both key stages most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make evident gains in their knowledge and understanding of science. For example, in Year 7 pupils already understand the concept of a fair test; they measure accurately using a range of instruments and make perceptive

observations during practical work. They continue to acquire knowledge of a wide range of scientific concepts so that, by the end of Year 9, they give accurate explanations for abstract concepts such as the movement of atoms and molecules in a liquid, and the transfer of energy in a system.

104. In Years 10 and 11 pupils widen their knowledge of materials and physical and biological processes. For example, in Year 10 chemistry pupils made evident gains in their understanding of combustion and its products through lively discussion based on their earlier work on chemical reactions. Most pupils record their findings from experiments accurately and clearly in both a qualitative and quantitative way.
105. In all years, pupils follow instructions and perform a range of practical tasks with accuracy and proper regard for safety. However, their investigative skills are not well developed and pupils' progress in this aspect of science is sometimes unsatisfactory. For example, in Year 7 progress is slowed by unnecessary repetition of work covered in primary school. Though the pace of learning increases in subsequent years their investigative skills continue to lag behind their performance in other aspects of science. Pupils are less confident when predicting and interpreting their own results from investigations and they are not sufficiently experienced in selecting their own methods and resources.
106. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs, and those whose prior attainment is below the average, is usually good. They frequently attain standards in line with other pupils of similar age.
107. In almost all lessons, pupils' have a positive attitude to learning. They are attentive and well motivated and respond with enthusiasm, particularly when they find the work demanding. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and pupils work well together during the numerous practical activities. They share equipment and materials sensibly and listen patiently to the ideas of others. For example, in a Year 11 lesson pairs of pupils successfully investigated the electrostatic properties of materials. Good behaviour is established as the norm.
108. Teaching is of good quality at both key stages. It is rarely less than satisfactory and is good or better in three-quarters of all lessons. In the most successful lessons teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They provide a variety of carefully planned activities to encourage pupils' independent learning and offer support only when necessary. For example, in a Year 10 chemistry lesson pupils took responsibility for the quality of their presentations to the class on environmental pollution. They resulted in interesting and informative talks, with excellent use of the ICT available. Pupils in Year 9 consolidated their previous learning and gained new insights into the effects of friction and air resistance when teachers' careful planning, demanding questioning and practical demonstrations made the underlying scientific principles clear. In most lessons, very good subject knowledge, good organisation and management and the very good relationships underpin the effective teaching.
109. In the small proportion of lessons at both key stages when teaching was less effective, pupils failed to make the progress that they should. These few lessons were characterised by over-supportive teaching which prevented pupils from taking responsibility for their own learning and so placed a ceiling on what they could achieve. When teacher direction is excessive, the pace slows and some pupils, especially the higher attainers, lose interest. For example, in a Year 7 and a Year 9 lesson pupils spent a considerable portion of the lesson copying notes or taking dictation and attention wandered. At both key stages, experimental work is made too easy when the harder aspects of investigation are taken over by the teacher and pupils are provided with ready made answers.
110. Teachers' marking is very variable in the department. At its best, especially at Key Stage 4, marking is instructive and helpful. It makes clear to pupils what they do well and what they need to do next in order to improve. However, most of the marking does not focus sufficiently on pupils' achievements in science and does not help them to identify clearly their strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

111. Formal assessments are carried out in line with National Curriculum and examining board requirements. Record keeping is good and the department has established systems for effectively monitoring pupils' progress. This allows staff to monitor pupils' performance in relation to their prior attainment and so identify any that are underperforming. However, the information is not yet used routinely by all staff in planning future work for pupils of differing abilities.
112. The department is effectively led and the teaching and non-teaching staff work as a cohesive team. They give freely of their time to encourage and help pupils in their care. Schemes of work cover most of the National Curriculum programmes of study and GCSE requirements. At present they do not provide sufficient guidance on suitable approaches to teaching methods and assessment, or how pupils will acquire and consolidate their learning in the investigative aspects of science. There is a comprehensive department handbook and a department development plan which sets out clear educational priorities linked to resources and staff development. The department has a strong commitment to further raising pupils' attainment in science and sustaining the significant improvements that have already been achieved.
113. The previous inspection report identified a shortage of teaching time for science at Key Stage 3. Despite changes to the timetable since then, for Year 7 and three-quarters of pupils at Key Stage 4 the time allocated to science is below that normally found in schools nationally. In response to this time pressure, teachers narrow the range of teaching approaches used and pupils have too few opportunities to develop independence in their learning.
114. Most lessons are now taught in laboratories, although some are still taught in other classrooms. This situation will be much improved when the new laboratories come in to use in January 2000. In the meantime, staff successfully minimise the difficulties presented by careful planning and a flexible approach to sharing accommodation.
115. The department is generally well resourced in terms of equipment and materials. Provision of books for pupil's use during lessons and at home are less good and this results in too heavy a reliance on teacher dictation or copied notes. Particularly effective use is made in lessons of the excellent supply of laptop computers, associated hardware and software. These make a strong contribution to pupils' attainment in science.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information and communications technology (ICT)

116. No pupils were entered for public examinations in 1998 or 1999 in ICT. It is, however, a component part of the GCSE business studies and GNVQ courses.
117. In the work seen, pupils' standards of attainment at the age of 14 are in line with the level expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Boys and girls make competent use of computers and attain above average levels of knowledge, understanding and capability in handling data in a range of contexts, in designing and using simple databases, and in searching and reorganising data. Many can set up a small spreadsheet, write simple cell formulae with references to other cells, and use this to model the effects of changes in values. The majority carry out competently basic operations in word processing such as inputting text and then changing print and font size, while using graphics alongside the text to produce attractive leaflets and articles. Work in developing procedures to use the computer as a means of control is appropriately developed and enhanced by the work on computer aided design and computer aided manufacture (CAD-CAM) in the design and technology courses. At Key Stage 4, ICT is not offered as a separate subject, but as a tool for learning within other subject lessons. It is an integral part of GCSE business studies and GNVQ travel and tourism and standards are at the levels expected. In science, pupils use sensors and in most other subject areas ICT is effectively used to enhance the presentation and quality of the pupils' work. The majority of pupils attain the level expected nationally by the age of 16.
118. Viewed against their previous experience and attainment in the subject on entry to the school the pupils make good progress at Key Stage 3, including those with special educational needs. Progress at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory across the curricular areas, but is good within the specific ICT components of GCSE and GNVQ courses.
119. The pupils respond well to lessons at both key stages. They enjoy their work and most lessons have a high work rate. Behaviour is good. Many show a high level of determination and persistence in their work and concentrate on the demanding tasks for extended periods of time. A very positive characteristic of work is the way pupils share their problems and achievements and help each other.
120. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and also at Key Stage 4 as part of GCSE or GNVQ courses. The teachers' expectations are high and tasks are set which are challenging, but achievable. Lessons are well planned and the teaching is very responsive to any difficulties the pupils have. As a result of this helpful, supportive approach, some pupils do not develop personal initiative and independence as learners as much as they should. Lower attaining pupils are supported well and teachers are familiar with their individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils are appropriately encouraged to strive for more challenging outcomes in their work. Though verbal praise and support is given within class, it is less frequently evident in the marking of pupils' work where few targets are set to help pupils improve, particularly at Key Stage 3. The tasks set at both key stages, for example, to input a procedure to create a variety of shapes capture the pupils' interest and accelerated their progress. Time and resources are generally effectively used, and teachers have good, caring, constructive relationships with the pupils they teach. Digital projectors are used effectively to enable pupils to observe clearly the use of new software. Where pupils are sharing computers, challenging and appropriate work is not always set for the pupils awaiting hands-on experience. Appropriate homework is sometimes set is, but not regularly set to support the pupils' learning.
121. The strong vision for the subject has guided the department forward through rapid growth over a number of years. Much of it has been made possible by additional funding and an accompanying determination on the part of the school to give the subject real prominence.

Statutory requirements at both key stages are met. The management of the subject is sound. The curriculum is comprehensive at Key Stage 3 with well-planned modules of work, which match the National Curriculum requirements. However, strategies to monitor and assess what pupils know, understand and can do are unsatisfactory and do not help teachers to plan the next steps in each pupil's learning as they move through the key stage. The previous inspection recommended the promotion of ICT across the curriculum. Despite the lack of a specific ICT course for all pupils at Key Stage 4, a good system operates to ensure each department is aware of the ICT it is expected to provide. This is checked and recorded centrally, although the quality of work achieved by the pupils is not yet effectively monitored and assessed.

122. Apart from the head of department and one other member of staff, those teaching ICT have major teaching commitments in other departments, some only teaching ICT for one period each week. This presents a difficult and challenging situation to manage. Much has been done to ensure that the team provides a consistent programme of work for all pupils, although at present no strategies are in place to monitor the quality of the provision.
123. Since the previous inspection report, which noted an overall shortage of equipment, many improvements have been made. The teaching facilities for ICT are now very good. The rooms are large, well planned and based within different sections of the site allowing satisfactory access for the other subject departments. Pupils' work is very effectively displayed. Each ICT room is part of the network and has a reasonable number of computers, although not enough for large class sizes when pupils have to share machines. In addition, the computers and CD ROMs within the library provide some good opportunities for pupils' independent research. Staff also allow pupils access to the computer rooms at lunchtimes.
124. The majority of staff have good skills in the use of computers and in-service training for teachers has been available. However, at present the department is without any technician support and this is causing difficulties, which have been exacerbated by the recent fire in the school. The limited, but useful, access to the Internet has been curtailed, several computers were not functioning and some systems such as log in facilities for Year 7 were not operating. The school intends to take action on this issue.

Art

125. In 1998, the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations was below the national average. This percentage decreased further in 1999. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is also below what is expected at this stage in the course. Pupils had an abnormally high number of different teachers during their course; the various skills and techniques essential to their work were not systematically taught earlier in the school; in their course work, the teaching has in the past constrained opportunities for pupils to respond at a personal level within their project work. All had to produce the same outcome. These weaknesses are now being tackled.
126. Although progress over time is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are beginning to make good progress in lessons. They increasingly realise the importance of researching and planning their work and having evidence of everything that they have done. They are paying greater attention to practising the skills required, recording their ideas and developments and annotating their preparatory work accurately. The planning for their final pieces shows a much more personal response as individually they use and adapt the skills, techniques and ideas of other artists. A particularly good example is one Year 11 pupil's study of the picture 'Blue and Green Music' by Georgia O'Keeffe. Here, the pupil's notes show a clear understanding of the artist's use of colour and the pupil's planning, indicates how the colours and effects will be creatively incorporated into a self-portrait. Another example is that of a face made up of pictures of motor cars, showing the influence of a study of the artist Arcimboldo.
127. At the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with the national expectation. Progress is satisfactory at this key stage. Pupils in Year 7 extend the basic drawing

and painting skills they have learned in their primary schools as they learn how to create a wide range of shades and tones using pencils, pencil crayons and paint. They readily use the correct vocabulary as they describe primary, secondary and tertiary colours and apply their knowledge creatively in three-dimensional tonal images of shapes and still life compositions. Throughout the key stage, pupils develop sound skills in clay work. In Year 8, for example, they study Gaudi architecture and produce imaginative representations of towers in the style of this artist. Work on display includes felt-making with an emphasis on the use of colour and in groups they make large-scale representations of insects and fish. In Year 9, pupils learn the history of batik and the skills associated with the art form. Fine manipulative skills improve considerably over time and pupils use an increasingly specialised art vocabulary, for example when they name and describe the purposes of the various tools they use in clay and batik work.

128. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to their peers. They receive good support from the teaching on an individual basis and this helps them to develop at least sound manipulative skills and to undertake research and planning satisfactorily.
129. Most pupils enjoy art and demonstrate very positive attitudes to the subject. Their attentive listening and high levels of concentration enable them to make good progress in lessons. They work hard to improve their skills and are beginning to take some responsibility for their own work and for the tools and equipment they use, especially at Key Stage 4. Throughout the school, pupils use their literacy skills well as they produce written projects on the life and work of chosen artists, brainstorm ideas, take notes and annotate their designs to show what they will need and what colours they will use. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily as pupils learn, for example, to measure facial proportions, undertake studies in perspective and create three-dimensional shapes using shading and colour.
130. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages, and is often very good teaching at Key Stage 4. This quality of teaching is helping to counteract the weaknesses in attainment and progress that the present teachers have inherited.
131. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is very good. Staff demonstrate skills and techniques very well, for example how to use clay and batik processes and tools. They skilfully question pupils to consolidate their previous learning and build on their responses as they explain clearly what is to be done in a lesson so that pupils can move on to the practical work. Occasionally, however, introductions are slightly too long and pupils become restless as they wait to get on with their practical work. Teachers' planning is good. Explanations of what pupils are expected to do are clear and effective. Expectations are appropriately high. Teachers give good support to lower attainers and challenge higher attainers well through perceptive comments about their work. At the ends of lessons, rapid-fire questioning helps pupils consolidate their learning. For example, in Year 7 lessons on colour theory, pupils were expected to recall the vocabulary and colour mixes demonstrated at the beginning of the lesson and evaluate their work in the light of this. Homework is set regularly to consolidate learning done in school and to help them prepare for further work by undertaking appropriate research and planning.
132. The art curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. The balance of two and three-dimensional work and textiles is now appropriate throughout each key stage. At Key Stage 4, the requirements of the GCSE syllabus and at Key Stage 3 the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Planning for GCSE now ensures that pupils' progress is continuous and that an appropriate balance is struck between teacher-directed and pupil-initiated work. Good assessment procedures are in place, which involve pupils appropriately in assessing and improving their work.
133. Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to reflect on the meaning and purpose behind a piece of art work and to discuss how it makes them feel. In addition, they study art from a wide range of cultures, both geographical and religious, and to learn how art reflects and represents the lives and beliefs of peoples across the world.

134. Leadership and management are good. The acting head of department has taken a positive lead in revising and developing the policy and scheme of work. It is already having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress at both key stages. At present, the department has no technician support and pupils lose time, for example working with clay as it has to be prepared in lessons rather than beforehand. The targets in the three-year subject development plan have been systematically met over time. New furniture is due to replace the unsuitable tables currently in the art room and a suitable range of new ICT hardware and software has already begun to arrive to meet the priority in this area. Resources are good. They are easily accessible, well organised and used effectively to promote learning in a wide range of art activities.

Design and technology

135. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. All Key Stage 3 pupils study a series of modules based on designing and making activities in resistant materials, food, textiles, graphics, computer-aided design and manufacture, mechanisms and structures and electronics. These provide a firm foundation for their GCSE work at Key Stage 4.
136. Overall, the department's GCSE results have improved since the previous inspection. In the 1999 GCSE examination, the food technology results at grades A* to C were below the national average results for comprehensive schools in 1998. However, results for all other design and technology GCSE's at both A* to C and A* to G grades, are in line with or above the national average results. In food, graphic products and resistant materials, all pupils gained grades A* to G, which is above the national average. In graphic products, results at A* to C are well above the national average.
137. At both key stages, progress is sound. Sometimes in lessons it is good, including the progress of pupils with special needs. At Key Stage 3, progress is better in Year 7 than in Years 8 and 9. Occasionally progress is impeded by over-long explanations, leaving little time for the development of practical skills. The level of pupil involvement in these lessons is minimal and therefore opportunities for progress are limited. Few opportunities exist for higher achieving pupils to extend their rate of progress beyond that of the rest of the class. Good progress was shown in a Year 7 class when pupils were learning how to calculate co-ordinates for a computer aided design and manufacture project. At Key Stage 4, progress in the majority of lessons is satisfactory and in some lessons it is good. Pupils usually work at their own rate, which gives the opportunity for faster progression for higher achievers. Progress was good in a Year 11 graphic products lesson, when pupils improved their skills in using ICT under the guidance of the teacher. Pupils are well behaved and respectful. The atmosphere in the classrooms and workshops is harmonious. Pupils work independently and co-operatively. They are interested in their work, sustain concentration and many display determination to succeed. Relationships between pupils and staff throughout both key stages are good with few interruptions for disciplinary matters. Pupils enjoyed a Year 8 Italian food project that included making pizza and soup. They were also keen to use and demonstrate their ability in using computer control programmes. In a Year 11 textiles class, pupils were proud of their work. However, in a Year 10 resistant materials lesson, a significant minority of pupils did not ask for help when they clearly needed it. In two contrasting Year 11 electronic products classes, one class relied too much on the teacher's ideas but, in the other, they worked effectively and show perseverance in planning and organising work.
138. Teaching at both key stages is nearly always satisfactory and in almost a third of lessons observed it was good. In one lesson that was judged to be unsatisfactory pupils were ill prepared for the activity. For the rest, teachers are committed and work very hard. These are major strengths of the department. At Key Stage 3, teachers exhibit a strong sense of purpose which is transmitted to their classes. In satisfactory lessons, instructions to pupils are clear and the teacher seeks to maintain pupils' interest, sometimes by equating their work with real life examples Homework is set regularly. It is effective in consolidating learning done in and helps

them prepare for further work by undertaking appropriate research and planning related to their work.

139. At Key Stage 4, few lesson plans and schemes of work were written to support GCSE teaching. Where lessons are good, planning is detailed and the teacher conveys clear objectives to the pupils. The additional support needed by some pupils requires frequent teacher intervention. Marking and the setting of homework at both key stages are very variable in quality and quantity.
140. The curriculum is balanced and appropriate at both key stages, and meets National Curriculum requirements. The modules taught at Key Stage 3, lay firm foundations for work in Key Stage 4. Teaching time in Year 9 is half that in Years 7 and 8. This is due, at least in part, to under-staffing. The regular assessment at the end of modules, is not used for target-setting in designing and making with individual pupils. Parents receive yearly reports. Responsibility for subject areas is appropriately delegated to materials specialists. Progress has been good since the previous inspection in examination results, health and safety, resources and the working environment. Lesson planning, methods of assessment, providing work to match pupils' different capabilities and the training of staff are in the early stages of development and have yet to have an impact on standards. The strong sense of purpose in the department is due, at least in part, to the leadership of the head of department. Computing facilities will shortly be much improved with the provision of a new computer suite. The environment of the studios and workshops is good, with displays of a high standard and tools and resources well kept and organised. The department was recently well resourced using the technology college funding and this has helped to ensure that pupils produce quality products.

Geography

141. Attainment by most pupils at the end of Key stage 3 is in line with the national average. The attainment of boys is higher than that of girls, in contrast to the national trend. Pupils have a good sense of place which extends from a local to an international scale and they use atlases competently for reference and research.
142. Attainment by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average, an improvement since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving A* to C grades in the GCSE examination shows an increasing trend with boys performing exceptionally well. The grades achieved by pupils in geography are, on average, over half a grade higher than those they obtained in their other subjects. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of a range of places and explain the links between physical and human processes.
143. Pupils make good progress at both key stages. They enter the school with a wide range of attainments in geography. In each unit of work, key words are identified to improve literacy and pupils gradually develop their geographical vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 3, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs draw accurate scattergraphs to compare measures of development. Higher attaining pupils describe and explain the correlation of this data and use it in their understanding of countries at different stages of economic development. At Key Stage 4, pupils of all abilities develop their practical skills. They use Ordnance Survey maps to draw and annotate sketch maps of coastal features. They describe and explain how these features were formed and have a clear understanding of their influence on settlement and tourism. In fieldwork on Skipton, pupils analyse data on traffic and pedestrians. They use sophisticated analyses to describe and explain relationships and patterns. This challenging work is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.
144. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good and frequently very good. They have a positive impact on progress and attainment. Pupils like learning about people and places and the issues that arise from people's interaction with the environment. Their interest and enthusiasm are sustained when they are involved in group work. In work deciding the best location for a new factory they share ideas and listen with respect when groups justify their choice of site to the class. This respect extends to learning about other cultures in Brazil and

Japan. Pupils are aware of the moral issues of development and the exploitation of resources. When studying population growth pupils learn about the influence of politics, religion and culture.

145. Teaching is good overall at both key stages. It varies from excellent to satisfactory. The best teaching has clear objectives and is planned with different work for pupils with special educational needs and extension work for higher attaining pupils. It sets challenging tasks and involves pupils in their own learning. It uses very good quality resource materials, for example when pupils were involved in a simulated public enquiry on the improvement of roads and car parks in a national park. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and their class management is excellent. Day-to-day marking is regular, consistent and uses comments to inform pupils how to improve. Homework is set regularly to reinforce and extend learning.
146. The department makes a very good contribution to numeracy through graphical skills and statistical techniques. The use of fieldwork and ICT have improved since the previous inspection but are not yet fully implemented in each year.
147. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. It now includes an appropriate section on the local area and home region. Together with the GCSE course at Key Stage 4, it provides a coherent and progressive programme of study. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 covers too many countries and topics. Scope exists in the current review of the scheme of work to delete some sections and extend the depth of others. This will provide more time and increase the opportunities for independent learning. Assessment takes place regularly. The department maintains a record of pupils' attainment using National Curriculum levels. These are being used to monitor pupils' progress and to help with setting.
148. The management of the department is very good. Responsibilities are shared and there are very good professional relationships. The display of pupils' work enhances the accommodation which provides a pleasant learning environment. Learning resources are very good, managed well and used with skill to enhance learning.
149. The staff are committed to sustaining the improvements made since the previous inspection. Raising attainment is the priority. They have the capacity to do this but at present planning is not sufficiently detailed and focussed on this aim.

History

150. At the end of Key Stage 3, the attainment of most pupils in history is at or above the levels expected nationally. The work of more than half the pupils in Year 9 is on course to reach at least level 5 by the end of the year. Of the remainder only a few are unlikely to reach level 4.
151. Higher attaining pupils show a sound knowledge of the topics they are working on. They know about different kinds of historical evidence, and explain their respective strengths and weaknesses. Many establish quite complex linkages between causes and effects. They use technical terms with confidence and usually accurately. Most of the others have a good knowledge of the period being studied, but their work is mainly descriptive. They find difficulty in using that knowledge to answer questions about interactions of events. Some pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties, do not readily recall what they have learned previously. They are less able to select and organise material in relation to questions, and have only a sketchy understanding of chronology.
152. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A* to C at GCSE has steadily increased. All those entered this year gained a graded result, though the proportion of higher grades was lower than the national average. Evidence of current work indicates that standards are continuing to rise. Many analyse complex issues such as the factors leading to the rise of Nazism in Germany and the interaction of interests in the build up of the Cold War. Effective matching of work on the same topics at different depths, to pupils of varying attainment, enables them to share viewpoints and interpretations. This stretches each to make full use of their abilities.

153. Tests show that on entry the attainment of the majority in history is slightly below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 3 most have made good progress. They extend and consolidate their historical knowledge and learn to present their interpretations in a widening range of forms. They develop valuable skills of making notes which are useful throughout their work. In the lessons observed, pupils in Year 9 explained how the land enclosures of the eighteenth century affected different groups of people. With the support provided both by teachers and by support assistants, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points.
154. Comparisons of work done at the beginning of Year 10 with that a year later indicate at least satisfactory and usually good progress in all aspects of work done by the majority. The writing of many in Year 11 shows a deepening understanding, a growing ability to handle different kinds of evidence with skill and confidence and competence in organising evidence to support arguments. Very few pupils are making less than satisfactory progress.
155. Most pupils have a positive attitude to their work in the subject. From the outset, they display enthusiasm and interest. They respond to opportunities provided, are keen to answer questions and contribute to lessons, and work well in pairs and small groups when asked to do so. Many take much care in the presentation of their work, including homework. In Year 9, pupils work for extended parts of lessons without needing a lot of supervision. This enables teachers to work with individuals and small groups. A few pupils in very few lessons lost concentration and application as the lesson progressed. On no occasion did this interfere with those who wanted to work on. Work in pairs and small groups is a feature of many lessons and pupils are accustomed to this. They discuss their work sensibly and listen to and respect each others' viewpoints. These skills lay a very good foundation for work in Key Stage 4, in which virtually all pupils work responsibly, co-operate well in group work and show respect for each others' feelings and viewpoints.
156. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that teaching at both key stages is consistently good, often very good and sometimes outstanding. In none of the lessons seen was it less than satisfactory. All the teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, coupled with an enthusiasm which is communicated to the pupils. Lessons have clear objectives, and high expectations are set in several ways. A wide range of teaching methods is used and each lesson contains a variety of approaches to sustain interest and keep the work moving forward at a brisk pace. The methods used are appropriate to the aims of the lesson, and produce good balance and variety. Particularly at Key Stage 3, teachers' work hard to ensure correct use of historical terminology. They teach and practise note making skills. In a very few instances, notes are given to pupils. Some worksheet exercises, such as those which ask pupils to complete sentences by choosing words to fit blank spaces, are of very limited value. However, such exercises are used sparingly, and teachers are aware of their shortcomings. Questioning is used effectively at both key stages, not only to check and test, but also to stimulate pupils' thinking and probe for further understandings
157. Despite some developments in using ICT since the previous inspection, scope exists for further development. Younger pupils use computers for only a small number of topics. ICT plays a stronger part at Key Stage 4, where pupils are expected to use word processors to present their course work assignments.
158. Work is carefully marked to provide an assessment of the standard achieved and guidance on how this can be improved. Targets are set for pupils to aim for, and supplemented by tests and assessments at the end of each unit of work. Teachers thereby form an accurate picture of pupils' attainment, and plan their teaching accordingly. The recent building up of profiles of pupils' work illustrating the different levels of achievement is proving valuable to both teachers and pupils. Detailed pictures of the strong and weak elements of each pupil's work are not yet in place so that it is difficult to identify more specific individual targets for improvement.
159. The department is very effectively led and managed. The success which has been achieved results from sound teamwork. Several improvements have occurred since the previous

inspection, schemes of work are well constructed and meet National Curriculum requirements. Responsibilities are shared within the team and regular departmental meetings help to identify and spread successful practice. Book and other resources are in good supply, although the stock of books other than text books is limited. The three rooms that house all the history teaching are well furnished and contain good quality display.

Modern Languages

160. At Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils are attaining in line with the national expectation. Pupils generally speak with good pronunciation and some use reference materials effectively. By the end of the key stage, abler pupils manipulate past tenses with increasing confidence but only a minority are capable of unsupported and spontaneous communication.
161. In the 1998 GCSE examination the proportion of grades A* to C in French and in Spanish were below the national expectation. Abler pupils at Key Stage 4 produce grammatical sentences and paragraphs and engage in semi-authentic communication with support. Less able pupils have difficulty in manipulating new structures and very few use the language for more creative purposes.
162. Behaviour is very good at both key stages. Pupils of all abilities sustain concentration well and show interest in their work. They co-operate well when given the opportunity to work in pairs, volunteers answer readily and respond quickly to instructions. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very positive. Some less able pupils are more passive and lack the confidence to use the foreign language even for purposes well within their grasp. The majority take great care with the presentation of their work and are keen to do well.
163. All the teaching observed at both key stages was at least satisfactory and mostly good or very good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in the languages they teach. Their knowledge of the foreign language is very good, but variability exists in the extent to which they use it in the classroom. It is more extensive at Key Stage 3 where the best lessons show skilful use of mime and gesture and provide models to be disseminated across the department. Lessons are well planned and sequenced. Most lessons show lively pace and varied activities, but no use of television, video or ICT facilities was observed during the inspection. Some lessons are very teacher-directed, with few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work or progress to more creative and independent activities. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are carefully considered. Praise is freely given, for effort as well as attainment and lesson objectives are clear to pupils.
164. Although it meets National Curriculum requirements, the timetable allocation for modern foreign languages is relatively low at both Key Stages and the current distribution of lessons is unhelpful to the language-learning process. No pupils are studying two foreign languages in the current academic year.
165. Recently introduced schemes of work at Key Stage 3 are very detailed and conform to National Curriculum assessment requirements. Those at Key Stage 4 require more work to be done. End of unit tests at Key Stage 3 make regular use of National Curriculum levels. Homework is regularly set and consistently marked against the departmental marking scheme. Pupils at Key Stage 4 receive more detailed feedback on their work than at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 new courses have been introduced in order to raise attainment.
166. Frequent use of music enhances modern foreign languages lessons. Pupils research the culture of the foreign language countries and positive attitudes are encouraged towards pupils whose first language is not English. Visits to France and to a language college for intensive language work are in the planning stage. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are well motivated by regular use of the merit system and a monitoring scheme for Year 11 pupils uses interviews with pupils and contact with parents.

167. The modern languages department is emerging from a period of instability caused by long-term staff illness and the staffing this year has been reduced by one teacher. Despite three specialist language rooms, not all staff have their own base. Some rooms lack adequate blackout and projection screens. The language laboratory and workstations are in a poor state of repair. Some pupils are obliged to share books in class and pupils do not have the use of textbooks for independent study at home. Library stock is very poor and the department holds no material to encourage extensive reading for pleasure. The quality of classroom display is variable and scope exists to use it more extensively to support target language use by pupils.
168. The present head of department has been in post only since September 1999, but has the support and confidence of the department and shows a clear sense of the direction for the development of the subject. Regular departmental meetings are held in a collaborative style with useful links to senior management and the governing body. Within the constraints of staffing and timetabling the department is efficiently and effectively led.
169. Since the previous inspection GCSE results continue to be below the national expectation. New syllabuses and a monitoring system have been developed to raise attainment. Opportunities for abler pupils to engage in more open-ended activities are still comparatively rare. The extent to which pupils, especially at Key Stage 4, initiate use of the foreign language or draw support for this from classroom displays continues to be variable. ICT is still far from being an integral part of modern foreign languages teaching, although pupils are encouraged to use it for homework assignments and a lunch-time ICT club is being developed.
170. The department has come through a difficult time in the recent past. Its staff clearly have the will to succeed and now need a period of consolidation in order to concentrate on raising pupils' achievement especially at GCSE. The challenge will be to do this without losing sight of the needs of the ablest pupils who are capable of achieving the highest standards.

Music

171. Standards of attainment and progress are well above average by the end of both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and recent GCSE results were well above national expectations.
172. This is a very good department. At Key Stage 3, pupils follow a wide-ranging curriculum fully complying with the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the majority have a good working knowledge of staff notation and the elements of music as a result of lessons involving a 'class room orchestra' approach. Each pupil brings a musical instrument to the lesson and thereby learns the language of music and the skills of composition from an early stage and in an enjoyable way.
173. Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow a GCSE course and show promise for the future with individual standards ranging to grade six of Associated Board examinations. The good quality and quantity of compositions observed will be further enhanced by the impending provision of a computer and printer, and a scoring and publication software program.
174. Visiting instrumental teachers provide a valuable service and a high proportion of the pupils, more than one in ten, take advantage of this tuition, studying a wide range of instruments. The school has invested well in such tuition. The decision not to charge pupils for lessons has paid a handsome dividend, which is clearly evident in class work, the high standard of musical extra-curricular provision, and the ethos of the school to which music contributes greatly.
175. A sixty-piece orchestra was heard in rehearsal with all instrumental sections well represented. It presents an impressive sound, and this one hour, after-school activity, is obviously enjoyed by all. They are eagerly looking forward to the forthcoming annual orchestral weekend residential course which is fully subscribed, not a common event in schools nowadays.
176. Two choral groups were heard. The junior choir was beginning to learn new songs having presented harvest music in the previous week. Over fifty girls and boys took part, singing with

pleasant tone and accuracy from words-only sheets. Again, the new computer will enable notes also to be provided. The senior singers, a small group of girls, sang three and four part songs with good intonation and enthusiasm.

177. Pupils in all years are very well behaved. They show interest, enjoyment and a remarkable self-discipline in the classroom, so essential to practical music-making. They manage to work with sustained concentration, particularly when working in groups or practising individually within the confines of one room.
178. The standard of teaching at both key stages is always good and often very good. The teachers devote a great deal of their own time to the work. Their preparation, classroom organisation and assessment procedures are excellent and they constantly display their musical expertise, thereby maintaining the pupils' interest and progress in all years. Every minute of every lesson is fully used. They work hard, particularly when dealing with a full class of instrumentalists. They have provided an attractive, pleasant and a responsive environment in accommodation much improved since the previous inspection. It is a privilege to watch them at work.

Physical education

179. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is slightly above national expectations and at the end of Key Stage 4 it is clearly above national expectations. For the past four years, GCSE results in the A* to G grades have been consistently high and better than national averages when compared to all secondary schools. A* to C grade results, for the same period, have been in line with national averages for these and similar schools. The evidence from pupils' work in GCSE courses indicates that standards of attainment are being maintained at least, and in many cases are rising.
180. Almost all pupils at Key Stage 3 are on course at least to meet, and many to exceed, the levels expected nationally in all areas of the subject at the end of the key stage. They have a secure knowledge and understanding of a wide range of indoor and outdoor games such as volleyball, basketball, football, rugby and hockey. They understand rules and play within them fairly in both competitive and co-operative situations and develop their basic skills and tactics well. As a result they participate fully with enjoyment in each game. In gymnastics, by the end of the key stage, pupils acquire a sound understanding of the language of movement and use it appropriately. Skills in floor work and on apparatus have developed well and pupils perform sequences of gymnastic movements, individually and in groups, with grace and confidence. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have built successfully on the solid foundations laid earlier and the great majority exceeds the national expectations in each of the areas of the National Curriculum in this subject. The high level of attainment reached by pupils at the end of the key stage is demonstrated by the school's successful record in local and area competitions in a wide range of physical activities including girls' football. In GCSE courses, early indications are that pupils are attaining at levels which exceed national expectations in both practical and theoretical work. These two areas are combined in high quality project work, the results of which are presented well using ICT. For the most part, pupils with special educational needs, at both key stages attain levels which are at least in line with national expectations.
181. Progress is good within both key stages. It is above expectations in the great majority of lessons. Using the levels of attainment on entry to the school in Year 7 as a baseline, pupils make good progress consistently in this subject between Years 7 and 11. For example, very few pupils have played volleyball before entry to the school but by the time they are in Year 11, they play the game to a good club standard and have acquired high levels of game and tactical skills. The marked progress of pupils in skill development over time, in a wide range of physical education associated activities, for example in hill walking, orienteering and the expedition part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, is a major strength of the department. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their capabilities within both key stages.

182. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' GCSE work as well as observation of lessons at each key stage indicate that teaching at both key stages is consistently good, frequently very good and, on occasions, outstanding. Teaching is based securely on expert knowledge, high levels of personal skill and a genuine enthusiasm for the subject which is communicated to pupils' throughout the school. Long and short-term planning is effective. The department has developed good assessment and recording strategies and communication with parents about attainment and progress, particularly in the GCSE years, is very good. For the most part, teaching strategies are highly appropriate to the activity being taught and teachers concentrate effectively on improving pupils' performance throughout lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their own performance and that of others within both key stages, but pupils could be given more responsibility for designing their own work and assuming leadership roles within Key Stage 3. Within Key Stage 4 however, this improves. For example, in Year 11, girls were observed effectively coaching and umpiring their peers in a netball lesson. Class management is good and relationships with pupils are very good in most instances. Teachers make effective use of time and lessons are well paced. Resources are used well.
183. The curriculum taught at both key stages fully complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities which includes team games, lunchtime and after school sports clubs and annual visits to the Continent to engage in outdoor and adventurous pursuits. The department has a good range of options available to pupils within the Key Stage 4 programme, including swimming.
184. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good within both key stages. Discussions with pupils revealed a genuine enthusiasm for the subject and an appreciation of the wide range of experiences offered to them. Their commitment is reflected in the hard work they put into every lesson.
185. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. They have improved their qualifications, knowledge, understanding and skill through appropriate in-service training in the areas which they identified as weak, for example in mountain leadership. The amount and quality of resources are satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is variable however. The hall/gymnasium is satisfactory in size and condition but the storage space is insufficient for large items of gymnastic equipment such as boxes and the pommel horse which have to remain at the side of the room during lessons and assemblies. The sports hall is in poor condition generally but plans are in hand to replace it in the near future. Drainage continues to be a problem on the games field but, again, it is hoped to finance a new drainage system shortly.
186. Management of the department is very good. Schemes of work are of good quality. The department's development plan is good and fits well into the whole-school development plan. Although deficiencies were identified in the previous report, these have been attended to and the development plan now identifies dates, targets, staff responsibilities, costs and evaluation strategies. In addition, the document also contains good quality review reports of progress made in attaining its targets. Much of the teaching at Key Stage 3 continues to be in single sex groups, as was noted in the previous report. However, this does not have a detrimental effect on the quality of learning and most pupils indicated that this was their preference. Since the previous inspection, the department has improved its performance and provision in almost all the areas indicated in the 1994 report. The department now monitors pupils' attainment very closely. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and teachers demonstrated a wide range of teaching styles. The department has a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3 and the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully covered.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

A team of fourteen inspectors carried out the inspection over a period of five days. 174 lessons or parts of lessons were observed during more than 144 hours of direct classroom observation. Inspectors also examined a representative sample of pupils' work from each year group. These samples included work produced by high, average and low attaining pupils.

The attendance registers, records kept on pupils and teachers' planning files were scrutinised. The register and individual education plans for pupils with special needs were scrutinised. The school development plan and other documents were analysed also. The inspectors observed registration sessions and attended assemblies. Meetings were held with teachers, other staff, governors and parents. Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their work.

Before the inspection, a questionnaire was sent to the parents or guardians of all the pupils and a meeting was held with parents, There were 195 responses to the questionnaire representing the views of the parents and 34 parents attended the meeting.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y11	930	19	239	86

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

50

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

18

Education support staff (Y7 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff

4

Total aggregate hours worked each week

73.8

[Secondary schools]

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

78.7%

Average teaching group size:

KS2

N/A

KS3

24

KS4

22

Financial data

Financial year:

1999

£

Total Income	2,419,406
Total Expenditure	2,437,954
Expenditure per pupil	2,667
Balance brought forward from previous year	54,382
Balance carried forward to next year	35,834

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	658
Number of questionnaires returned:	195
Percentage return rate	29.6

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	28	63	7	1	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	49	47	3	2	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	26	50	19	4	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	37	54	5	4	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	49	43	5	3	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	40	55	4	1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35	61	2	1	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	33	53	6	7	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	48	46	4	3	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	46	50	4	0	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	48	48	2	2	1