

INSPECTION REPORT

Yarborough School
Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique Reference Number: 120703

Headteacher: Mr G Legg

Reporting inspector: Ms V Lynch

Dates of inspection: 6th – 10th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708196

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Riseholme Road Lincoln
Telephone number:	01522 529203
Fax number:	01522 504007
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Matthews
Date of previous inspection:	June 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms V Lynch, RgI		Attainment and progress Teaching
Ms G Watkins, Lay Inspector		Leadership and management Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr G Rawlins		Special educational needs Curriculum and assessment
Mr K Smalley	History	
Ms R Humphries	Geography Design and technology	
Ms M Harris	Information technology Religious Education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Equal opportunities
Mr P Bannon	Mathematics	The efficiency of the school
Mr J Stirrup	English	
Ms A Fraser	Drama Science	
Ms A Barwell Ms H Rudeforth	Physical education Music	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Ms J Tolley Mr E Forster	Modern foreign languages Art	

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
5 Lakeside, Werrington
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire PE4 6QZ
Tel: 01733 570753

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The Office for Standards in Education
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33 Kingsway

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 are very close to the national average and over the last three years have been better than results in similar schools.
- Science, history, geography, physical education and art are well taught. This leads to appropriate and often good or very good work in lessons.
- Higher and average attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 and students in the sixth form make good progress as a result of good and sometimes very good teaching in nearly all subjects.
- The new headteacher and the governing body have a very clear vision for the school and strategies in place to achieve the vision.
- A recently introduced system for tracking pupils' academic progress, attitudes and behaviour in Key Stage 4, used to set individual targets, is proving to be very helpful to pupils, parents and teachers.
- Tutors, pastoral heads and staff involved in careers education and guidance provide good support to individual pupils.
- There is a friendly and encouraging atmosphere in the school and a sense of mutual respect between pupils and staff.

Where the school has weaknesses.

- I. Attainment in English and mathematics in Key Stage 3 is below the national average and below that in similar schools.
- II. Teaching in mathematics and French in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. In design and technology in Key Stage 4 teaching is not improving examination results quickly enough.
- III. The progress of lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 because teaching in subjects in Key Stage 3, overall, is not well planned to meet the needs of these pupils.
- IV. Assessment information and pupils' individual education plans are not consistently used to inform teaching in Key Stage 3.
- V. Senior and middle managers do not sufficiently monitor or evaluate the curriculum and teaching and learning. This has meant that issues in Key Stage 3 have not been tackled either by the whole school or by approaches in departments.
- VI. The curriculum, the timetable and the grouping of pupils do not provide the same opportunities for all pupils to experience a range of teaching styles or to receive similar help and support from their subject teachers.
- VII. Development planning at a whole school and a department level is not sufficiently focused on raising attainment, is not sufficiently long term and nor are aspects of the planning process monitored or evaluated.

The school has many strengths that outweigh its weaknesses. Its major strength is the work that teachers do in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form to ensure that pupils fulfil their academic potential. This has led to a rapid improvement in GCSE results over the last three years, better than the rate of improvement nationally. The work of the school in the last 18 months has focused on putting a number of systems in place that should ensure greater consistency in practice across departments and across Key Stages. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified in the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection.

The school has made improvements in Key Stage 3 test results and outstanding improvements in GCSE examination results, particularly in the last two years. A-level examination results have slightly deteriorated over the previous three years but in 1999 showed signs of improvement. These improvements reflect the commitment of staff to ensuring that their individual teaching is at least satisfactory and often good, particularly in Key Stage 4. However, the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection have not been satisfactorily addressed and progress has not been accurately reported to governors. Steps have been taken to improve the work in design and technology but this has not yet resulted in significant improvements in results. The review of the curriculum and the structure of the school day took place but have not resulted in an improved curriculum. The review solved some problems and created others, largely because staff were not involved in curriculum debate. The policy monitoring required by the previous inspection has not taken place and a number of policies are due for review. In the improved interim school development plan for 1998/2000 professional development needs are more closely linked to school priorities. Financial management is much improved and plans are in place to ensure that a more fair and equitable system for allocating funds to departments is established. Attendance is still just satisfactory but still falls below 90 per cent in Years 10 and 11. The school still does not comply with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship nor does it comply with the requirement to teach religious education in Key Stage 4 or the sixth form.

Standards in subjects

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

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

At the end of Key Stage 3 results in English and mathematics are below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Results in science are in line with the national average and in line with results in similar school. Results in English and mathematics in 1999 were lower than in 1998.

The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C in 1999 is close to the national average and is better than the average in similar schools. In 1999 58 per cent of girls in Year 11 gained five or more GCSE grades A* - C which is above the national average. Only 30.8 per cent of boys gained five or more GCSE grades A* - C which is well below the national average. This difference between boys and girls is greater than the difference found nationally. The percentage of pupils leaving the school with no qualifications is similar to the national picture. When GCSE average points scores are used results are in line with the national average and better than those in similar schools. GCSE results in science, religious education, French and German are above the national average. In English, art and geography, they are similar to the national average and in mathematics, design and technology, history, drama, music and physical education they are below. The average total GCSE/GNVQ point

score at the school is rising at a faster rate than found nationally.

The average A/AS level points score of students is broadly in line with the national average in 1999 and is a slight improvement on 1998 results. Eighteen students followed GNVQ intermediate courses in business and health and social care in 1999. Seventy seven point eight per cent of students gained their award.

• **Quality of teaching**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Unsatisfactory	Art; Drama; Geography; History; Physical Education; Science.	Mathematics; French.
Years 10-11	Good	Art; Drama; French; German; Geography; History; Physical Education; Religious Education; Science	Design and technology.
Sixth form	Very good	Art; Geography; History; Music; Physical Education; Religious Education; Science	
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Unsatisfactory		

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 89 per cent of lessons; in 61 per cent it is good and in 24 per cent it is very good or excellent. The percentage of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory is higher in Years 8 and 9. All teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory or better and in 76 per cent of lessons it is good or better.

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	Pupils show a good attitude to learning and behave well. Relationships are good and pupils are keen to respond positively to opportunities offered to them
Attendance	Attendance levels are in line with national averages but the poor attendance of a few pupils in Key Stage 4 has a detrimental effect on their examination results.
Ethos*	There is a positive atmosphere in the school and a sense of mutual respect between staff and pupils. All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils with academic ability reach the standards of which they are capable.
Leadership and management	The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the governing body are good. The leadership and management roles of heads of department are underdeveloped.
Curriculum	The curriculum and timetabling is unsatisfactory. There is a limited view of how the curriculum organisation impacts on the attainment of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3. Overall curriculum planning is poor.
Pupils with special educational needs	They have positive attitudes and are interested in their work. Their progress, when working in small groups with special educational needs staff, is good but in subjects in Key Stage 3 it is unsatisfactory.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The provision for pupils' moral development is good and for their social and cultural development it is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There is an adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers. Accommodation is adequate and for physical education is excellent. Learning resources are satisfactory although there are not enough computers.
Value for money	The school has taken some hard financial decisions and provides good value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

There were 475 questionnaires returned out of 973 given out. This represents a 49 percent rate of return. Twenty-nine parents attended the parents meeting.

What most parents like about the school

- VIII. It encourage parents to be involved in the school and their children's' learning.
- IX. It is approachable when there are problems or complaints.
- X. It keeps parents informed about what is taught and their children's progress.
- XI. It enables pupils and students to produce a good standard of work.
- XII. It encourages pupils and students to be involved in activities beyond lessons.
- XIII. It promotes positive values and attitudes.
- XIV. Pupils and students enjoy school.

What some parents are not happy about

All parents spoke very highly of the school. They appreciated the individual care provided for pupils and the support and guidance pupils get when making career choices. They also appreciated the range of extra curricular activities available. A few parents expressed concern about the amount and frequency of homework set. Although there was no evidence of too much homework being set, the amount of homework set does vary from subject to subject. Not all subjects take account of homework in their planning and use homework well to support and extend learning in lessons.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

1. Improve teaching, particularly in Key Stage 3 by:

- XV. Identifying the characteristics of good teaching in all subjects and using them to evaluate and share good practice; (Paragraph 30)
- XVI. Planning schemes of work and lessons to take more account of individual pupils' specific needs, particularly lower attaining boys; (Paragraphs 30-32,45 and115)
- XVII. Extending the range of activities in lessons to help pupils, particularly boys, to learn in different ways; (Paragraphs 15,17,19,30,84-85,116,130 and168)
- XVIII. Using assessment within and at the end of one lesson to plan the next; (Paragraph 32)
- XIX. Planning for and setting appropriate homework regularly in all subjects. (Paragraphs 32,117 and151)

2. Improve levels of attainment in English and mathematics by:

- XX. Ensuring that all staff plan to and provide work that meets the different needs of pupils across the ability range, particularly in Key Stage 3, and work together to share and develop good practice; (Paragraphs 45,72,89-90 and97)
- XXI. Developing schemes of work that build more effectively on the work in primary school; (Paragraphs 38,89-90 and97)
- XXII. Using assessment data more effectively to monitor pupils' progress and to intervene appropriately. (Paragraphs 89 and 96)

3. Develop the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle managers by:

- XXIII. Extending the development planning process at a whole school and departmental level; (Paragraph71)
- XXIV. Linking staff development to achieving agreed whole school priorities; (Paragraph 75)
- XXV. Implementing recommendations of recent reviews and audits; (Paragraph 68)
- XXVI. Monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in departments. (Paragraphs 67-68,119 and 131)

4. Improve the curriculum for all pupils and students by:

- XXVII. Providing a religious education course in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form that meets the requirement of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus; (Paragraphs 35 and 169)
- XXVIII. Ensuring that pupils studying two modern foreign languages do not miss time in other subjects in Key Stage 3; (Paragraphs 34 and 107)
- XXIX. Ensuring that information communication technology is used effectively in other subjects and meets statutory requirements at Key Stage 4; (Paragraphs 35,37 and144)
- XXX. Grouping pupils in tutor groups and for lessons that best help pupils learn and ensure that they get the support and help they require; (Paragraphs 34,36 and55)
- XXXI. Ensuring that personal and social education is taught by a team of staff who are committed to further improving the course to support the development of pupils personal, social and learning skills. (Paragraphs 30 and 80)

In addition the school needs to:

Ensure that tutor time is used to meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. (Para 49)
Identify and secure the contribution that each subject can make to the spiritual development of pupils and students. (Paragraph 49)

INTRODUCTION

• Characteristics of the school.

1 Yarborough School is an average size mixed comprehensive 11-18 school on the north east side of Lincoln. It occupies a single site, which it shares with the local sports centre. There are 1045 pupils on roll, including 97 in the sixth form. In Key Stage 3 there are similar numbers of boys and girls although in Year 7 there are more girls and in Year 9 more boys. In Key Stage 4 there are similar numbers of boys and girls and similar numbers of boys and girls remain at the school in the sixth form. The school roll has been relatively stable over the years despite a dip in 1997. Numbers of pupils in the sixth form have reduced however with the opening of a sixth form at another local 11-16 school.

2 The school serves an area of Lincoln that includes two estates with a mix of public and private housing and an area that includes a number of small Victorian terraced houses. The percentage of adults with higher education qualifications is slightly below the national average in most of the wards served by the school. The percentage of children in high social class households is below the national average. One point one percent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, this is low. Nine pupils come from homes where English is not the first language but none need additional language support.

3 The percentage of students eligible and registered for free school meals is 18.6, slightly above the national average of 17.5 per cent. This is a slight increase on what was recorded in the 1994 inspection report. There are 2.8 per cent of pupils with statements of special educational needs, which is slightly above the national average and higher than at the time of the previous inspection. A further 19.3 per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, giving a total of 231 pupils (22.1 per cent) with special needs. This is well above the national average. The school receives a maximum of 25 pupils from other schools in the local education authority who have a statement of special educational needs concerning general learning difficulties. Whilst their provision is referred to as 'the unit' the pupils are fully integrated into the school. There are more boys than girls on the special educational needs register. The school has evidence that although it does have a number of very able pupils the ability profile of the intake has been slightly skewed by a higher number of lower attaining pupils.

4 The school currently has a two year draft development plan which has guided its work since July 1998 whilst the newly appointed headteacher works with staff and governors to identify the strategic priorities for the next five years. The priorities have rightly focused on introducing a number of initiatives that are already well established in other schools nationally. These include:

- XXXII. the use of data on the attainment of pupils when they enter the school for target setting;
- XXXIII. the implementation of a whole school assessment policy;
- XXXIV. a full curriculum review to iron out anomalies in the curriculum and in timetabling;
- XXXV. the use of information and communications technology across the school;
- XXXVI. the introduction of an electronic system for recording attendance;
- XXXVII. the introduction of a systematic process for reviewing the work of departments and the school.

5 Impetus has been brought to the plan by the new headteacher working with governors and staff to complete a number of very significant, challenging and appropriate reviews. These include:

- XXXVIII. a review of the pastoral system to identify how it can better support the monitoring and progress of pupils and students;
- XXXIX. providing time for tutors to work with pupils in their group;
- XL. the introduction of line management/mentoring;
- XLI. a whole curriculum review based on agreed curriculum principles.

Significantly, these changes are being accomplished through a more open and participative style of management than previously.

• **Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 3²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	98	90	188

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	30	50	48
	Girls	50	56	50
	Total	80	106	98
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	43 (60)	56 (55)	52 (50)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	10 (30)	23 (29)	20 (23)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	35	55	44
	Girls	51	59	54
	Total	86	114	98
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	46 (59)	61 (59)	52 (57)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	21 (24)	22 (28)	23 (28)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

.....
2

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4³

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	78	92	170

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	24	68	72
	Girls	54	82	86
	Total	78	150	158
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	46 (40)	88 (92)	93 (96)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

Attainment in the Sixth Form⁴

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 who were entered for GCE A/AS examination in the latest reporting year:	Year	Male	Femal e	Total
	1999	13	20	33

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	20.2	16.4	17.9 (16.2)	N/a	N/a	N/a (N/a)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of <i>such students</i> who achieved these qualifications:	Number	% Success rate
School	18	77.8
National		82.5

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

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

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	8.2
	Absence	National comparative data	7.6
	Unauthorised	School	1.7
	Absence	National comparative data	1.1

•

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	22
	Permanent	1

•

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	24
	Satisfactory or better	89
	Less than satisfactory	11

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

6 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national average. Results in the core subjects of English and mathematics in 1999 were lower than those in 1998. GCSE results are very close to the national average and have very significantly improved over the last two years showing an increase from 32.6 per cent of pupils gaining grades A* - C in 1997 to 45.9 per cent in 1999. In the sixth form attainment is generally in line with the national average and in A level results in 1999 were better than in 1998. When pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 7 results in Key Stage 2 tests indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above is below the national average. In English the percentage of pupils achieving the national expectation is below the national average. In mathematics the percentage of pupils achieving the national expectation is slightly below the national average. In science the percentage of pupils attaining the national expectation is well below the national average. Results in cognitive ability tests (CATs) indicate that on entry the school has slightly more lower attaining pupils and a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs than other schools.

7 At the end of Key Stage 3 results in English and mathematics are below the national average and well below those achieved in similar schools. Results in science are in line with the national average and in line with results achieved in similar school. Results in English and mathematics have deteriorated in 1999 when compared with those achieved in 1998. Results in science are similar to those in previous years. In design and technology, art, history, geography, religious education and physical education attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. In modern foreign languages, information and communications technology and music attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is below the national average. There are no significant differences in the results achieved by pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is in line with their prior attainment. However there are significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in English, history and geography with a higher number of boys than girls who are lower attainers.

8 There has been a considerable improvement in examination results achieved by pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 since the previous inspection and particularly in the last two years. The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C (45.9 per cent) in 1999 is close to the national average and is better than the average in similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A*-G (88.2 per cent) in 1999 is close to the national figure but below the average in similar schools. The percentage gaining 1 GCSE grades A* - G in 1999 (92.9 per cent) is again similar to the national figure but below average for similar schools and has not increased on the 1998 figures. About six per cent of pupils leave the school with no qualifications, which is similar to the national picture. When GCSE average points scores are used results are in line with the national average and better than those in similar school. The pupils who did not achieve any grades in their GCSE examinations had all experienced problems with their attendance. GCSE results in science, religious education, French and German are above the national average. In English, art and geography they are similar to the national average and in mathematics, design technology, history, drama, music and physical education they are below. This represents a significant difference across subjects. There are no significant differences in the results achieved by pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language. There are significant differences in the examination results of boys and girls in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, geography and physical education. In all these subjects girls outperform boys. In 1999 58 per cent of girls in Year 11 gained five or more GCSE grades A* - C which is above the national average of 53.2 per cent. Only 30.8 per cent of boys gained five or more GCSE grades A* - C which is well below the national average of 42.6 per cent. This difference between boys and girls is greater than the difference found nationally. The average total

GCSE/GNVQ point score at the school is rising at a faster rate than found nationally.

9 There is a significant difference in nearly all subjects between attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and the end of Key Stage 4. There is more focused teaching in music at Key Stage 4, better targeting of pupils in art and in science better targeting, better relationships and better analysis of investigative skills. The situation is reversed in mathematics where results in GCSE are weaker due to a reduction in time from 4 to 3 lessons per week and the presence of boys at both key stages disaffected by uninspired teaching. In history and geography there are no differences between attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and there are no significant differences in the quality of teaching. In English there is a lack of differentiated work in Years 7 and 8 and no support for pupils with special educational needs in Year 9. In Key Stage 4 pupils are set according to ability and below average pupils, usually boys, are in smaller classes to receive extra support.

10 The average A/AS level points score of students is in line with the national average in 1999 and is a slight improvement on 1998 results. Eighteen students followed GNVQ intermediate courses in business and health and social care in 1999. Seventy seven point eight per cent of students gained their award. Three of the four students who did not gain an award at intermediate level were boys.

11 In 1999 73 per cent of pupils continued in education beyond the age of 16, most in the sixth form at the school. This number has increased over the last three years. At the end of Year 12 16 per cent of pupils left the school for employment or further training. At the end of a two year sixth form course just under half the students go on into higher education; this percentage has decreased over the last three years with more students taking up employment. Most students who go on to university obtain good honours degrees.

12 With the exception of science and mathematics where speaking and listening skills are under-developed pupils demonstrate satisfactory and sometimes good oral skills. Pupils listen to teachers' exposition and instructions and are keen to respond to their questions. Many subjects provide pupils with the opportunity to engage in speaking and listening activities. In religious education pupils regularly engage in group activities as they explore a range of RE issues. In art pupils engage in question and answer sessions in order to develop their knowledge of the subject. In physical education pupils talk about and assess and evaluate their own and others' work. Pupils demonstrate good speaking and listening skills in English though some lower attaining pupils have problems in organising their ideas and presenting them formally. Most pupils are able to use the vocabulary appropriate to the subject. Most pupils display satisfactory reading skills. However, the school does not provide timetabled access to the library during lessons after Year 7 and boys do not read books, particularly fiction books, as regularly as girls. The school does not carry out annual reading tests to identify pupils with significant reading weaknesses. With the exception of music and design technology where there is an over-dependence on worksheets pupils are provided with regular opportunities to engage in writing activities. Whilst pupils fill in a number of worksheets they are regularly provided with the opportunity to engage in extended writing. Extended writing activities are provided in religious education, geography, history and science. Pupils write short descriptive notes in art and pupils in mathematics are involved in note taking. Handwriting and presentation is generally good.

13 Pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactory and for the most are good, allowing for potentially good progress in mathematics and supporting good progress in other subjects. In Key Stage 3 pupils are able to calculate and use different types of averages from sets of data and interpret and use tables of information. Pupils use their number skills in most subjects in Key Stage 3. For example, they are used to good effect in interpreting Ordnance Survey maps in geography, interpreting line graphs in science and enlarging shapes in art. In Key Stage 4 pupils can interpret the periodic table in science and interpret data from a departures board in French. In the sixth form the use of high quality numeracy skills are evident in design and technology where very accurate measurements are made to calculate velocity ratio in a gearing experiment. In geography lines of best fit are used with scatter graphs and Spearman's Rank Order correlation coefficient is calculated. In science very good number skills are used in

experiments to calculate pressure and in GNVQ intermediate level business studies average attaining students interpret graphs to good effect. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the school management appreciates that to be more systematic in using numeracy skills across all subject areas it is important to produce and implement a whole school numeracy policy.

14 Information communication technology skills in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory although there are insufficient opportunities for the use of these skills in lessons. Most pupils can use word processing skills effectively, compile spreadsheets and databases and use the Internet to find information on a wide range of topics. There is evidence in the lunch-time activities that pupils have acquired the competence and confidence to transfer these skills and pupils were observed writing letters, designing Christmas cards and using the e-mail to contact friends and families in other areas. Their capability in Key Stage 4 is less well developed because of the previously limited experiences during Key Stage 3. Confidence is beginning to improve but overall attainment is below what is found nationally. Attainment of information communications technology in GNVQ courses and in A Level subjects is satisfactory. A variety of applications are used to record, illustrate and research information effectively. Information communication technology skills are improving as a consequence of the study skills programme within general studies.

15 Attainment in lessons in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 reflects the standards achieved in national tests and examinations and varies considerably across subjects. Attainment in lessons in the sixth form is close to national expectations and reflects students' attainment in GCSEs. However, in a number of subjects there is a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Although there are a higher number of boys on the special needs register this does not totally explain the significant differences between boys and girls in history and geography in Key Stage 3 and in mathematics, design and technology, history and geography in Key Stage 4. In geography there is less evidence of analytical work by higher attaining boys. The group in Year 10 following a certificate of achievement course in geography is mainly boys. In history boys in Key Stage 3 are less fluent in their written work. In design and technology a number of boys have no sense of urgency when deadlines have to be met. Boys' attainment in mathematics is related to their lack of progress, which in turn is a result of the lack of suitable work and support.

16 In Key Stage 3 the progress of pupils with special pupils and of lower attainers is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in withdrawal groups and in science but do not make satisfactory progress in other subjects where there is no classroom support and not enough teaching that is targeted specifically at their needs. Lower attaining pupils make very good progress in science and satisfactory progress in art and physical education. In other subjects their progress is unsatisfactory. The progress of higher and average attaining pupils is good overall and very good in science but in music it is only satisfactory. Girls make better progress than boys in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history and geography. On entry to the school and in all the core subjects the percentage of pupils reaching the standard expected nationally is below the national average. Other test results indicate a higher percentage of lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Progress in Key Stage 3 overall therefore is satisfactory.

17 GCSE results indicate that higher and average attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 make good or better progress in all subjects. However, only a third of boys are achieving GCSE grades A* - C in English indicating that the differences in attainment between boys and girls in Key Stage 3 continues into Key Stage 4. The progress of boys in mathematics in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory: a number are disaffected as a result of uninspiring teaching. In science girls make excellent progress and boys make very good progress. Girls make better progress than boys in design technology, history and geography. The school has used the autumn package to identify progress from the end of Key Stage 3 to the end of Key Stage 4. This indicates that progress in English in Key Stage 4 is in line with that expected from Key Stage 3 results nationally and in similar schools. Progress in mathematics is below that expected from Key Stage 3 results nationally but is similar to what would be expected in similar schools. Progress in science is excellent on the basis of Key Stage 3 results nationally and in comparison with

similar schools. When average points scores are considered again the progress in Key Stage 4 from Key Stage 3 is excellent when compared with progress nationally and with progress in similar schools.

18 The results in GCE A level examinations and GNVQs overall largely reflect the predicted grades on entry to the sixth form but in a number of subjects progress is good with pupils exceeding expectations. A value added analysis that tracked sixth form pupils from 1996 to their examinations in 1998 indicated that students make good progress in the sixth form, particularly in biology and French. In these subjects and in chemistry, English literature, German, physics and sociology students did better than their GCSE results predicted. Progress in economics and mathematics was unsatisfactory. Parents are largely satisfied with the progress pupils and students make.

19 Progress is satisfactory or better in nine out of 10 lessons and good in over half of them. Progress is significantly better in lessons in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3 where progress in nearly two out of 10 lessons was unsatisfactory. In sixth form lessons progress is always satisfactory or better. The lessons where progress is unsatisfactory are mainly where there are a larger than usual number of lower attaining boys or where mixed ability groups are over 30 and are often taught by part-time or supply teachers. The progress of lower attaining pupils, mainly boys, is dependent on the teacher providing appropriate tasks and maintaining pace and challenge in the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs in withdrawal groups generally make good progress. They also make good progress in reading and spelling through the paired reading scheme. Their progress is variable, however, in mainstream lessons and is dependent on the arrangements made by the teacher for them to learn. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and lower attainers make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 with limited gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. Their progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 4.

20 The systematic monitoring of progress across Key Stage 4 has been established over the last two years and is proving to be helpful and effective. This has recently been extended into Year 9. The system provides data for subject teachers and tutors to monitor pupils progress towards their targets on a termly basis and to enable progress over time to be evaluated. There is however insufficient use of this data and pupils' individual education plans to plan teaching to meet the individual needs of all pupils. Although all pupils have target grades what is not made explicit is what they have to do to get there. This does not deny the fact that the system in itself is proving to be motivating pupils. The school has set its targets for GCSE examinations over the next two years on the basis of a nationally recognised commercial test and Key Stage 3 test results. This information indicates that in 1999 the percentage achieving GCSE grades A* -C exceeded what was predicted at the end of Key Stage 3.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

21 Pupils show good attitudes to learning. They show interest, listen carefully both to staff and their fellow pupils and concentrate well. Most pupils settle quickly to tasks set and work hard to complete them. Written work is mostly well presented. Pupils are keen to ask questions and are confident voicing their opinions to the class. A good example of this was observed in a Year 10 English lesson where pupils were role-playing characters from "The Merchant of Venice". Not only were the performers confident and knowledgeable but the audience were effective in their cross-examination. In situations where sensitive issues are being discussed pupils show maturity and listen to the views of others. Where pupils with special educational needs are offered appropriate work and support they show good attitudes to learning and work hard to meet the expectations of the teacher. This was evident in a Year 10 information communication technology lesson where lower attaining pupils were studying French. Although they found both the French and using the computers difficult pupils worked hard and with support produced work of a good standard. When working in a small group pupils with special educational needs show good interest in their work and sustain their concentration for increasingly longer periods of time thereby developing aspects of effective personal study. They behave well, are courteous, ask questions and volunteer answers and form very good relationships with support teachers and staff. In the mainstream lessons pupils are usually interested in their work and apply themselves

appropriately to the task. Students in the sixth form demonstrate particularly good attitudes to learning and very good independent work. There is a small number of lower attaining boys in Year 8 and 9 whose attitude to learning is unsatisfactory. These pupils do not always concentrate well or work hard and at times their behaviour can be unsatisfactory.

22 Overall pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. In class this allows for a fair distribution of the teachers time and results in a positive learning environment. Pupils show respect for all staff and for one another. There is a friendly and sociable atmosphere in the dining room and around the school. Pupils value the merit award system for good work or effort and consider the sanctions to be fair. Incidents of serious misconduct are in line with those found nationally and there are very few incidents of bullying. The rate of exclusions is rising however, with 22 fixed period and one permanent exclusion in the previous academic year. The correct exclusion procedure is followed. Some parents did express their concerns regarding behaviour and during the course of the inspection these concerns were found to be partly justified. Corridors and staircases are narrow and a few pupils are boisterous and at times discourteous. Litter is a problem in the school grounds, not helped by a public right of way through the school and in areas around the vending machines. The previous report noted very good behaviour and in this aspect the school has not been able to maintain such a high standard.

23 Relationship between pupils and between staff and pupils are good. Pupils work collaboratively when required. In physics in Year 11 pupils offered the choice of independent or group work choose in the main to work in groups and plan effectively as a team. Boys and girls work well together when required. For example, during an English lesson they discussed romantic poetry in a mature way, listening to and respecting each other's opinions.

24 When opportunities arise pupils show initiative and organise their own work. Some pupils have taken responsibility for the organisation of events such as talent contests to raise funds for charity. The sixth form students help lower attaining readers from Year 7 on a weekly basis. Year 10 pupils taking part in work experience carried out their duties in a responsible and mature manner. A small group of Key Stage 4 girls and one sixth former have regularly volunteered to assist with music club at a nearby school for disabled pupils and also performed a musical concert for the school. Their good-natured enthusiasm for music delighted their audience and all adults present. Twelve sixth form students run a lunchtime club called "The Edge" for pupils in Year 7. Organised entirely by themselves they focus on moral issues in everyday life. About 30 pupils attend regularly and this provides a good link between older and the younger pupils.

• **Attendance**

25 Attendance levels overall are in line with national average and unauthorised absence is also in line with the national figure. For almost all pupils attendance levels are good. The school's attendance figures are marred by approximately 10 per cent of pupils whose attendance records are unsatisfactory with five per cent of these having poor records, particularly in Year 10 and Year 11. Their absence in crucial examination years has a negative effect upon standards of attainment. The previous report noted a very similar position and the school has not substantially improved attendance.

26 Punctuality is generally satisfactory at the start of the day. However, pupils arriving late from their previous lessons, often from distant areas of the school, can delay the prompt start of lessons. With no time allowed for movement such lateness can severely curtail the time available in 50 minute lessons.

• **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

· Teaching

27 Teaching is satisfactory or better in 89 per cent of lessons, which is the same as the previous inspection. However, in 61 per cent of lessons teaching is good or better and it is very good or better in 24 per cent of lessons. There are more lessons that are good or better than there were at the time of the previous inspection. Approximately one in 10 lessons have shortcomings and a small percentage of lessons are poor, mostly in Key Stage 3. Teaching in the sixth form and Key Stage 4 is much better than in Key Stage 3. Teaching in all sixth form lessons and in nearly all Key Stage 4 lessons is satisfactory or better whereas in Key Stage 3 nearly two in 10 lessons are unsatisfactory. In well over half the lessons in both key stages and the sixth form teaching is good or better but there are fewer examples of very good or excellent teaching in Key Stage 3.

28 Teaching is a particular strength in all key stages including the sixth form, in science, art, geography, history, drama and physical education. It is a strength in French, German and religious education in Key Stage 4. In the sixth form teaching is also a strength in music and religious education. There are weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics, French and music at Key Stage 3 and in personal and social education. This accounts for three-quarters of all the unsatisfactory teaching in the school.

29 Where there is consistently satisfactory or better teaching teachers have a good subject knowledge which they use to plan lessons effectively. There are good relationships with pupils and particularly with students in the sixth form where good adult relationships support students' learning. Most teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour; this is a particular strength in science, history, geography and art where there is good academic rigour in all lessons. Classroom routines and agreed expectations are established and followed. In science and physical education particularly all equipment is handled safely and efficiently. Many lessons have a range of activities and as a consequence good pace. A particularly good example of this was seen in a religious education lesson. Having told pupils what they were going to learn in the lesson there was good use of questioning to make links with the previous lesson, a timed role-play of an interview, good feedback to pupils on their work and a quiz to conclude the lesson. In a Year 11 art lesson pupils were given a wide range of activities to use from plaster moulds of body parts to a wide range of painting techniques. A mix of individual and class discussion and demonstration supported this varied lesson. There is good management of pupils and good discipline in nearly all lessons and good use is made of time and resources. In small groups the quality of teaching provided by special educational needs staff is never less than good. Frequently it is very good with a few excellent features. This teaching is based on very good subject knowledge, the establishment of excellent relationships with pupils, planning for progress in small steps, informal assessment and high expectations. The latter is particularly effective in sustaining concentration, increasing motivation and encouraging improvement. Staff in the special educational needs department work together to plan and co-ordinate the work for their pupils. This is a particular strength. The high quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form supported by examination syllabuses has made a significant contribution to the improvement in examination results.

30 Teaching in Key Stage 3 has several weaknesses including the use of inappropriate teaching methods, unclear planning and the lack of assessment of progress towards targets of pupils with special educational need. These weaknesses have a negative impact on the progress of these pupils and on other lower attainers. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is a lack of pace, challenge and teacher enthusiasm for the subject. This is a particular characteristic of the unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics. There is insufficient collaborative planning between teachers and support staff which limits their contribution in some lessons and limits the progress that lower attaining and pupils with special educational needs make. Despite the school's recognising the difference between boys' and girls' overall attainment very few departments are systematically trying to tackle the problem. Overall there is a lack of opportunity for using initiative and taking responsibility. Few departments have sufficiently detailed planning for Key Stage 3 to support the work of part-time or temporary teachers. This is a particular issue for modern languages and personal and social education. In personal and social education planning and the allocation of staff to the subject does not help temporary staff to provide anything other than unchallenging worksheets which lead to unsatisfactory progress.

31 The school now has reliable data on pupils and students and has established predicted levels and grades for test and examinations. These levels and grades are shared with pupils as minimum targets for them to achieve. However, this data is not used to plan the curriculum and lessons and information on pupils with special educational needs is not used to identify learning objectives for specific groups or individual pupils. In most of the lessons seen during the inspection with the exception of science, history, geography and art planning did not take sufficient account of the pupils' range of skills in reading and writing nor of the needs of individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs do not make as much progress in some subjects as they do in withdrawal lessons where their needs are clearly used in planning the lesson.

32 The implementation of a marking policy is inconsistent. Marking is undertaken effectively in a number of departments with targets, levels and helpful comments. However, in other areas, criteria and policy are not universally applied, comments are largely motivational and there are no indications of what pupils need to be do in order to improve. Assessment of pupils' work and their progress in lessons are not taken sufficiently into account when planning subsequent lessons. There is a homework timetable in pupils' diaries but homework is not set regularly in Key Stage 3 in mathematics, design and technology and music. Homework in Key Stage 3 in modern foreign languages is brief and not sufficiently challenging. In contrast, homework in science is purposeful and imaginative and is set regularly. In religious education it often extends what has been learnt in lessons and requires creativity and research skills. Pupils with special educational needs are rarely set appropriate homework specifically designed to meet their needs other than in their small group lessons where the homework set is a mix of carefully structured small tasks in easy steps. Some parents at the parents' meeting thought that there was too much homework in some subjects and not enough in others. Although there was no evidence of too much homework being set the amount of homework set does vary from subject to subject. Not all subjects take account of homework in their planning or use homework well to support and extend learning in lessons. Pupils have diaries in which to record homework but few seen were up-to-date and many did not contain enough detail so that parents and pupils knew exactly what was required. There were good examples in science where information in homework diaries was very detailed and help given in lessons to pupils with statements of special educational needs in recording their homework. Some pupils, particularly girls, fill in their diaries meticulously but tutors and heads of department do not sufficiently monitor either the quantity or the quality of homework set.

• **The curriculum and assessment**

33 There are some positive aspects of the curriculum but there are many weaknesses, most of which concern the overall planning and continuity of the curriculum. These weaknesses limit the progress of some pupils.

34 At Key Stage 3 pupils have access to a full range of activities but pupils who study a second language in Year 8 and 9 do not take a full programme of art. Subject areas have developed courses that provide a balance of activities for the pupils. However, setting arrangements and the organisation of the timetable do not provide equal opportunities for all pupils. At present there is no consistent policy regarding group sizes. In addition, each half-year group should have a spread of ability and this is not the case. For example, the size of bottom and top sets in the same subject varies between the two bands. A pupil might be in a lower ability group of 16 or a group of 24. Similarly a pupil in a top set may be taught in a group of 30 plus or below 20. Pupils with special educational needs are sometimes taught in separate groups for English, history and geography where they work with special educational needs staff. In these groups they experience appropriate teaching, use suitable materials and re-integrate satisfactorily back into the lessons with their peers. The school also provides a personal and social education course. Over time a comprehensive range of material has been gathered and effectively organised by the co-ordinators, which provides an appropriate course for the development of knowledge, skills and understanding. The impact of personal and social education, however, is significantly

hindered by the organisation of the timetable, which results in the course being taught by any teacher who is available when groups are timetabled and lessons take place where there is a classroom free. The result is a lack of consistency in approach within the year and through the key stage.

35 The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is neither broad nor balanced. Insufficient time is given to the study of information communication technology and religious education is not taught other than in examination courses. As a consequence the school is not meeting its statutory requirements. The whole curriculum provision is built around those pupils who study 10 examination subjects. Whilst a range of subjects is available to the pupils the school is not sufficiently using the flexibility now offered in Key Stage 4 to meet the needs of all pupils. Although careers education and the life skills course are two examples of good curriculum practice the school has not exploited the range of available vocational courses. Personal and social education continues into Key Stage 4. It is taught on a modular basis and this helps to solve some of the organisational difficulties met in Key Stage 3. There is a range of accreditation options ranging from GCSE to certificates of achievements available. This helps to sustain motivation and provides a valuable part of the pupil's record of achievement.

36 In the sixth form there is a broad mix of GNVQ and A level courses which the school plans to increase over the next two or three years. Low numbers choosing some sixth form courses mean that planned courses do not always run. Small numbers in sixth form groups also limits the opportunities for pupils to learn from each other. In addition students are able to pursue community service, physical/recreational activities and general studies. Students are able to progress onto advanced GNVQ, NVQ and A level or higher education courses at other establishments. Work experience provision is successful in vocational courses and modern foreign languages. The range of provision also gives lower attaining pupils opportunities for continued study. There are weaknesses in the current provision in the sixth form. These include the absence of religious education and the system for choosing between significant learning experiences like physical activities or community service. Also, students cannot continue their studies from GNVQ intermediate to GNVQ advanced at the school.

37 The time allocations in certain subjects are inappropriate and hinder progress. Despite investment in computers and associated equipment, the time allowed for information communication technology in Key Stage 4 does not provide for adequate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. In addition, although there is more than the recommended time for mathematics in Key Stage 3 there is a reduction in time in Key Stage 4 and physical education has insufficient time to teach to National Curriculum programme of study. The school also provides for too little religious education in Key Stage 3 and none at Key Stage 4.

38 There have been some good links made with primary schools by the English department to ensure that staff are aware of the literacy hour. However, there has been little work done in all subjects to ensure that the work in Year 7 builds on the work already done in partner primary schools. This is a particular issue in mathematics where pupils talked of already having done aspect of the work before and were clearly able to do what they were being asked to do gain. Whilst links with partner primary schools are well-established for pastoral matters there is no-one responsible for making sure that staff are aware of what has been taught to pupils before they join the school. There is better planning for progress between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 but in modern languages in particular a large percentage of pupils who take two languages in Years 8 and 9 do not continue with them into Year 10.

39 There is a satisfactory programme of extra-curricular activities operating across the school, including a considerable number based on sporting or musical pursuits. As well as the traditional major games there are also opportunities to swim or participate in health related fitness. In music there is provision for string, wind, choral and band activity whilst elsewhere pupils can get involved in choral speaking, information communication technology or discussion with members of the sixth form.

40 The personal, social and health programmes provide a good range of content, which includes

sex education and career guidance. The latter is a strength of the school. In it there is a planned programme which aims to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge. It enables pupils to make informed choices. A partnership agreement with the local careers service is regularly reviewed. As a result, the school makes very good use of the careers adviser who gives impartial and up-to-date advice. The work experience scheme is well organised and provides a good range of experiences. Staff monitor the effectiveness of the placements and the progress made by the pupils. On return to school pupils follow this up with a personal contribution to their record of achievement. The careers library is regularly updated and is readily accessible.

41 Pupils with special educational needs have access to the curriculum and the school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Withdrawal from mainstream classes in Key Stage 3 does not have an adverse effect on continuity in mainstream classes. Where groups are organised on the basis of prior attainment some sets do display extreme gender imbalance with, for example, very few girls in lower attaining groups. Some lower sets have a concentration of pupils with special needs and behavioural difficulties. This makes it difficult for teachers to provide support to all pupils.

42 The school has not been in a position to have an overall view of the curriculum until recently. As a result, there has been no effective evaluation of the impact of grouping of pupils and the timetable organisation on pupils' learning. This lack of a comprehensive view of the whole curriculum means that cross-curricular skills and knowledge are not progressively taught. Staff are unaware of the content of areas like personal and social education and are therefore not able to consolidate and extend the pupils' skills and knowledge. For example, pupils are taught study skills effectively in personal and social education but there is limited evidence of the use of these techniques in other areas of the curriculum. The school has made considerable progress in developing whole curriculum thinking based on knowledge of these weaknesses and is well placed to make the necessary improvements quickly.

43 Some departments have particularly effective systems for assessing pupil attainment and progress. For example, in history and geography there is very good practice which involves criteria based assessment, the allocation of levels and pupils' target setting. This is especially rigorous in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In other areas like science a good start has been made on a system that will make target setting more meaningful for the pupil. In other areas assessment practice at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is more effective than in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 3 weaknesses concern the lack of consistency in the application of assessment and the absence of the link to National Curriculum levels of attainment.

44 There have been a number of good initiatives aimed at improving pupil target setting and self-review. The record of achievement encourages pupils to reflect on progress and identify the development of their skills and knowledge. In addition, the recently introduced whole school report system provides parents and pupils with detailed information regarding attainment and progress. However, the next steps for improvement section of the report remains under-developed. A new system providing information to both parents and pupils has been introduced into Years 9, 10 and 11. It concentrates on the pupils' attainment in all curriculum areas and it indicates likely examination outcomes. The system provides a good base for individual target setting as it makes a clear link between current attainment and predicted performance, highlighting the areas that require particular attention. Finally, a system for individual pupils to meet with their tutor during assembly time to concentrate on pupil self-management skills is beginning to contribute to their personal development and academic progress.

45 Individual records for pupils with special educational needs are detailed and include contributions from pupils and parents. This level of detail helps the review process. The targets contained in the individual education plans correspond to the areas identified in the statement. However, they are not specific enough and do not allow for teachers to easily translate these targets into subject specific targets. They also do not support the reviewing of pupils' progress towards achieving their

targets at the end of the identified period. Some targets also describe what the teachers will do rather than how the pupils will improve. Therefore their use in curriculum planning is limited and the focus of the lesson for individual pupils is unclear. The use of behavioural individual education plans is underdeveloped.

46 The assessment data transferred from Key Stage 2 is sometimes used to organise teaching groups. However, they arrive too late and are often incomplete so that they are ineffective when supporting continuity and progression in pupils' learning. In an attempt to gain a more comprehensive view of a pupil's performance the school has recently introduced cognitive ability testing. This is already providing helpful information about individual pupils as well as whole year groups. The school also screens some pupils using other standardised tests but these procedures lack whole school co-ordination. As a result, there is a lack of information in the school about the progress made by identifiable groups of pupils over time. The absence of information about trends throughout the school hinders strategic planning. One aspect of this more effective provision is the work that is undertaken on examination results. Several departments are developing good analytical tools to review performance at GCSE and A level. This analysis then forms the basis of raised teaching strategies and methods aimed at improving standards.

47 Statutory requirements for reporting to parents are met and procedures for ensuring these are useful and informative are in place.

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

48 The values which the school seeks to promote are clearly stated within the mission statement and are linked specifically with the code of behaviour.

49 There is no school policy at present that explains how the school defines spiritual development and how it seeks to promote it throughout the school. Provision is largely through the assemblies, religious education and some unplanned occurrences in lessons. The weekly assemblies, usually led by the headteacher and other senior managers such as heads of houses, offer opportunities to consider moral themes and Christian values. For example, during the week of the inspection the theme of the assemblies was about the morality of targeting teenagers when advertising alcopops and the dangers of drinking with reference made to the book of Proverbs. Assemblies are very well ordered and pupils listen with interest and behave well. Visitors lead assemblies from time to time and have included a team from Youth for Christ and local clergy. In September of the current year a 'Theme for the Week' was introduced for tutors to use with their groups on the days when no assembly is provided. These themes and accompanying thoughts provide a good basis for thought and reflection and some good examples were seen but their use by tutors is not consistent. In religious education spiritual development is fostered in Key Stage 3 by many opportunities to consider how belief influences life. For example in Year 7 students write with sensitivity about 'My World' and 'Special Place' and in Year 8 consider their own beliefs and ideals when reflecting on ultimate questions about life and death. There is very good promotion of the spiritual in religious education for pupils and students who opt for the subject at GCSE and at A level. However, opportunities for spiritual development are considerably reduced by the lack of provision of statutory religious education. There is no explicit planning for the promotion of spiritual development across the curriculum. Some opportunities do occur such as in art where the extended sixth form topic 'Spirituality in Art' resulted in an excellent display in the school foyer of three-dimensional models, including representation of the futility and waste of war. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory overall.

50 Provision for moral development is good. The school states clearly in its mission statement that the individual is to be valued and the behaviour policy is very clear about how that is to be achieved in practice through promoting moral attitudes and good behaviour. Policies such as the equal opportunities and anti bullying policies also support the school's moral code. A personal and social programme is provided for all students and includes a range of moral and social issues. For instance, in

Year 7 students learn about why laws are needed and how they are made as well as considering personal rights and responsibilities. Other units in Key Stage 4 especially provide for the consideration of environmental and health issues and the responsibilities of citizenship. Although schemes of work do not identify contributions to moral education some subjects provide good examples. For instance, in Science a very good discussion on global warming was observed where scientific information was used to stimulate students' imaginations and consciences. In a year 10 English lesson on Shakespeare's 'The Merchant of Venice' pupils used their thorough knowledge of Christianity and Judaism in understanding the moral issues involved. Pupils with special educational needs in withdrawal groups are given opportunities to make moral decisions thereby fostering positive attitudes of honesty, fairness and respect. Pupils know right from wrong and can be trusted to use resources responsibly. The excellent displays around the school, for example, remain untouched and enhance the ethos of the school. The school is a moral environment where students feel safe. Teachers promote moral values and students respond well.

51 Satisfactory provision is made for the social development of pupils and students. The school mission statement recognises the importance of providing opportunities for social development for students and goes some way to achieving its aim. For instance, pupils across the age range describe the school as sociable and friendly. Teachers provide good role models and treat students firmly but with respect. There are no reported serious incidents of bullying though instances of name-calling need to be dealt with more fully. The code of conduct is prominently displayed in classrooms and promoted by teachers. The personal and social education programme provides a range of topics which promote social attitudes and skills both in the community and in personal relationships though there is scope for more coherence and consistency across the Key Stages. Although there are opportunities in some subjects, for example in GNVQs, to develop co-operation through working in pairs and small groups, overall insufficient use is made of such activities. In physical education taking part in competitive sports makes a contribution to concepts such as fair play and following the rules. In religious education pupils consider social issues for example when learning about life on the streets in the stories of Nicky Cruz and Dr Barnardo. In withdrawal groups when pupils with special educational needs are working in groups they are encouraged to accept rules and conform to expected norms. At all times pupils are encouraged to display good social behaviour and self discipline. There are few opportunities for older pupils and students to take responsibility other than in the sixth form. However, these opportunities do include effective participation in the paired reading and writing scheme where sixth formers support younger pupils on a regular basis. Members of the sixth form help in the information communication technology rooms, take part in weekly community service and take care of the memorial garden wildlife area. A particularly good example was observed in the weekly lunchtime club run by sixth form students for Year 7 called 'The Edge'. This was initiated by the students to help explore Christian morals and to give support to younger pupils. The club was extremely well run within an atmosphere of trust and fun providing an excellent link between the oldest and the youngest students in the school. The sixth form leaders were very good role models for Year 7 both in their demeanour and in their caring attitude. Younger pupils help in the library and in induction evenings for new pupils and their parents but there are limited opportunities overall for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 to contribute to the life of their school.

52 Provision for cultural development is sound. There are many opportunities throughout the curriculum for pupils to extend their cultural awareness through their work and through the many visits, for instance, to the theatre, to concerts and to art galleries such as the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery. There is a significant number of visits abroad which add to the cultural experience of students. These include an exchange with a school in France which has continued for 20 years, an exchange with a school in Prague and one planned with Barcelona as well as visits to Paris to visit the art galleries there. Although the school has a policy to promote equal opportunities there is insufficient celebration of the multicultural aspect of society. Some subjects raise awareness of other cultures well through aspects of the curriculum but this is not consistent across the school. In art there is extensive awareness of other cultures evident in student work and in English students study multicultural prose and poetry as well as Chaucer and Shakespeare.

53 Since the last inspection the school has ensured that a personal and social education programme

is provided for all students in Key Stage 3 and 4. Although the acts of worship provided by the school make a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of students the school still does not provide such acts on a daily basis for each student as legally required. Religious education does not feature as part of the curriculum for Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and therefore the school does not yet meet these statutory requirements. The planned curriculum review seeks to improve this situation.

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

54 The school offers good support and guidance to pupils overall and is successful in promoting the health and safety of its pupils. The previous report made a similar judgement and the school has maintained this strong position.

55 Pupils are well known by the subject staff and are provided with good support and guidance through the house system of tutors and heads of house. Tutors and heads of house work closely with pupils and provide a focal point for pupils and their parents within a large school. Some tutor groups are large and tutors have little time to work with pupils either individually or as a group. The school is currently reviewing the pastoral system so that it supports the curriculum more effectively and enables tutors and pupils to have more time together. Heads of house are well respected by both parents and pupils but have large teaching commitments and too many pupils in their houses for them to get to know them all well. Recent improvements have been made to the monitoring of academic progress and personal development. Pupils' progress reports are produced termly for pupils in Year 9 and above and are followed by individual interviews between tutor and pupil. Targets are set and pupils are guided towards improved attainment and encouraged to become involved in extra curricular activities.

56 Attendance levels are monitored carefully by tutors and heads of house with absentees and pupils who arrive late being routinely challenged. However, a number of pupils continue to have unsatisfactory attendance. The school does not routinely advise parents of the non-appearance of their child on the first day of absence but plans to introduce this system as an attempt to further improve attendance. The school does not currently offer a reintegration programme to support pupils who have had a prolonged period of absence.

57 The school has behaviour and anti-bullying policies both of which are mostly consistently applied. Pupils know the rules and staff are successful in gaining good behaviour in lessons. The reward system is effective and pupils value merits. There are some inconsistencies in monitoring behaviour outside lessons where pupils are less closely supervised. Some boisterous and inconsiderate behaviour and dropping of litter is not sufficiently challenged.

58 The staff in the special educational needs department provide effective support for their pupils. Progress, personal development and behaviour are all monitored well. Pupils know that the support staff are approachable and accessible throughout the school day. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to reach the targets identified in their individual education plans. Good liaison is established with outside agencies that offer support to both pupils and teachers. In addition the life skills course in Key Stage 4 raises pupils' level of confidence and their self-esteem in and around school as well as preparing them for adult life. This course also gives pupils knowledge and understanding that promotes their health and safety.

59 Careers guidance is very good. Pupils and students are well supported and helped to make the right choices at Year 9. In Year 10 pupils are able to take part in two weeks work experience with further opportunities being provided in the sixth form.

60 The school complies with local child protection procedures. Regular training takes place for staff to ensure that they are up-to-date concerning child protection matters. The health and safety policy

has been recently supplemented by a health and safety audit. Overall, the school provides a safe environment for pupils and meets safety requirements. Risk assessment has taken place in physical education and science and good advice is provided for out of school visits. No risk assessment has taken place in design and technology. Arrangements for pupils who are taken ill at school are good and there is satisfactory first aid provision.

Partnership with parents and the community

61 The school has been successful in creating a good partnership with parents. Good quality information is provided for parents prior to their child joining the school and continues to keep them up-to-date about school events and curriculum matters. Parents of Key Stage 4 pupils receive termly progress reports covering academic progress, attitudes, effort and behaviour. Regular consultation meetings are arranged and these are mostly well attended in Year 7 and Year 8 but less well attended in other years. Parents are provided with a helpful end of year report which clearly indicates attainment, progress, personal development and achievements in extra curricular activities. Careers information is routinely provided for parents and together with staff they are able to take a full part in the decisions affecting their child's choice of subjects and courses. Staff in the special educational needs department have effective links with parents. Good information is provided for them and they are invited to annual review meetings.

62 The school prospectus and governors' report to parents does not include all the necessary information. The governors' annual report does not include information on the next elections of parent governors, a statement on the progress of the school's action plan following the previous inspection, information on school security nor information about provision for pupils who are disabled.

63 Parents completing the questionnaire and attending the meeting were overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. Most parents are supportive of homework and assist staff by monitoring its completion through the homework diary. Some parents had concerns about homework mostly in respect of its being inconsistently or too infrequently set. The inspection evidence found this to be justified. Another concern was that the school did not handle complaints well. During the inspection cases of complaints were discussed and evidence produced to support the fact that this concern is not justified.

64 The work of the school is enriched by links with a wide variety of community members. The school has shared use of the leisure centre and it is well used by the local community through the adult education programme which takes place four nights a week. The work experience programme for Year 10 and Year 12 pupils gives pupils an insight into work life and provides them with a good opportunity to experience possible career options. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support to make the most of work experience opportunities and on the life skills course local knowledge and experience is used through visits to places such as the Magistrates Court and the Council. Year 9 pupils take part in an industry day when pupils become involved in a variety of work related topics. Most departments offer a wide range of visits and speakers, extending and adding interest to the curriculum whilst giving pupils a greater understanding of the nature of citizenship and community. The school has satisfactory links with local church communities, with local clergy regularly taking assemblies. Pupils visit a variety of places of worship as part of their religious education.

65 Pupils are keen fundraisers and have in the past organised their own events to support various charities. Pupils offer to help those less fortunate than themselves, for example, a small group of Key Stage 4 pupils and a sixth form student performed a concert for a nearby school for disabled children. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained its very productive links with parents and the community.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

66 The new headteacher and the governing body are providing effective and visionary leadership and at the end of the first term of the headteacher's tenure they have clear strategies to secure the further improvement of the school. These include a recognition of the strengths of the current provision and of the issues that need to be tackled to secure greater consistency in the implementation of whole school policies and procedures. Governors are knowledgeable and play a full and appropriate role in school, fulfilling their role and responsibilities conscientiously. Although the school has a named governor to represent the interests of pupils with special educational need the role is underdeveloped. Therefore the governing body is not in receipt of regular feedback about special needs provision, budgetary implications and the successful implementation of the policy.

67 The role of senior and middle managers for planning and for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and departments has not been identified in earlier job descriptions. Consequently many do not fulfil this aspect of their work. Indeed the roles and responsibilities of senior managers are unclear and are not sufficiently focused on providing whole school leadership in key areas. There is good practice in terms of subject leadership in the humanities area, which includes history, geography and religious education and in physical education and science. Staff with departmental responsibilities in these areas have a vision of how their subject might develop in the future and know how this vision will be achieved. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good and effective leadership. This has resulted in the development of a well co-ordinated team approach in the department. Senior management involvement in special needs has changed this term and there is now greater familiarity with special educational needs issues.

68 Strategies are not in place to monitor the work of the school or of departments systematically although last year a start was made through the introduction of an approach to whole school monitoring and evaluation using a published scheme. A recently introduced system of departmental mentoring is beginning to be used to hold middle managers accountable for their work and to provide support for them in implementing any necessary changes. This does not include the monitoring and evaluation of the subject curriculum nor of teaching and learning and has therefore not picked up the issues relating to the progress made in lessons by different groups of pupils, particularly lower attainers, boys and pupils with special educational need. There is good practice emerging from the analysis of trends in test and examination data and in the use of this information to identify strategies for improvement. This practice is not consistent across departments. Although there has been very little internal monitoring and evaluation a number of subject and management reviews or audits by external consultants have provided a clear agenda and support for improvement.

69 The school has only recently begun to collect data on pupils systematically. The use of this data by teachers in their planning and to set targets is at an equally early stage of development. Although the school did set targets for 1999 without such an evidence base it exceeded them by five per cent, achieving its best ever results. The school has set its targets for GCSE results in the next two years based on the results in tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and on the results from a nationally recognised scheme that tests pupils' cognitive abilities. They have rightly built a challenge factor into these targets and know that the targets are minimum targets that with effort on the part of staff and pupils can be exceeded. The school has not set specific targets for improving attendance nor has it aggregated the targets for individual pupils into subject targets or whole school targets for the end of Key Stage 3.

70 The school is in the process of reviewing its aims and the senior management team and governors know that nearly all policies are well overdue for a review. All policies with the exception of the recently formulated Child Protection policy are undated and are not used to monitor practice in the school. This leads to inconsistencies in practice both within and across departments. For example there is a lack of clarity about how the rewards and sanctions policy should be used; there is variable practice in departments in terms of monitoring and parents' concerns about the inconsistency in the frequency of setting homework are justified. The special educational needs policy constructed in 1997 is in need of urgent review as it does not conform to statutory requirements in relation to discrimination on the grounds of disability. Although the management forum and the pastoral conference meet regularly there has been no whole school debate about the curriculum until recently. Many developments that are well-established in other schools are at a very early stage. For example, information and communications technology is not well used to support learning across the curriculum. Although the newly introduced system to monitor pupils' progress is proving successful it is still only in Years 9 to 11 and the house system whilst successful in itself does not easily support year on year monitoring.

71 The school has a two-year development plan running from July 1998 to April 2000. Of necessity the senior management team and governors constructed this plan with very little staff involvement. One of the most significant developments in the plan has been the introduction of a commercial programme for tracking pupils' progress. This is providing very helpful information to pupils, parents, tutors and teachers on how pupils are working towards their target levels in National Curriculum tests in Key Stage 3 and towards their target GCSE grades in Key Stage 4. Priorities for special educational needs, however, have not been formally included in the whole school development plan. There is good practice in terms of monitoring the implementation of the school development plan by a small committee of a governor, two senior managers and two teachers. Departments have not been required to produce departmental development plans although as a result of analysing test and examination results they have been asked to produce strategies for improvement that will readily form the basis of such departmental plans in the future. The governors have had to make hard financial decisions in order to work within the school's budget. These included the non-replacement of the deputy head when he became acting head both in terms of the position and in terms of a member of staff. As a result there is a high staff contact ratio. In order to implement improvements in information and communications technology they decided to use their financial reserves. The chair of the finance committee works effectively with the headteacher and the bursar to ensure that governors have sufficient information and options from which they can choose the best course of action.

72 There is a very positive ethos in the school. Although there are a number of whole school issues to tackle, standards particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form have improved as a result of committed and dedicated teachers helping pupils to achieve their academic potential. All departments but particularly science, art, history, geography and physical education work hard to provide an effective learning environment. There is a strong commitment to promoting good relationships and the school is a friendly place to be. However, there is currently inequality of access in the timetable. Pupils who choose to study a second language in Year 8 do not get access to the full art curriculum. In Year 9 pupil groupings are such that if a pupil is in the top set in one band they are in a group of 33. In the other band the size of the top set is 20. This situation is reversed for the bottom sets in these bands. This provides considerably unequal access to their teacher's time. Where there is little whole department planning such as in English and mathematics pupils in different groups get different experiences. This is a result of the lack of whole curriculum debate and established and agreed curriculum principles. Part of the governors' strategic plan is to address these issues.

73 There are a number of statutory requirements which are not met. There is inadequate provision for religious education in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and inadequate arrangements for the teaching and assessment of information and communications technology in Key Stage 4. The governors' annual report to parents does not report progress on the school's action plan from the previous inspection nor does it include information on the next elections for parent governors. It contains an information section

about special educational needs but does not evaluate the effects and successes of the policy. There is no information on admissions and access for pupils with disabilities. The school prospectus does not contain National Curriculum test results for the school or the national figures for comparison.

• **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

74 The match of the number of staff and their qualifications and experience to the needs of the curriculum is generally good although the physical education department does not have enough staff to provide a range of activities for pupils in the sixth form. There are insufficient qualified staff to support the introduction of GNVQ business at advanced level in September 2000. The school plans to rationalise staffing in the science department by appointing a new head of department in the near future. In science support staffing is currently insufficient to meet the needs of the large lower ability classes in Year 9. Part-time staff and non-specialists in the modern foreign languages department are not sufficiently well-qualified to teach the language which is hampering progress particularly in Key Stage 3. There are an appropriate number of teachers qualified to work with pupils with special educational needs. Their level of subject knowledge and expertise make a significant contribution to the progress of the pupils. This is also true of the learning support staff. Technicians in science and information communication technology are knowledgeable and helpful and make a valuable contribution to work in these departments. Administrative support staff, caretakers and cleaners, the catering service and lunchtime assistants all provide a good level of service to the school.

75 There is a good programme of support for new teachers and professional development priorities are now more closely linked to those highlighted in the school development plan. Despite this in-service training is poor in English, special educational needs, art, music and modern foreign languages, though courses have been well used to raise standards in GNVQ and in drama. Staff training courses are evaluated but the skills, knowledge and understanding gained are generally not well shared between colleagues afterwards. Systems for allocating funds for training have changed since the last inspection. The inset advisory group no longer exists and sometimes training courses are still attended without sufficient reference to whole school priorities. This leads to some inequity of access as certain departments have more training than others. Despite this the courses attended are more varied and relevant to the needs of pupils and teachers than at the time of the previous inspection. A reduction in the staff development budget this year of some 50 per cent has not led to discernible loss of in-service provision. The school's system of staff appraisal has collapsed and does not comply with current regulations.

76 The school is situated on an open campus shared with an excellent leisure centre that provides superb daytime facilities for physical education. The accommodation is sufficient and suitable to meet the needs of the majority of subjects. However, the library is often over-crowded at lunchtimes and has insufficient space and furniture to meet the needs of pupils. There is a shortage of space in music for two classes to be taught simultaneously in the department, which happens in four lessons each week. There is also a shortage of space in design technology when large groups are timetabled. While most lessons are satisfactorily grouped the dispersal and use of non-specialist rooms for modern languages limits the range and variety of activities available. Lessons in the art rooms are interrupted regularly as they also tend to function as corridors. The special educational needs department occupies a suite of rooms which have been attractively decorated by a display of pupils' work. Storage is satisfactory in all subjects and is often good. Accommodation both internally and externally is in good order following a programme of refurbishment. It is kept clean but an excessive amount of litter around the grounds detracts from the pleasant environment. The school has responded well to the previous report. Design technology has moved to different rooms and the noise problems in the music, geography and modern languages have been reduced by extensive carpeting and improved sound insulation. Acoustics in the new science laboratory, however, are unsatisfactory. The one-way system on staircases promotes safe movement and reduces incidents of boisterousness which could be dangerous. The lack of hard areas and the absence of games or activity markings outside limit play opportunities especially during wet weather.

77 Whilst there is no whole school policy for display displays in both classrooms and corridors are good and are used effectively in setting standards by using exemplar materials, providing information and in rewarding attainment through the use of 'Well Done' boards, for example.

78 Learning resources are generally sufficient and of good quality. The leisure centre resources are excellent for physical education lessons and the science department is also well-equipped. Resources in science, however, are less impressive in those lessons where large groups of pupils are taught. Despite there being adequate resources overall there are too few books in art, particularly when focusing on the knowledge and understanding required in (Attainment Target 2) and there are too few quality resources for use with pupils with special educational need. There is not enough software designed to support lower ability pupils available in particular. The ratio of computers to pupils in the school is high and higher than at the previous inspection with one computer to 15 pupils. There are not enough computers particularly when class sizes are above 30. The number of books in the library per pupil is low at 11 books per pupil although there is a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Books are particularly limited for design and technology, French and religious education. There is a shortage of textbooks in information and communications technology, design technology and art. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are poor in terms of range and quality. Many of the texts which support history and geography are unattractive and out of date. Fictional material is also limited and does not support the teaching programme. Learning resources beyond the school itself are well-used. Pupils are well-catered for in terms of visits abroad, field trips in geography and educational visits, for example, in English, drama, history and art.

The efficiency of the school

79 The school's status has changed since September 1999 from that of a grant-maintained school to a foundation school. This has resulted in a significant reduction in budget for the current year bringing it broadly in line with other LEA maintained schools. The school has taken steps to plan for this by commissioning external consultants to audit its performance and they have made recommendations for future planning. The governors have had to take difficult decisions about expenditure; departmental resource allowances have been halved and spending on buildings improvements and maintenance has been reduced by a third for the current year in order to work within the reduced budget. The net level of teacher staffing has been reduced over the last two years. Reserves have been used to provide increased and improved information communication technology facilities, which are still scarcely adequate. All of these represent sound policy decisions as the level of resourcing previously was generally good, accommodation was sufficient and in good repair and staffing cuts still allowed the same curriculum to be offered for the current year. At departmental levels planning has been short term as budgets have been allocated historically on a yearly basis and the decision to halve budgets this year has adversely affected the resourcing of the new and popular physical education A level course. However, a formula has now been produced to fund departments based on pupil/student contact periods together with a weighting favouring subjects such as science and design and technology, where essential use of equipment and consumables is high. This should allow middle managers to produce development plans for the medium and long term that identify both resources and the professional development needs of staff.

80 The overall use of teaching and support staff is unsatisfactory. Spending on teachers is low and the contact ratio is high. The pupil/teacher ratio is close to the national average. Whilst most departments are not seriously affected by this there are significant problems in modern foreign languages where teachers teach their second language rather than their first and in mathematics where most of the teachers also teach in other departments. The staffing for the personal and social education programme is done on the basis of who has time available. This has a negative impact on the quality of some lessons. Spending on special educational needs is costly compared to income and is not totally effective. Individual education plans for these pupils are inadequate in their production and

consequently in their use. There is insufficient support staff in lessons but the three full time staff in the department also teach in other subject areas. The inefficiencies in the use of staff are part of the problem caused by the lack of a whole curriculum debate and by a school day and a timetable designed to fulfil agreed curriculum principles. The timetable constraints and the lack of a whole school framework for special educational needs means that the expertise of special educational needs staff is not effectively used. The lack of a whole school perspective and strategic planning at governor level has impacted adversely on the satisfactory deployment of both staffing and financial resources. The latter is exemplified in the absence of adequate funding to support both the paired reading scheme and the life skills course. In Key Stage 3 academic groups in some subject areas are based on house groups. Since one house group is larger than the other two this results in some teaching groups that are too large. The lack of morning and afternoon breaks means that lesson time is lost travelling between rooms by pupil and students and by teachers who teach in more than one subject area. As the lessons are planned at 50 minutes this results in some lessons being too short.

81 Departments are well-resourced with good accommodation. Subjects make very effective use of both accommodation and resources especially in science where results in Key Stage 4 are above the national average. However, accommodation is so extensive for physical education that it is underused. Resources are not well used in mathematics where results in both key stages compare unfavourably with national averages and in modern foreign languages where results in Key Stage 3 are below the national average. The teaching of modern foreign languages to sixth formers in the sixth form area means that the head of department spends a large proportion of the week away from the languages area which limits the possibility for informal monitoring of the work of the department.

82 Financial control and school administration are good. Through its finance and premises committee the governing body now play a full part in decision making and is kept well informed of the needs of the school. Departmental heads along with all other budget holders receive a monthly statement indicating spending and reserves. The system of senior management mentoring of departmental heads is supporting the development of good practice in this area. Stocks are kept secure and record keeping is good. The most recent auditor's report confirmed that accounting procedures are good.

83 The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are similar to those found nationally in comprehensive schools although the attainment of the intake on entry is below average. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is in line with national averages and at the end of Key Stage 4 is better than similar schools. Pupils' make good progress during their time at the school although this could be better in Key Stage 3. Their attitude to their work and their behaviour is good. The quality of education provided, teaching and the use of resources and accommodation are good whilst the unit cost per pupil/student is slightly above average. As a result the school gives good value for money. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

84 Pupils' attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 3 is below average. This is reflected in the end of Key Stage 3 English attainment tests with pupils achieving standards below national averages and well below the standards in schools with a similar intake. As with previous years results are very much influenced by the significant number of pupils with special educational need, particularly boys. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly average with pupils achieving GCSE English Language and Literature results close to the national average. Girls outperform boys in both Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE examinations. Key Stage 3 results and GCSE results vary from year to year sometimes showing a difference between one year and the next of between 10 and 30 per cent up or down. This variation is not seen in the attainment of pupils when they join the school. Standards of attainment in the sixth form also vary from year to year with students in 1999 achieving standards in their English A-level examinations below the national average.

85 Whilst there are exceptions pupils in both Key Stages 3 and 4 display satisfactory speaking and listening skills when partaking in informal discussions with their friends. A number of pupils, however, usually below average ability boys, lack the ability to structure their ideas in an organised manner or make a formal presentation. Whilst many sixth formers are confident in their ability to express ideas and opinions about the texts they explore an equal number of students lack the confidence to express a personal opinion and are happy to accept the received opinion of their teachers. Standards of attainment in reading in both Key Stages 3 and 4 are broadly average with many pupils reading with clarity, fluency and interest. Pupils can read a range of English materials, poetry, plays and novels and most pupils read with clarity and understanding. Whilst the standards of reading in the sixth form are good some students lack the ability to analyse a text in a detailed critical and analytical manner. The standard of written work for average and above average pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Most pupils are able to write in a variety of styles and produce informative and imaginative responses to a range of novels and factual materials. Most pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose of the piece of work they are writing and the audience to whom it is addressed. Pupils make good use of a range of spelling, grammar and punctuation skills and handwriting and presentation are generally good. Standards of attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 4 are broadly average: a number of pupils write at length about the texts and the non-literary issues they explore as part of their GCSE studies. In contrast a significant number of below average boys rarely move beyond a simple knowledge of the characters and storyline in the plays and novels they read despite being encouraged by the teacher. Examination of students' work in the sixth form indicates that a number of higher attaining students are capable of producing work of real depth and quality.

86 The standard of attainment in English upon entry is below average. Those pupils who are average and above average then go on to make satisfactory progress in both key stages and the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 9, and below average ability pupils across Key Stage 3, make unsatisfactory progress. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their oral skills as they move across Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils are provided with regular opportunities to engage in speaking and listening activities. A good example of this was observed in Year 10 with pupils acting in role in a magistrate's court as the central character in the novel they were reading was put on trial for destruction of property. Another excellent example was observed, also in Year 10, with pupils taking on different roles from 'The Merchant of Venice' and being hot-seated as to the nature of their characters and their contribution to the play. Many students in the sixth form make progress in their ability to discuss texts in a mature and perceptive manner. Average and above average pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading skills in Key Stage 3. They are provided with the opportunity to explore a good range of reading materials including poetry, plays and prose. Pupils also explore a good

range of pre-twentieth poetry, prose and plays including the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare. Pupils in Year 7 develop good reading habits and visit the resources centre on a weekly basis. Access to the library during lesson time stops after Year 7. Examination of book loans from the resources centre indicate that many pupils do not carry on with the good reading habits developed in Year 7: book loans in Years 8 and 9 are a quarter of those in Year 7. The school does not carry out any formal procedures to assess pupils' reading ages.

87 Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress in their reading skills as they are introduced to a range of more complex poetry, plays and novels. Many make sound progress in their ability to use a range of critical and analytical skills. This likewise applies to many students in the sixth form as they develop sound linguistic and high order reading skills. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing skills as they move through Key Stage 3. Examination of pupils' work indicated that many pupils develop the ability to write in increased length and in more detail to a good range of writing activities. Pupils start to extend their knowledge of a range of English skills and are able to use these in a more demanding range of writing activities, including creative essays, newspaper reports and books reviews. Pupils write their own poems and plays and respond to a range of contemporary issues and concerns. Whilst pupils in Key Stage 3 are involved in occasional drafting activities it is generally copying a rough draft into 'best' rather than any kind of editing or improvement. Opportunities are missed to extend less able pupils by not providing them with the opportunity to develop and refine their work in terms of content, style and structure. The development of the work of higher attaining pupils is also limited by the insufficient opportunities for drafting and re-drafting. Sound progress in writing is made in Key Stage 4 as the demands of the GCSE syllabus encourages pupils to respond in a detailed manner to some demanding poems, plays and prose. Some above average ability pupils make good progress in their ability to compare and contrast issues both with individual texts and across genres. A number of below average pupils and pupils with special educational needs make limited progress as they respond to more complex writing activities and find it difficult to write in detail and at length. Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress as they move across the two years of their English studies.

88 Pupils and students take a positive approach to their work with many pupils demonstrating interest and enthusiasm for activities. Pupils are able to work both independently and collaboratively and have good working relationships with their teachers. A significant number of pupils in both Key Stage 3 and 4, usually below average ability boys, take a somewhat passive approach to their work and slow the pace of their own learning. This often means that they make limited progress in the time available and produce a minimum amount of work. Pupils with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to their work when they work in small groups in years 7 and 8.

89 The quality of teaching in the most lessons in Key Stage 3 is always at least satisfactory and sometimes good and better, whilst the quality of teaching in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form is good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and outcomes, which are, however, not made known to pupils. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and provide all pupils in both key stages and in the sixth form with a good range of challenging English activities. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils and have good classroom management skills. Those lessons deemed to be good or better often came about as a result of the teachers' own personal enthusiasm for the work in hand and their ability to create a motivating environment in which good learning could take place. Some good and very good teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 appears to have been influenced by teachers' knowledge of the national literacy hour used in primary schools. They introduce pupils to a text or an issue in an imaginative manner, provided challenging activities which match pupils' abilities and provide a plenary session at the end of the lesson to share, assess and celebrate what pupils had achieved in the lesson. Whilst all staff have copies and are aware of pupils' individual education plans in their classes this does not appear to influence their planning. This in particular applies to the mixed ability classes in Years 7 and 8 where all pupils were engaged in the same activity regardless of their ability. There is no additional support for pupils with special educational needs after Year 8. These issues are significant factors in the unsatisfactory progress made by below average attainers and pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 3. All lessons

observed during the period of the inspection were teacher-directed with limited opportunities for pupils to contribute to their own learning or to develop independent learning skills. There were no group work seen in Key Stages 3 and 4, although the department do include this in their planning. The department uses some good assessment and recording procedures with all pupils in Key Stage 3 producing two common assessed tasks each term but does not use this information to plan subsequent work. Homework is set regularly.

90 There are significant weaknesses in the management and organisation of the English department. The department does not have a whole school scheme of work providing for continuity and progress from primary schools and across all years and key stages including the sixth form. It also lacks a detailed department development plan addressing short, medium and long term development, success criteria, staffing and financial implications, areas of responsibility and dates for completion. Whilst the department analyses Key Stage 3 test and GCSE results and sets targets for improvement these targets are not monitored and evaluated. The progress of the department is limited by these weaknesses. Accommodation for the subject is good, with most teachers having their own classroom. There is good display work in classrooms and around the department. Despite cuts in capitation resources remain adequate. The school fulfils all requirements of the National Curriculum for English.

• **Mathematics**

• 91 Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are below those of all schools and well below those of similar schools. They are slightly better than those in English within the school and below those in science. Results have not improved in recent years and in 1999 the results when compared to those in similar schools are worse than for 1998. Attainment in lessons is below national standards. Higher attaining pupils are able to solve fractional algebraic equations whilst average attaining pupils use calculators to find approximate solutions of cubic equations and lower attaining pupils solve simple linear equations. Pupils with special educational needs are able to substitute numbers into simple linear equations. Although there are no significant difference in the percentages of boys and girls achieving expected levels at the end of Key Stage 3 there are proportionally more lower attaining boys than girls. There has been little improvement in Key Stage 3 results since the previous inspection.

92 At the end of Key Stage 4 the percentages of pupils achieving grades A*-C and grades A*-G are below those in all schools and below those in similar schools. Results have improved slightly in recent years but this is from a very low starting point and they have only shown an improvement since 1998 when GCSE results were well below those in similar schools. Eleven per cent of the year group were not entered for GCSE in 1999. This is higher than the national average. Results are below those in English and well below those in science. They are also below those of almost all other subjects in the school. Attainment in lessons is below national standards. Higher attaining pupils are able to understand circle theorems and use simultaneous equations in calculating vector components. However, the work done on vectors both in drawing the vectors and in solving simultaneous equations was teacher led to the extent that it was a rote process unrelated to any particular situation. In discussion with pupils it was apparent that many could think of no application for vectors and no attempt was made by the teacher to relate the questions to relevant contexts. Average attaining pupils are able to use probability trees to calculate probabilities of compound events. Although lower attaining pupils are able to order and use directed numbers and pupils with special educational needs are able to tally data into groups when given specific tasks to complete they often lack either the confidence or the ability to apply these skills to other situations. The attainment of boys in lessons is lower than that of girls.

93 In the sixth form results at GCE A level are broadly in line with national results but the number of students entering has declined steadily over recent years. The 1999 results, however represent a significant improvement over 1998 when results were well below national standards. This represents only a slight improvement since the last inspection. Currently the numbers following the course show

an increase in Year 13 and a further slight increase in Year 12. There are indications from interest shown by current Year 11 pupils that a further increase could be maintained. Overall results show no improvement since the last inspection.

94 Most pupils make satisfactory progress throughout both key stages but in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 the progress made by the very highest attainers, most low attainers and almost all pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. In the sixth form all students make good progress in both pure mathematics and mechanics. Skills that pupils have from Year 7 remain underdeveloped throughout both key stages. This is particularly true of lower attaining pupils, especially boys and those with special educational needs in both key stages but particularly in Key Stage 4, who become disillusioned because of a lack of both suitable work, individual support and appropriate teaching. The progress seen in a significant number of lessons was too slow and this is reflected in the unsatisfactory progress over time.

95 Relationships between pupils are good and between pupils and teachers are satisfactory or better. Pupils are conscientious, attempt questions readily both orally and written and are willing to persevere with difficult tasks. Their behaviour is almost always of a high standard when given challenging and appropriate work. They show respect for each other and their teachers. Pupils respect their own and the school's equipment. Work in exercise books is neat and the books themselves are well looked after. Coursework is well presented and pupils work well together when asked to share equipment and on other occasions. Pupils enter and leave rooms in an orderly fashion, have a positive attitude to learning and bring at least their own basic equipment. Where lessons lack a clear focus a small group of pupils, almost always boys, lose interest but are never particularly disruptive. Pupils rarely show initiative because there are only limited opportunities provided where they could show initiative. The attitude of sixth form students is excellent. They work very hard, show determination and responsibility and are extremely courteous and polite. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection for sixth form pupils.

96 The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in just under eight out of 10 lessons. Occasionally it is good but it is never very good. In Key Stage 3 teaching is usually satisfactory and occasionally it is good but in nearly a third of lessons it is either unsatisfactory or poor. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and occasionally it is good. Teaching in the sixth form is always satisfactory or better. Overall lessons are usually well planned but where the aims are not challenging or clearly outlined then progress is unsatisfactory. Teachers always insist on and obtain orderly entry to and from rooms and are themselves courteous to the pupils. Whilst expectations of behaviour are high teachers use only a limited range of strategies to deal with poor behaviour. Expectations of standards of achievement are not consistently high. Work with most groups and in particular low attaining groups usually lacks any relevance and too often there is insufficient challenge for them to make progress. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory or good but all teachers have a similar teaching style that they rarely adapt to useful effect. Whilst teachers have some rapport particularly with older more intelligent pupils there is very little enthusiasm generated in lessons. Teachers use time well with a good mixture of exposition and individual work but in a few lessons the exposition and examples for higher attaining pupils are tedious and uninspiring. Resources other than written texts are very underused apart from scientific calculators which are usually used to good effect. However, the use of scientific calculators with the lowest attaining pupils occasionally results in some confusion for those pupils. Teachers assess pupils' day to day progress in an unsystematic manner. Classwork is rarely marked by a number of teachers and whilst homework is almost always marked it is given inconsistently and then often only to complete work. Assessment is rarely used to inform teaching. In the worst lessons pupils repeat work previously covered, there is no everyday relevance apparent to them and there is no recognition in planning or teaching that individual pupils have individual needs. The better lessons all have a clear focus, present challenging work to most of the pupils and links with the real world are apparent. Overall the quality of teaching has deteriorated since the previous inspection.

97 There are significant weaknesses in the leadership and management of the department in that

individual teachers do not work as a team. The time allocation in Key Stage 4 is barely sufficient but in Key Stage 3 is more than that recommended. The department does not capitalise on this additional time in Key Stage 3 to secure the best progress in pupils' work and to ensure a smooth progression from Key Stage 2 that avoids repetition. Individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs are rarely interpreted for their implications for mathematics teaching. For example, a pupil who was required by their individual education plan to sit with their right ear to the centre of the room sat with their left ear to the centre of the room and was not asked to move. In a minority of lessons some pupils, in particular girls, sometimes suffer from a lack of the teachers' time when teachers are too involved in managing the behaviour of boys who are not working. The department uses information communication technology to enhance learning but this is not productive if work on computers is not related directly to clearly identified mathematical concepts. Although administrative and routine tasks are well done the department lacks the positive leadership and firm management needed to overcome gaps and inconsistencies in departmental practice. There are no coherent systems for marking in general or for the use and setting of homework. Limited use is made of resources and different teaching strategies. The department is also severely lacking in providing work to meet individual needs. There is a lack of stimulating work, a departmental numeracy strategy, enthusiasm, team spirit, team discipline and sharing of practice. These are having a detrimental effect on standards and until they are addressed standards of achievement will not rise appreciably.

• Science

98 By the end of Key Stage 3 the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 5 and the higher level 6 is similar to those found nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 5 was in line with results in similar school and for those achieving the higher level 6 was better than in similar schools. Results in 1999 are better than in 1998. During the previous three years attainment has been close to national averages, varying in line with national trends. The 1998 comparisons indicate that boys did not perform as well as girls but both groups were close to the national average. This has improved in the 1999 results. Results show improvement since the last inspection.

99 By the end of Key Stage 4 the 1999 the number of pupils achieving the higher grades A-C and those achieving the grades A-E is above average. When compared with similar schools results are well above average. The school has sustained above average results compared with national averages. The 1998 comparisons for all GCSE's indicate that girls did not perform as well as boys but both groups were close to national average. Although there is still a difference between boys and girls it is not as great as in 1998. GCSE examination results show good improvement since the last inspection.

100 Standards in the sixth form are good. The 1999 results show the percentage of pupils reaching the higher A-C's has improved since 1998. The school's own analysis shows a good percentage improvement over a period of four years although the number of pupils taking advanced level GCSE examinations has reduced.

101 Attainment in lessons at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with standards expected nationally and is above average at the end of Key Stage 4. Standards are good in the sixth form. Pupils in higher sets generally reach good standards in using language to explain scientific ideas although lower attaining pupils find this more difficult. Pupils reach appropriate standards in the use of number but do not reach high enough standards in the use of information communication technology to record and analyse information. Pupils in the highest set reach good standards in Year 9 in distinguishing between pollination and fertilisation of flowering plants. They improve standards of literacy by constructing a story profile to explain the processes to a scientific audience using correct terminology and showing the stages through good illustrations. Pupils in the lowest attaining set achieved very successful outcomes during a practical experiment to collapse a can, beginning to understand the change in pressure inside the can if the air is extracted. In Year 11 the highest set reach good standards in understanding how light reflects from a plane surface. They recall scientific terminology well giving clear and accurate

answers to questions and writing to a good standard. Pupils in a lower set reach average standards in understanding global warming and begin to write a successful newspaper account drawing effective scientific explanations. The lowest set reaches appropriate standards in conducting an experiment to determine patterns of chemical change in a series of metals, discussing findings successfully and preparing them well for the award of the Certificate of Achievement. In the sixth form Year 13 use good background knowledge of atomic structure to produce fact files of X rays, explaining them verbally and with good standards of written presentation. In chemistry all use equipment competently during a practical assessment, following correct procedures and generally arriving at accurate results through careful measurement. Scrutiny of work shows biology pupils have a good understanding of animal and plant anatomy and physiology, interpreting information to discuss environmental issues well.

102 Progress is very good throughout the school. Pupils make good or very good progress in lessons, which sustains very good progress over time. Lower attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, make good progress when work is carefully reviewed at the end of lessons to help them remember what they have achieved. Written support materials are adapted for pupils in different sets but the materials do not always help pupils learn because they are not designed to meet the specific needs of some pupils on the register of special educational need. Pupils make significant gains in knowledge and understanding because scientific ideas are well presented by teachers and always supported by very good practical experimentation or high quality visual material. Regular assessment of progress supports pupils very well. In understanding the investigation process of planning, obtaining, recording and evaluating evidence pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and very good progress in Key Stage 4. Pupils make very good progress in the sixth form because practical and theoretical lessons are meticulously planned and work assessed frequently. In Key Stage 3 Year 7 pupils make very good progress in grasping the idea of electrostatic charge as the loss of electrons by carrying out a series of stimulating and challenging experiments. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 make excellent gains in knowledge of chemical rates of reaction rising to the challenge of interpreting information from graphs they have recorded. In Key Stage 4 a good demonstration using the Van de Graff generator enables lower attaining pupils in Year 10 to gain a good appreciation of human and natural effects of electron transfer. In the sixth form Year 12 chemistry pupils build upon good earlier experience to establish trends in electro-chemistry through successful practical experience, establishing the reactivity series and relating ionic equations to the displacement reactions. In biology all pupils make good gains in knowledge of the sequence of chemical reactions at a nerve synapse. They make very good progress in using appropriate biochemical language finding it difficult initially but speaking and writing fluently by the end of the lesson.

103 Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave very well in lessons. They respond very well to lively teaching, manage practical resources very well and participate fully. Lower attaining pupils usually support each other well, talking about ideas when they find them difficult. Older pupils develop very good concentration, particularly those in the higher sets. They enjoy very good relationships with teachers, steadily increasing in maturity, although a very small number of boys in Year 10 show a lack of regard for others in trying to slow the pace of the lesson. In the sixth form pupils are serious minded and hard working, showing they appreciate the relevance of different teaching approaches. They show a strong desire to succeed, working effectively to improve and relating to adults very well. All pupils respond very well to fulfilling safety procedures.

104 Teaching is very good overall. Over two thirds of lessons were good or better and almost half were very good. One lesson was unsatisfactory because insufficient scientific information was used to support numerical calculations. Teaching is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The strengths of teaching lie in the high expectations teachers have that pupils will gain very good subject knowledge. Teachers convey information through very good presentation and demonstration encouraging pupils to explore scientific ideas for themselves through practical investigation. At best teachers are imaginative, preparing materials and practical experiments very well to motivate pupils. When a strong emphasis is placed on language encouraging pupils to enter into the role of scientists or scientific authors pupils make very good progress in writing. For example, pupils in

Year 11 produce imaginative writing for the effects of global warming on their own town. Relationships with pupils are very good. Teachers praise and encourage the enthusiasm of younger pupils and recognise the increasing maturity of older pupils. Planning is good. Lesson objectives are clear and teachers explain them carefully to pupils. They are adjusted well for pupils in different sets but planning for pupils with special educational needs does not always reflect their personal targets. Teachers organise work well making very good use of time and resources and are well-supported by competent technicians. Lessons usually have a good pace with plenty of variety. For example, a physics lesson for pupils in Year 7 included quick and impressive demonstrations, two distinctive practical experiences for pupils and presentation of well presented information located in three areas of the room. Excellent use of practical experiences promotes very good personal development of pupils as they take responsibility for equipment and sometimes make their own decisions about what is needed. For example, it is expected of a lower set in Year 9 that they will organise an investigation based on the problem they need to solve deciding which materials will be most suitable. Learning assistants support pupils with special educational needs very well but this level of support is not often available. Teachers assess pupils' progress well during most lessons but do not always require pupils to speak formally about what they have learned. In satisfactory lessons learning is not effectively reviewed because the end of the lesson is too rushed. Teachers generally make very good use of assessment. The new system in Key Stage 3 is well structured but is not yet used to help pupils set good targets for improving knowledge and skills. Teachers set homework regularly expecting pupils to complete homework diaries.

105 The department is managed well during a period of interim joint leadership by three subject co-ordinators. The departmental action plan shows a significant commitment to achieving excellence in pupils' performance. Schemes have been successfully updated and are translated well into lesson planning. The department has improved continuity through each key stage but does not have a map to show teachers which skills are to be incorporated year by year. Consequently there are gaps in pupils' skills, particularly in information communication technology. Good progress has been made in monitoring the work in pupils' books but there is very little monitoring of progress or teaching through lesson observation. The timetable in Year 9 results in an in-balance of numbers in the highest and lowest sets in each band and this raises questions of equity in terms of pupils' experiences of the curriculum.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

106 At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils achieve to expectations and beyond. The proportion of pupils who gained grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations in 1998 was just above the national average with girls outperforming boys at the higher grades. Recent results at grades A* to C are in line with the national average. In the sixth form with the exception of 1998 examination results have been regularly above average in the higher grades.

107 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is good and is sometimes better than the standards expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of observational recording. They recognise the work of established artists and their styles such as their tromp l'oeil denim shirts based on the work of Peter Blake. They explore the art of other cultures which they regularly incorporate and develop in their imaginative practical work such Chinese calligraphy or Mexican-influenced masks. They are good at using different media to record formal observational drawings and are able to design imaginatively in the style of well-known movements as in their pop art postage stamp designs. They record images accurately in line and tone from direct observation and create good-quality imaginative and expressive imagery in clay. Sketchbook work is satisfactory. Within the large groups low attainers and pupils with special educational needs show attainment lower than expected for this age range. Boys and girls attain equally. Some pupils in Year 9 miss out on the broad range of experiences offered through studying a second modern foreign language, and fail to attain to a level comparable with their fellow pupils. All pupils are able to use computers to generate creative art but this expertise is only just beginning to be developed in key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

108 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 continues to be good. Pupils acquire and demonstrate skills, new techniques and understanding to a level comparable to expectation for their age. They are able to sustain a chosen study from conception to realisation such as large-scale screenprints derived from plant forms. They develop good craft skills such as modelling in clay and casting body parts in plaster as a direct result of regular good-quality teacher demonstration. They understand how to use paint to represent a wide range of qualities from watery-sky treatment to thick impasto textural surface-treatment. Pupils with special educational needs show attainment comparable with the national expectation due to effective teacher intervention clearly specifying what needs to be done. Attainment of both boys and girls is comparable in the lessons observed.

109 Attainment at the end of the sixth form is very good. Students produce work of both breadth and depth, combining good craft skills with imaginative flair. They show very good spatial concepts when working on exquisite large-scale paper and plaster masks. These are done with energy and successfully develop their study of artists' work seen in galleries or from secondary sources. They show great strength in sensitive formal observational painting and drawing which is often at a stage associated with a higher level. Their incorporation of raised-relief work in their paintings is often exceptional. Colour is used with sensitivity. Students' ability to regularly review, modify and refine their work as it progresses is a strength that leads to very good accomplishment. Moral issues are reflected well in allegorical sculpture at this stage.

110 Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. They arrive at the school with varied levels of previous experience. There is some effective Key Stage 3 liaison including sixth form participation but formal links are not well established. They are introduced to a very wide range of visual and tactile experiences in a balanced curriculum. They make good progress at Key Stage 3 and improve their craft and design skills equally in both two and three-dimensional work although their understanding of a range of artists' work is limited by poor book stock and absence of contemporary learning material. The work at Key Stage 3 provides a sound practical foundation for Key Stage 4 where pupils continue to make good progress particularly when introduced to new media such as

printmaking. Independent study skills develop well as pupils move through the school. Progress in the sixth form is very good and is notable for the significant gain in both skill and wider understanding and appreciation of art. Opportunities to work with artists-in-residence are few. Pupils of all levels of attainment make progress at a satisfactory rate. When writing or talking about art they express well-considered opinions and judgements and use an appropriate art vocabulary aided by key words displayed in studios and the use of word-search games at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 and 5 the good practice of annotation alongside artwork helps pupils to reflect on and formalise their ideas. Opportunities for group discussion are few and have little impact.

111 Attitudes and behaviour are good. This is a direct result of the enthusiasm which teachers bring to their work and the high standards they set. Pupils respond well to the challenges in the work set for them. Pupils organise themselves effectively, support each other, share ideas and show respect for each other's work. The quantity and quality of coursework generally reveals a very positive attitude to the subject. Homework is satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 and makes a very positive impact in the sixth form.

112 All teaching is consistently good and often very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and very good technical and craft skills that are evident in frequent practical demonstrations to groups and individuals working in all activities. Teachers are particularly good at motivating pupils, setting high expectations and enthusing pupils to produce imaginative visual ideas such as when Key Stage 3 pupils explore tactile qualities of working with clay and sprig moulds. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and students in the sixth form are treated as independent artists and supported very well in developing their ideas. Students at A level have a mature working relationship with their teachers valuing and responding well to the high-quality guidance they receive. Assessment is used effectively to raise pupils' awareness of what to do in order to progress further. Marking and recording of attainment is done well with useful comments provided to push pupils on even further. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Pupils of all levels of attainment are given equal consideration in a caring and supportive workplace. The learning environment is visually stimulating with many rich examples of different media. The effect is morale boosting and, consolidated by the extensive display of good-quality artwork around the school, serves to promote inventiveness and high standards.

113 The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Documentation is very well considered and supported by good clear worksheets. Since the last inspection there has been progress in introducing Key Stage 3 pupils to the creative use of computers and use of the Internet to research artists' work is being introduced in the studios.

Design and Technology

114 At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment overall is in line with national expectations although in lessons where there is a high number of special educational needs pupils attainment is below that seen in other similar schools. The teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 were in line with national averages in all the different material areas. There were no pupils who gained higher than level 6. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in both lessons and in examination results is well below the national average. A few higher attainers in food technology and graphics produce detailed and quality work which is above the national average but generally their work and the work of average attainers' are below national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs have problems presenting their design ideas effectively and their limited research does not support the good development of workable ideas. GCSE results in the past three years have shown considerable improvement from 12 per cent gaining grades A* - C in 1997 to 36 per cent in 1999. Approximately 40 per cent of pupils in food technology and graphics gained grades A* - C but results in resistant material were well below national average. Girls do better than boys in food and graphics whilst boys are slightly better than girls at resistant materials. The results are below the school and national averages. Of the 19 lower attainers who followed a design and technology certificate course in food and graphics and took the exam one gained a distinction, one a merit and 15 gained a pass grade. Standards are improving at both key stages and pupils are developing the ability to use and apply the process of designing in a variety of

material areas. A Year 9 top ability textile group are producing very detailed analysis of their research on the needs for storage of small items and this analysis has been beneficial in the development of a variety of interesting ideas. Year 7 pupils have a good knowledge of different types of forces and are able to apply their understanding in construction work. Pupils with special educational needs often show good verbal and practical understanding but their ability to record their findings accurately is weak. Basic skills are good in food and in resistant materials where accuracy of measurement is given a high priority, supporting the development of pupils' numeracy skills.. Where attainment is good pupils of higher ability involve themselves in investigation work and act upon the information gathered. Previous staffing problems and the shortage of teaching time have affected attainment at Key Stage 4 especially in resistant materials but the current teaching techniques are successfully addressing this problem. The two A Level students are achieving in line with their capabilities and in line with national expectations.

115 Attainment on entry is below national expectations. Progress across Key Stage 3 in most areas of design and technology is almost always appropriate to pupils' prior attainment and is occasionally good but has been affected by a shortage of teaching time and a lack of teaching expertise. Progress in lessons is better at Key Stage 3 when lessons are well paced and teachers make high demands. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is affected by the lack of material specially designed to extend or support them. When special educational needs pupils have a member of staff to support them in a lesson their progress is satisfactory, especially in presenting their design ideas and increasing their confidence in practical activities. Progress at Key Stage 4 is slow in some areas because pupils in Key Stage 3 in the past have not been effectively taught basic skills and knowledge. This is particularly the case in two Year 11 resistant material groups who have made poor progress through Year 10 with teachers who have now left the school. Progress at post-16 is satisfactory with the students having completed their minor projects and are currently realising their designs for their major project.

116 Many pupils show a keen interest in lessons. They respond well to questions and give detailed answers. Pupils of all abilities mainly sustain their interest and show good powers of concentration. Minor disruptions do occur when some pupils find the task too difficult or the pace of the lesson is too slow. Most behave well and work well in pairs or group activities. Special educational needs pupils often co-operate and involve themselves in group work productively. Some project work is particularly well presented especially in food and graphics at Key Stage 4. However, some pupils do not take enough pride with their presentation and organisation of their folders. Most pupils at all key stages are enthusiastic about their work and some can articulate their ideas in great detail. Year 11 pupils show a mature and confident approach to presenting work done in groups to the class and the listeners appreciate listening to each other's ideas. Some boys, particularly at Key Stage 4, have no sense of urgency about completing design and practical work and do not work to set deadlines. The post-16 students often work independently on their project work and are self reliant and mature in their approach to learning. In lessons pupils are pleasant and co-operative with just a few displaying challenging behaviour, often pupils with special educational needs who do not have any support.

117 Teaching is always satisfactory or better and is occasionally very good. However the teaching is currently not effective enough in helping pupils overcome their lack of progress in Key Stage 3. Where teaching was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 the pace of the lesson was slow and there was a lack of appropriate support material, especially for pupils with learning difficulties. Overall teachers' knowledge and understanding are good and the pupils now benefit from a wide range of expertise and experiences, especially at Key Stage 3. Most lessons are well managed with a brisk pace set in good and very good lessons. Although classroom management is generally good some weaker management prevents lessons from flowing smoothly. The activities are generally relevant and interesting, though references to industrial practices are scarce. Some lessons rely heavily on the completion of work sheets that sometimes restricted pupils' creative talents. Resources are well used, though the reduction in capitation for consumables has restricted the use of a wide range of materials, particularly in resistant materials and textiles. Homework is not always set on a regular basis at Key Stage 3 but is marked with appropriate supportive comments, though pupils didn't always have a clear indication as to where

improvements could be made. A newly introduced assessment scheme covering all material areas is proving to be of benefit in assessing the progress of pupils, especially in Year 9. All staff have good relationships with the pupils and are very supportive and give positive praise for work well done.

118 The curriculum at both key stages now has adequate time. Nearly all pupils have relevant experiences in five areas of design and technology but because of the lack of teacher time some pupils in Year 7 do not get food technology. Until recently not all pupils at Key Stage 3 were able to do textiles. Although a new assessment procedure has been introduced to cover all areas moderation across them has not yet taken place. Analysis of exam results at Key Stage 4 has been done and strategies for improvement recorded but there is no evidence to suggest that these strategies have yet been implemented in a formal manner. There have been successful links with industry through the Neighbourhood Engineers' Scheme, for example, the Engineering Day for Year 7 pupils, and graphics pupils have been successful in designing posters..

119 Improvements have been made since the last inspection in the management of the department. Various material areas are now within one building and changes in staffing have brought in new ideas. New schemes of work have recently been introduced and cover the National Curriculum. However, these schemes of work have yet to be evaluated for their effect on standards. The lack of communication and the fact that there is no whole team approach to planning and evaluating are having a detrimental effect on progress and on the future vision for the department. Although the head of department has done some observation of classroom activities there are no strategies in place that would benefit all staff in the sharing of good practice and ideas.

120 Since the previous inspection standards have improved in all material areas. The A Level take-up is still low. Attainment at Key Stage 3 is almost in line with national expectations for higher achievers but is still below at Key Stage 4. Teaching has improved considerably and the curriculum is better planned. Sketching and presentation of work is improving but the organisational skills of lower attaining and special educational needs pupils are still weak. Assessment procedures are consistent across all material areas.

Drama

1 Whilst it was only possible to observe a limited number of lessons during the period of the inspection indications are that pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 are good and above that normally expected of pupils of a similar age. Standards of attainment as reflected in the 1999 GCSE examinations were below national averages.

2 Pupils in Key Stage 3 are provided with the opportunity to engage in a good range of improvisations and scripted work and develop an appropriate range of drama skills. This was observed in Year 7 as they explored the issue of conflict in a domestic situation. Pupils improvise their work, take notes and refine and revisit them until they arrive at a finished piece of self-scripted work. In contrast the pupils in Year 8 explore the opening scene of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' as they focus on tension and the ability to create atmosphere through the use of voice and body language. In Key Stage 4 pupils continue to consolidate and extend their skills as they learn to apply what they have learned in Key Stage 3 to more demanding pieces of work in response to the GCSE syllabus. A good example of this was observed in Year 10 with pupils putting together an imaginative and entertaining piece of work about young people going on a holiday abroad for the first time.

123 Pupils arrive in school with a limited knowledge of drama as a discrete art form. They then go on to make good progress across both key stages. They develop good mime and movement skills and come to appreciate the importance of tension and pace, the appropriate uses of voice and body language. They plan their work well, evaluate and revise it and learn how to sustain a character in role.

124 All pupils approach their work in a positive manner and demonstrate a real enthusiasm for the subject. They give their work their full attention and work well with each other. They listen to and respect the opinions of other and come to a consensus of opinion when working towards a finished piece of work. Pupils take pride in their completed improvisations and scripted work and are keen to show them to their teacher and friends. An active and imaginative working environment existed in all lessons observed.

125 The quality of teaching in all lessons observed is good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning outcomes made known to the pupils. The teacher of the subject demonstrates good subject knowledge of drama and a personal enthusiasm for the work he is involved in. Lessons are well paced and rigorous. The pupils are provided with the opportunity to show and celebrate their work at the end of the lesson. Within a comparatively short time sound documentation with an effective scheme of work and appropriate documentation for the assessment of pupils' work has been put in place. All work takes place in a large open drama studio although there are no black-out facilities or suitable portable lighting equipment. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to take part in a drama club and contribute to school productions.

122 **Geography**

126 By Year 9 the attainment of pupils in geography is in line with that found nationally. Girls' attainment is significantly higher than that of boys. Both these judgements are supported by the school's unmoderated teacher assessment. Pupils have a sound knowledge of locations and a working geographical vocabulary. They are acquiring a sound understanding of geographical patterns and processes. Pupils make good use of their case studies in understanding how people live in particular places as, for example, in their work on whether the Aswan dam in Egypt should have been built. When studying acid rain or renewable energy or conflicts in land use pupils are developing a sound understanding of environmental issues. In their structured research work pupils show they can extract information from a range of sources and present that information effectively using a variety of geographical skills. They can write good extended descriptions, as in the work comparing Tokyo with rural Kyushu. In all years pupils are engaged in appropriate geographical enquiry work in the field, both locally investigating the microclimate of the school, or further afield measuring river flow near Louth or looking at coastal processes at Flamborough Head. There is less evidence of attainment at the higher levels of the National Curriculum where pupils would explain geographical processes, analyse information or test simple hypotheses. Pupils are beginning to use the Internet well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in acquiring and consolidating their knowledge, skills and understanding. Least progress is made by the lower and higher attaining boys.

127 By Year 11 pupils' attainment is in line with that found nationally. Currently 53.4 per cent of pupils gain GCSE grades A*-C. Boys' attainment is below national averages and few gain the highest grades. Pupils taking the Certificate of Achievement course achieve appropriately. Pupils show a sound knowledge and understanding of geographical patterns, processes and ideas. Many write well on population issues. Their work on coastal protection and management shows good competency in a range of skills. They have acquired an appropriate sense of place through case study work and understand such geographical issues as environmental loss in the Aral Sea area and population control in China. There are some good examples of fieldwork studies in Castleton and course work investigations evaluating alternative sites for a shop in Lincoln. Overall there is good descriptive work but many pupils use a language of description rather than a language of explanation and reason. There is less evidence of boys producing the type of work needed to gain the highest GCSE grades. Most pupils including those with special educational needs are making good progress. Higher prior attaining boys make least progress.

128 Attainment of students in the sixth form is at and above that found nationally. Consistently for the last three years all students entered for the advanced level examination have gained grades A-E. Currently the higher grades are under-represented. Students' files show that their ecosystem work has a good scientific basis, their study of land use conflicts arises out of detailed case studies (as in the "flow country" work) and that their extended writing is sound. Early in Year 12 students acquire good note taking skills. Some personal studies and decision-making exercises do not have a clearly defined focus.

129 Across the school pupils' response and learning is good. There is a purposeful atmosphere in all the classes seen. Pupils show an interest in the work and concentrate well on the task in hand. By Year 9 they have developed some initiative in their research work but do not take sufficient responsibility for their learning through increasingly independent, structured enquiry work.

130 The teaching of geography across the school is always satisfactory, predominantly good and often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well planned, managed and organised. Teachers provide a range of activities using interesting resources, including field work in each year, and computers. Marking of work and feedback to pupils is good. In a Year 10 class the teacher led the lower prior attaining pupils to appreciate features about the Thar desert area of India from an atlas. A clear question was identified - "What difference has irrigation made in north west India?" Using an organisational grid to collect relevant information the pupils saw a video case study. The grid then acted as a supportive writing frame with some additional selected vocabulary provided. The lesson was well matched to pupils' prior attainment and moved at good pace. In a Year 8 mixed ability class the teacher extended previous knowledge of tectonic processes by asking pupils to access information about Mount Etna from a particular website on the Internet. A worksheet with clear instructions and some demanding geographical questions for this appropriately challenging task was provided. Pupils showed much enthusiasm and worked well. The activity helped all to make good progress both in consolidating their information communication technology skills and extending their geographical understanding. Although these lessons were well matched to the needs of pupils there is not enough challenge provided, particularly for the higher prior attaining boys, in order to develop their higher order analytical and thinking skills.

131 The humanities area is extremely well led by an able and experienced head of department who offers high quality and effective management. He leads a team of teachers who have a commitment to high standards and continuing improvement. The department offers a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched by fieldwork opportunities, research and increasingly the use of computers. There is comprehensive documentation and all courses are planned in detail. Pupils' attainment is rigorously and accurately assessed through common tasks with agreed mark schemes, which increasingly is giving helpful information to pupils about their National Curriculum level attainment, the criteria by which they are assessed and the ways they could improve. The department has a rigorous approach to examination and assessment information, analysing it at all levels, identifying points for attention and implementing strategies for improvement. Although the department does not have a formal development plan the processes and mechanisms for change are well embedded. The department has both reviewed its own work and welcomed external reviews and acted quickly on any findings. There is good monitoring of both pupils work and the work of teachers, although monitoring through classroom observation is not yet in place. Good displays provide an attractive learning environment in all areas.

132 With such effective management and a team of mainly specialist teachers the department continues to make good progress. Since the last inspection it has maintained its examination success and the high quality of its teaching. Its assessment practice has much improved.

122 **History**

133 By Year 9 the attainment of pupils in history is in line with that found nationally. Girls' attainment is significantly higher than that of boys. Both these judgements are supported by the

school's unmoderated teacher assessment. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the events, people and situations studied together with an appropriate historical vocabulary. They show a good understanding of the idea of cause, as in their work on the reasons for the English Civil War and the idea of change, as in the work on the growth of English towns between 1750-1900. They show sound comprehension of historical sources, including films, and by Year 9 are beginning to analyse written sources with help. They are beginning to appreciate different historical interpretations, as in their work on Oliver Cromwell answering the question "Why did Parliament win the civil War?" Pupils engage in sound research. They can use information to write in an extended way about the slave trade and the abolition of slavery or about the social life of the Sioux Indians. There is less evidence of the use of timelines to develop pupils' sense of chronology. Whilst pupils can write well in a descriptive manner, there is not sufficient use of historical detail and there are fewer examples of extended writing which offer a reasoned response to historical questions. Overall most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. Least progress is made by the lower and higher attaining boys.

134 By Year 11 pupil attainment is slightly below that found nationally. Currently 43 per cent of pupils gain GCSE grades A*-C. This is an improving figure but there is still a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Also, the percentage of boys and girls gaining grade G is higher than the national average. The percentage of boys gaining the higher grades is much lower than the national average. Over the two-year course pupils acquire a sound level of knowledge and understanding. They appreciate how the farming landscape was changed by enclosure. They appreciate the range of causes leading to the repeal of the Corn laws. Pupils have a sound understanding of what different sources, written, statistical, graphical and cartoons can tell a historian. In Year 10 lower prior attaining pupils are beginning to develop a structured approach to such sources but they are still not analysing them in sufficient depth. Pupils can make notes, research and present information well. Much of their work is a response to historical questions which encourages sound extended writing. Whilst pupils can write full descriptions there is a lack of historical detail such as dates and not enough identification of differential effects and sufficient explanation and reasoning. Whilst the coursework on local Lincoln transport encourages good historical skills, the interpretation section does not make sufficient demands of pupils to analyse different historical interpretations on the benefits or otherwise of the new link as well as present their own view. Pupils including those with special educational need, are making sound progress. Least progress is made by lower prior attaining girls and boys and by the higher prior attaining boys.

135 The attainment of students in the sixth form is above that found nationally. The percentage of students gaining grade A-E at advanced level has been consistently above the national average but the higher grades A/B have been consistently under-represented. Currently students show a good level of historical knowledge and understanding in their oral work and presentations. Some write complex personal studies using appropriate specialist language. All are well able to make full notes.

136 Across the school pupils' response to learning is good. There was an atmosphere of learning in all the classes seen. Pupils show an interest in the work offered and concentrate well on the task in hand. By Year 9 they have developed some initiative in their research work but not enough skills for more independent, structured historical enquiry.

137 The teaching of history across the school is always good and often very good. The team of specialist historians show good subject knowledge, plan interesting, focussed, well structured lessons and tasks and organise and manage their classes well. Teachers have high expectations, ensure that lessons move at a brisk pace and match work to student prior attainment. In a mixed Year 8 class the teacher stimulated whole class discussion of a simple cartoon-sketch showing the victories of the opposing forces in the English civil war. Pupils demonstrated much knowledge of relevant terms and information. He then led them in a structured manner to see what a written source (the memory of a soldier) had to say about the battle of Naseby in 1645. Pupils followed the pattern set as they wrote similar analyses for two other sources. The lesson offered good challenge to all pupils. In two Year 11

classes teachers appropriately helped pupils to structure and develop their course work investigation by good whole class emphasis on the criteria by which their work would be assessed and by good support offered to individuals. In three different sixth form lessons students were challenged to offer presentations on difficult sixteenth century sources, to compare Zwingli with Luther using specialist language and text and to debate whether the French wars of the sixteenth century were indeed only wars of religion. All offered organisational and intellectual challenges to which most pupils responded well. Although teachers provide a good range of teaching and learning activities, little use is made of learning through discussion in Key Stages 3 and 4 and nor is the use of information communication technology well developed. Work is increasingly being matched to pupils' attainment but does not yet support the learning of the lower prior attainers in Key Stage 4 nor does it challenge boys in both key stages in order to develop their higher order thinking skills.

138 The team of teachers is very well led by the experienced head of the humanities and by the teacher in charge of the subject. All are experienced specialists who have a commitment to high standards and continuing improvement. The department offers a broad and balanced history curriculum that is enriched by opportunities for library research and site visits in the rich historical environment of Lincoln. Courses are well planned and documentation is full and detailed. Pupils' attainment is rigorously and accurately assessed through common tasks with agreed level response mark schemes. Increasingly this is giving helpful information to pupils about their National Curriculum level attainment, the criteria by which they are assessed and the ways they could improve. There is rigorous analysis of all assessment information, good predictions and pupils' progress is well monitored. Good displays provide an attractive learning environment in all areas.

139 Since the last inspection attainment has improved in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form and been maintained in Key Stage 4. The teaching has continued to be of high quality. Assessment practice has much improved.

122 **Information Technology**

140 Overall attainment is below national standards at both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 3 the teachers' assessments in 1998 were well below national averages and no pupil gained level 5. In 1999 24 per cent gained level 5 and one per cent gained level 6. This is a considerable improvement but still well below national averages. In discrete information technology lessons at Key Stage 3 attainment is in line with national expectations. At Key Stage 4 attainment is below national averages for most pupils observed during the inspection. There are no formal examinations taken at Key Stage 4. From the scrutiny of work and in the lessons observed in the sixth form attainment is in line with national averages in the GNVQ and general studies courses. Within the discrete information technology lessons in Year 7, 10 and 11 most pupils are developing competent keyboard skills. They are able to access software to devise databases, to record information from questionnaires and they use 'Coral draw' to design badges, combining pictures and text. They use the CD-ROM and Internet for research purposes. Good use of information technology skills are seen in Year 7 control work in design and technology and in using the Internet in geography to collect data on volcanoes in Year 8. Use of information technology in mathematics, music and modern foreign languages, for example, is less effective because the software is not always appropriate or as advanced. Competence in Year 10 and 11 is generally less well developed because of the lack of experiences at Key Stage 3. Boys' skills are slightly better than those of girls. Pupils with special educational needs are often well below national standards, especially at Key Stage 4. However, there are some who are quite proficient. At both key stages a few pupils submit work of a high standard for assessment that has been done either at lunchtime or at home.

141 Attainment on entry is below that found nationally. Progress across Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory partly because of the lack of time given to the discrete courses and the pupils' lack of experience in other subjects in Years 8 and 9. At Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory given the limited experience in Key Stage 3. Where progress is good pupils have the competence and confidence to

access software, work diligently on their tasks and complete work accurately having consolidated previous learning. Lower attainers and those with special educational needs often make slow progress; they have difficulty using the toolbar and have weaker keyboard skills. Progress is satisfactory or better in the sixth form. Students are able to use spreadsheets, questionnaires and databases and word process job specifications as part of GNVQ coursework. Students taking A-Level courses use the Internet to collect information for use within their subject areas. The general studies course encourages the use of the resource to find information for their coursework.

142 Pupils of all ages are positive and enthusiastic, with a few exceptions who admit to being reluctant to use computers. The facilities are fully used at lunchtime for a variety of academic activities. Pupils of all abilities and ages show good powers of concentration and persevere until tasks are complete. Several work effectively on their own and many often help and encourage each other. There are some, however, who lack confidence, especially lower attainers and pupils with special educational need. Some girls rely heavily on teacher support. The pupils generally enjoy the work and take pride in their success. The facilities are highly valued and respected. Classroom behaviour is nearly always good with very few pupils not working. Pupils value the support they get from class teachers, support teachers and sixth form students.

143 Teaching is generally good in lessons where the subject is specifically taught. Subject teachers' competence varies in other subjects. In lessons where teaching is good teachers are secure in their use of information communication technology and the management and planning are effective and detailed. When teaching is less than satisfactory clear guidelines were not given to the class and pupils are not sufficiently challenged or kept on task. In good lessons the pace of the lesson is brisk and realistic targets and deadlines are set. Individual support is generally good. When the information communication technology co-ordinator is used to support other teachers in lessons there is insufficient liaison in planning. Support material is generally good and informative but some pupils with special educational needs have problems reading the technical words. The procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are good. They are very detailed and thorough and progress can be monitored easily by the charts in individual folders. Moderation of work and assessment of information communication technology capability are not yet developed in other subjects.

144 The National Curriculum is covered at Key Stage 3, but statutory requirements are not fully met at Key Stage 4. Pupils do not receive their full entitlement. Assessment procedures are in place at Key Stage 3 and 4. A detailed audit has been done in the last twelve months of the professional development needs of the staff and these needs are currently being addressed. The level of staff competence has increased. Successful courses have been run by the overall information communication technology manager and the co-ordinator on using the Internet, word processing, e-mail, desk-top publishing and the use of a commercially produced system for managing pupil and school information. The area now benefits from a full time systems manager and some technician support. The co-ordinator is currently planning work in conjunction with other subjects but the assessment is not fully integrated into the planning. A draft development plan for the next three years is currently being developed in consultation with all staff. A steering committee has recently been established whereby departments can assess their needs and contribute to the future developments of information communication technology. There are no staff with formal information technology qualifications but this does not have any adverse affects. Accommodation is cramped and used to capacity. The recently installed equipment is a great improvement in terms of both the number of computers and their quality and pupils in Key Stage 3 have already shown improvements in their attainment and progress. However, some software does not always allow pupils to develop higher order skills and is not always of great benefit in enhancing subject knowledge.

145 Since the last inspection audits of coverage and staff competence have been completed; more structure has been included in the planning of cross-curricular work and staff capabilities have been addressed. More challenging and interesting tasks have been planned within the discrete course and although in the previous report resources were reported as being good the changes in technology have

meant that hardware needed replacing and in 1998 this was done.

Modern foreign languages

146 By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils achieve below national expectations. Listening skills are well developed. All pupils understand and respond appropriately to the extensive use of the language being learnt. They identify the main points from extracts of speech at near normal speed; higher attainers with little hesitation or repetition, lower attainers requiring more guidance and repetition to identify detail. Higher attainers interpret more complex instructions and some unfamiliar language and many have a good understanding of the way the languages work. Most pupils are less secure in speaking where they are hesitant and lack confidence. Most respond appropriately but briefly when asked direct questions, lower attainers with some prompting. Pronunciation is often approximate due to pupils' dependence upon written prompts. Many pupils are not sufficiently independent in the language to cope successfully with gathering information for themselves. Reading and writing skills are satisfactory. Many lower attaining pupils and some higher attaining pupils write following a model or by filling in gaps but are less secure when left to their own devices.

147 The percentage of candidates achieving A*-C and A*-G grades at GCSE is well above national averages in both French and German. In both languages the percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades has increased significantly since the last inspection. The percentage of candidates achieving A*-G grades has increased significantly in French with all candidates entered now achieving at least a grade G. All candidates entered for German achieve a grade F or above. Average points scores in both languages compare favourably with national averages. The department's targeting of C/D borderline candidates has had a significant effect in raising standards. Girls achieve better than boys in French but boys' results are still above national averages. All pupils entered for Certificate of Achievement accreditation gained at least a pass, almost all gained merits or distinctions in 1999 and almost half gained distinctions. This is a significant improvement on 1998 results. Listening skills are well developed and pupils respond appropriately to questions and instructions in French and German. They describe events in the present, past and future. Lower attainers use set phrases and substitute words to change meaning, higher attainers use their knowledge of the languages to adapt phrases to suit their own purposes. They describe events in some detail and use a good range of vocabulary and structures. This is not always sufficiently developed in French since some higher attaining pupils are not secure in their use of the language and achieve below national averages in speaking and writing. Most pupils identify the main points and specific detail from short texts and extracts of speech, lower attainers requiring some guidance.

148 The percentage of candidates achieving A-B grades at A level in French and German were well below the national averages in 1999. The percentage of candidates achieving A-E grades in French is above national averages but well below in German. The average points score in French is below national figures and well below in German in 1999. In 1998 it was below in French and well below in German. However, the numbers entered for examination in 1999 are low and make comparisons with national figures difficult. However, candidates achieved above predictions based on GCSE results in French and in line with predictions in German. Listening and reading skills are well developed; students identify detail and the main points from a variety of texts including narrative, articles and interviews and broadcasts in both languages. However they are less confident in speaking and mixed skill activities and in using the languages for real purposes, for example, in debate or in presenting their views. They write notes and prepare oral work but they are hesitant in doing so and lack independence in using the languages for themselves.

149 Rates of progress are satisfactory overall. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, is good overall in Key Stage 4 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Progress is best where pupils are given the opportunity to practise new language and structures orally before they meet the written form, where they are encouraged to practise informally and are given the opportunity to put their skills to the test in real situations. Progress is slow for some average and higher attaining pupils in French in both Key Stages 3 and 4 because of inappropriate tasks set, for example, copying notes and vocabulary as an

objective of the lesson rather than as a reinforcement or extension of learning. Progress is hampered for many lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs when resources used to complete tasks are not sufficiently adapted to allow them to complete tasks successfully. In the sixth form valuable guidance, effective monitoring and teacher intervention are effective in increasing progress in the small groups involved but progress is too slow in developing independence in the languages due to the limited variety of activities provided and insufficient opportunity to test the languages in realistic situations.

150 Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning, are well motivated and concerned to do well. In Key Stages 3 and 4 most are eager to contribute to oral work in class and concentrate on tasks set. When teacher led activities are lengthy or when resources are not adequately adapted to suit their needs some pupils become frustrated and lose concentration and interest. A small number of pupils have negative attitudes towards their learning in Key Stage 3 and show little interest or commitment towards their work. Pupils settle quickly in most lessons, are well behaved and co-operative and have good relationships with their teachers. They listen attentively to the teacher and each other and work productively in small groups and pairs. A small number of pupils studying French in Key Stage 3 are poorly behaved, have poor relationships with the teacher and each other and try to disrupt lessons. When pupils are given the opportunity to use their initiative and work independently they respond well.

151 The quality of teaching is satisfactory or better in eight out of every 10 lessons seen and good or better in over half the lessons. The quality of teaching amongst specialist teachers is good overall. The most effective teaching was seen in Key Stage 4 in both languages. However a third of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or poor in French in Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers have a good command of the languages they teach and a good knowledge of the languages that enables them to plan lessons effectively so that pupils build steadily on previous learning. Some non-specialist teaching and temporary cover has an adverse effect on the range and appropriateness of activities and on expectations and planning. Teachers' expectations vary and this is exacerbated by the lack of detailed guidance for non-specialists and temporary teachers in schemes of work. Planning for continuity and progression is very good: teachers provide well-sequenced and appropriate activities to ensure that pupils build successfully on previous learning. Planning for individual progress, however, is not effective enough in raising attainment. In the more effective lessons teachers use a good variety of strategies to promote learning, for example, effective questioning to elicit oral responses, but the lack of knowledge of the current methods of teaching languages results in a limited range of strategies used overall. Control and management of pupils, which is very effective in most lessons, together with the good relationships between pupils and their teachers create a supportive and purposeful atmosphere. In some instances in Key Stages 3 and 4 poor control has an adverse effect on progress for the classes involved. In the more effective lessons activities are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils are given the opportunity to practise informally and use the languages to gather information. This is effective in increasing their confidence and competence in the languages. In some lessons the teacher dominates activities which decreases opportunities for pupils to participate and slows the pace. Teachers good use of resources such as overhead transparencies and flashcards to clarify meaning enables pupils to identify patterns in the languages and develop reading skills. Information communication technology is used to good effect in developing pupils' writing and presentation skills. In the more effective lessons teachers monitor pupils' progress effectively and intervene sensitively to ensure understanding. Homework is well used in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form to reinforce and extend learning but in Key Stage 3 it is often very limited in terms of quantity and challenge.

152 Statutory requirements are met and the department is committed to offering the opportunity to study both French and German in Key Stage 3 to as many pupils as possible. As a result, a significant number of pupils opt to continue with German in Key Stage 4. The department offers trips to France for all pupils and to Germany for the sixth form. Visits to France and Germany and a well-established exchange with a school in France considerably enhance the curriculum for pupils involved. Development planning is short term and does not clearly identify how progress towards targets is to be evaluated or monitored. Timetabling arrangements lead to inefficiencies in a number of areas. Some classes at all stages of learning are taught in a variety of non-specialist rooms dispersed around school often at a distance from the language area. This severely limits the range and variety of activities provided for pupils and makes access to specialist equipment and resources very difficult. These

arrangements also result in the use of non-specialist teachers in Year 7 and Year 9 affecting the provision and attainment of those classes. Allocation of A level classes in both French and German has a negative impact upon staff development since most teachers do not experience teaching the full age range. The provision for sixth form students is unsatisfactory since teaching strategies and the voice they experience are limited in most instances to one teacher. For much of the time the head of department is at a distance from the language area. As a result monitoring and support for teaching and learning in the department are unsatisfactory, particularly in view of the fact that there is no second in department and several classes are taught by non specialists or temporary staff.

153 Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. Standards achieved in GCSE examinations have improved significantly. However, the department has become isolated from current ways of teaching. Timetabling and staffing arrangements are considerably slowing the department's progress towards achieving consistently high standards in teaching and learning.

122 Music

154 At the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of pupils is slightly below that expected for their ages, though a small number of pupils fall well below that level. Where attainment is higher a small number of pupils compose using a wide range of instruments with sensitivity and expression. In lessons where teaching is weakest, however, pupils work at a level more closely allied to standards expected in Key Stage 2. In Year 7 most pupils can compose music using given structures, creating some musical variety. When working in groups some pupils listen carefully to one another, responding well to subtle changes in mood and tempo. Compositions are often quite simple, however, and reflect insufficient rigour and challenge. By Year 9 most pupils can manipulate chords manually and can explore a range of musical techniques, for example, in blues style. A small number can improvise with confidence using the jazz/blues scale. Standards in lessons overall are slightly below those expected nationally. Singing, particularly part-singing, is under-developed. Following a dip in attainment since the last inspection standards in Key Stage 4 have risen considerably and GCSE results have returned to close to but still slightly below the national average. GCSE groups are commendably large and reflect the full ability range, including the highest grades. In the sixth form attainment is generally in line with or above expectations for the courses taught and sixth form work is a strength of the department. Most students have gained B grade passes at A or AS level in the last three years.

155 Progress across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is steady rather than rapid. In the sixth form, however, students progress well. Progress in lessons in both key stages is usually satisfactory, though in Years 7 and 8 a significant number of pupils make worse progress than expected, especially when two music classes are timetabled at the same time and progress is impeded by noise from the other classroom. Pupils with special educational needs and some higher attaining pupils progress less well than expected, especially in Key Stage 3, as schemes of work tend not to take the needs of individual pupils into account. The setting of work that is insufficiently challenging sometimes impedes progress in lessons. In Year 7, for example, progress in certain lessons is limited when teaching lacks a clear focus. In Year 8 pupils compose music using "The Seasons" as a starting point. Here progress is sometimes restricted when work is too simplistic. In Year 9 work on the blues is occasionally too reliant on automatic keyboard functions. This limits progress because many pupils are capable of producing more musical responses to this work.

156 Pupils' response in lessons is generally good in Key Stages 3 and 4, but behaviour in a significant number of lessons is unsatisfactory and in one lesson it was very poor. Response is consistently good in the sixth form and very good in aspects of extra-curricular provision. Where teaching is satisfactory pupils co-operate well in group activities and take responsibility for their own learning. Enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in the high numbers of students who opt to take music at GCSE level.

157 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in eight out of 10 lessons and unsatisfactory in two out of 10, mostly in Key Stage 3. Some lessons in Year 7 lack clear objectives and there is poor classroom management. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, however, and in the sixth form it is very good. In Key Stage 3, however, expectations tend to be too low; and the use of technology for expressive musical work in performing and composing is still under-developed in both key stages. An insufficient range of teaching and learning styles are used. Whilst a range of assessment procedures are employed within the department the information gathered is not precise enough to inform planning and the skills, knowledge and understanding of individual pupils are insufficiently well monitored.

158 Planning has improved, though plans for Key Stage 4 still lack the necessary detail. Reporting requirements at the end of Key Stage 3 are not sufficiently well linked to the wording of end of key stage descriptors. As recommended in the previous report instruments from a broader cultural base have been purchased and these have had a positive impact on attainment. Although access to music technology has improved access to MIDI equipment is still poor and accommodation is still inadequate. This restricts access to the full curriculum for those groups and impacts adversely on attainment. The provision of additional storage space has helped in the day-to-day running of the department. Tuition is available on woodwind, brass, guitars, strings and percussion at the school. Here standards are generally good. Extra-curricular activities are varied and of good quality. The band, for example, plays a wide-ranging repertoire, including jazz pieces and music from shows. Here pupils perform expressively and accurately with obvious enthusiasm. Progress since the last inspection has been good in terms of departmental management, though development planning is not sufficiently specific with measurable targets, deadlines and success criteria. The monitoring of teaching and learning in the department is at an early stage. This is a developing department with significant strengths and a lot of potential.

122 **Physical Education**

159 Attainment in physical education is broadly in line with standards expected nationally by the end of Key Stage 3 but below the national average for GCSE results at the end of Key Stage 4. The first pupils to study at A-level are now in Year 12 and their attainment is in line with what would be expected at this point in the course. Attainment in lessons is satisfactory and is often good. Pupils' performance is particularly good in areas where teaching allows them demonstrate their full potential. In swimming pupils are able to swim confidently and independently using a variety of well-produced strokes. In competitive team games pupils extend skills and principles learnt in earlier years and perform confidently and with increasing skill. Standards of attainment in lessons are below expectations when inadequate attention is paid to the evaluation of performance. There is little significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, except in the first cohort of GCSE pupils last year where the only A* grades were achieved by girls.

160 Pupils' progress in physical education is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. This includes pupils of all attainment levels and those with special educational needs. All pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. Schemes of work show clear progression in all activities. Low attainers are encouraged to make faster progress by the use of adapted equipment such as low bounce balls. Higher attaining pupils make good progress where work is pitched at a challenging level, for example, pupils demonstrate good stroke production in badminton in a competitive situation.

161 The response of pupils is keen and enthusiastic at all key stages. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they show respect and courtesy to each other and to teachers. Relationships between the staff and pupils show mutual respect. A well-controlled level of humour is present and this, combined with pupils' desire to learn, enables them to make faster progress and to develop higher levels of performance than would be expected. This is a strength of the department.

162 The teaching of physical education is satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons. It is good or better in six out of 10 lessons and is very good or excellent in nearly a quarter of lessons. It is

particularly good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve including those of lower ability. In the sixth form pupils on the A-level course make exceptional progress in their knowledge and understanding of human movement. A variety of methods ensure that teaching is interesting and stimulating; the use of demonstration is particularly effective in improving performance. Pupil behaviour is managed well and the ethos of the department brings out good manners and sportsmanship. Resources are of good quality and these are effectively used. Sometimes it takes rather a long time for sufficient equipment to be available at the beginning of a lesson and this reduces the amount of teaching time available.

163 The curriculum for physical education is good and is enhanced by the superb facilities available. The National Curriculum is fully covered at Key Stage 3 but at Key Stage 4 the depth of study and the variety of activities are restricted by the time allowed for physical education. The syllabuses for GCSE at Key Stage 4 and for A-level in the sixth form are fully covered. In the sixth form the range of activities offered is limited by the staffing allocation with Year 7 timetabled at the same time. All pupils follow the same scheme of work and pupils of lower ability or those with special educational needs are fully included. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, however the numbers participating are low and the number of activities offered at the end of the school day could be extended. Procedures for assessment have recently been revised, as required by the previous inspection. Time must now be built into an already busy schedule to ensure that they are kept up to date. Assessment is a strong feature in lessons where teachers and pupils are skilled at pointing out ways to improve performance both immediately and in future lessons. Physical education makes a positive contribution to the moral and social development of pupils.

164 The leadership and management of the department are good and provide strong direction for the work of the team, which, in turn, promotes pupils' attainment and progress. The lack of a development plan for the department means that staff development and financial planning are not clearly mapped out and there are no systems for the monitoring and evaluation of the standard of teaching and learning. The physical education department deploys staff efficiently and has a clear vision for the future.

122 Religious Education

165 Attainment in religious education by the end of Year 9 is in line with the expectations of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus. At the end of Key Stage 4 66 per cent of pupils entered for GCSE in 1999 achieved grades A*-C and all gained grades within the A*-G range. There was an improvement in the number gaining higher grades. These results are above the national average and amongst the highest in the school when compared with other subjects. Results for A level in 1999 show that 71.4 per cent achieved A to C grades, an improvement on results in 1997 and 1998. All students entered achieved A - E grades. The numbers of students opting for religious education, however, have fallen and at present there is no current A level course for Year 12.

166 Pupils in Key Stage 3 have a sound knowledge of Christianity and of some aspects of other religions, including Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism, for instance, where they can identify features of places of worship. They show a sound understanding of concepts such as symbolism. They express well their own responses to questions of meaning and purpose, shown in their writing of their own creed for life, and are perceptive when discussing feelings and experiences, evident when learning about the reasons for behaviour in the story of Nicky Cruz. Some pupils in Key Stage 3, including higher and lower attainers and some with special educational needs make slower progress when work is not sufficiently suited to their ability, either by not having enough challenge or by being too difficult. Pupils who choose to follow a GCSE course show good attainment and progress by the end of Year 11. They demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding built up over the two years of the course of Christianity and Islam. They develop and can use with accuracy a good specialist vocabulary, shown particularly in their work following their visit to local churches when they can identify features of the building and explain the significance for Christians. Pupils have good skills in empathy work but their

skills of research and evaluation from a wider range of resources are not well-developed. Attainment for students who take A Level is good and they make good progress over the two years of the course. They have good factual knowledge of Islam and Christianity, good understanding of often-difficult concepts within these religions and use specialist terms with confidence. For example, in both oral and written work they show good understanding of Sufism in Islam and the concept of apostle in Christianity. Their ability to make links between areas of learning is good and enables them to use evidence well to support their arguments and to ask searching and pertinent questions.

167 Behaviour is good in class, especially at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, where pupils and students listen well to teachers and work quietly. There is some unsatisfactory behaviour in Years 8 and 9 when pupils are restless and do not settle readily to work. Generally they respond particularly well when writing about their own ideas in creative ways such as their own personal creed for life. Some pupils, on occasions, complete tasks of comprehension work without being fully engaged with the topic. This is often linked with a lack of challenge in teaching and the lack of opportunity for personal study and research.

168 Teaching is good or better in six out of 10 lessons and in only one lesson was teaching unsatisfactory. Teachers have good specialist knowledge that is especially effective at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Preparation is thorough and expectations high. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are used and pupils are managed well. This was exemplified in a Year 10 lesson on the features of a mosque. Very clear sharing of the expected learning with pupils at the beginning of the lesson set a very clear framework for the lesson. Good questioning of students about their previous learning on the subject extended and reinforced new learning during reading from the class text. A very appropriate activity simulating interviews with Muslims as a role-play was managed very well with encouragement of quiet pupils. There is, however, in many lessons insufficient variety in activities and resources to support individual pupil's learning, both for the more able pupils and for those with special educational needs. There are also too few opportunities, especially in Key Stage 3 for pupils to find information for themselves and to work in groups. This allows pupils to take a sometimes passive approach to their work.

169 Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and students through consideration of, and reflection on, a variety of beliefs and practices, and visits to various places of worship. The department is well led jointly by the head of humanities and the teacher responsible for the subject. Although a broad and balanced curriculum is in place for pupils in Key Stage 3 the school does not yet provide religious education for all pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school, therefore, does not yet meet statutory requirements in this respect, which is an issue outstanding from the previous inspection.

122 Vocational Education

170 Attainment of sixth form students at the end of the GNVQ intermediate business course and the GNVQ intermediate health and social care course are both in line with national results. Since September 1999 the GNVQ health and social care course has been replaced by the BTEC first diploma in caring which operates in partnership with the North Lincolnshire College. It was felt that this would best meet the needs of the students. The quality of students' planning of assignments is variable and is particularly weak when timescales are not clearly identified. Some folders show well planned and structured assignments and this has led to interesting and well-researched final pieces of work. There is little difference in the work of boys and girls, although girls' folders are better presented.

171 Progress in lessons is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. Lower attaining students show good progress in the core skills of number and information communication technology where they are taught by specialist staff. Progress is slower in the core skill of communication, delivered within the programme of study. Students are more able to talk about aspects of the vocational area than they are to write about them and this is a weakness in portfolio work. There are many instances of poor spelling and sentence construction shown both in the draft and final assessments. However, considering that

many students did not achieve 5 or more grades A* -C and often have lower grade passes in English and mathematics progress is good in these core skills over the one year course.

172 Students' response on both courses is good. They think about their work and the standards they achieve and identify what needs to be done next. Behaviour is generally good and students work well with each other to produce their portfolios. Some portfolios are well-presented and carefully put together but others are poorly presented and are not cross-referenced. Independent research is a major part of the courses and it is sometimes not clear how much work is teacher directed and how much is produced working in pairs or as a team. Students show perseverance with core skills designed to bring them up to the required level, working co-operatively and helping each other when necessary.

173 Relationships between staff and students are good and staff show a sympathetic and appropriate manner in encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning. Staff listen carefully to students' ideas during lessons and ask well structured questions to take these ideas further. A good example of this was in a lesson looking at consumer issues. Ideas were carefully drawn together and related to the Sale of Goods Act in order to place the knowledge in a vocational context.

174 The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory to good. Staff provide individual support which helps those who have a lower starting point, for example in information communication technology, to progress. A well-managed activity using a scanner allowed all students to learn how to use it and individual help was offered to students experiencing difficulties. However, there is no system for monitoring the quality of teaching and there are only limited opportunities to share good practice between staff. Schemes of work are determined by the examining board and are clearly set out for students, including deadlines for the completion of their assignments. Assignments and homework are not always handed in on time and systems that are in place to try and improve this situation are not always used. Assessment of students' work is regularly carried out although marking is not specific in a number of cases. This means that students are not clear about what they need to do in order to improve their work to achieve higher grades. Helpful and specific verbal comments in lessons enable all students to improve their work and but this approach is not reflected in comments on students' work and nor is it consistently part of all lessons.

175 The leadership and management of both courses are satisfactory and are supported by the external verifier's reports. All targets for improvement set by the external verifier have been met, with the exception of a dedicated base for both courses. The department does not have a central base in which to store resources and students' work, offer information communication technology facilities and to give the department a clear identity of its own. Teachers are effectively deployed but lack the specialist input from staff trained in business education. The lack of a development plan means that staff development and future planning for expanding the courses are not clearly defined.

176 The progression from both courses onto GNVQ advanced business, NVQ caring courses or subject related employment is good. This demonstrates that both courses are effective and appropriate for the students. However, the school relies on outside providers to offer this progression. The school plans to offer its own GNVQ advanced business but does not have sufficient experienced and qualified staff to do this.

122 PART C: INSPECTION DATA

122 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

177 The team of 13 inspectors observed 210 lessons, spending a total of 186.2 hours observing and talking to pupils and looking at their work. Discussions were held with six pupils from each year in Key Stages 3 and 4 and with six sixth form students. They were asked about different aspects of their life at the school including their use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills across the curriculum and how their work was marked.

178 Subject inspectors had discussions with heads of subjects, including the GNVQ co-ordinator. Discussions were held with staff who had responsibility for attendance, records and reporting, the pastoral system, finance and professional development. Governors were involved in a number of the meetings, including in some meetings with heads of department where governors had links.

179 A sample of work from Years 7, 9, 11 and the sixth form spanning the ability range was looked at in detail. At the beginning the subject co-ordinator was present so that s(he) could relate the pupils' work to the schemes of work and their previous experiences. The vocational education inspector looked at the work of GNVQ pupils and students, joined by the appropriate subject inspector and inspectors looking at the key skills. Work of GNVQ students was also looked at during lessons.

180 The lay inspector tracked a higher attaining Year 11 pupil and the registered inspector tracked a pupil with special educational needs on the first day of the inspection. Twenty-seven registration sessions were attended at the start of the morning and four assemblies. A range of extra curricular activities in music and a mathematics club and a netball practice were observed.

122 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

122 **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1045	29	231	194

122 **Teachers and classes**

122 **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	55
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.73

122 **Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:	13
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	336

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	80.5
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	24
	KS4	22
	KS5	14

122 **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total Income	2,644,337
Total Expenditure	2,785,169
Expenditure per pupil	2,757.59
Balance brought forward from previous year	167,003
Balance carried forward to next year	26,171

Number of questionnaires sent out: 973
 Number of questionnaires returned: 475

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	16	64	14	6	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	37	56	4	3	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	51	21	6	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	17	67	10	5	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	27	61	6	5	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	31	61	5	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	59	6	3	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24	58	7	9	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	21	59	14	5	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	19	57	14	9	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	34	50	7	5	4

122 Other issues raised by parents

Many comments praised staff and the school for its care and concern for individual pupils. A number of parents of Year 7 pupils expressed great satisfaction in the way their children had been welcomed into the school. Two parents expressed concern about the lack of text books and four were concerned that pupils' complaints were not always taken seriously and investigated. Two parents indicated that they would like more notice of the timings of sports fixtures to enable them to watch. Ten responses commented on homework but varied from there being too much to some pupils having too little.