

INSPECTION REPORT

BECKFOOT GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Bingley

LEA area: Bradford

Unique Reference Number: 107386

Inspection Number: 183839

Headteacher: Mr D Horn

Reporting inspector: Dr D A W Biltcliffe
1025

Dates of inspection: 15 – 19 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	13 to19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Robinson
Date of previous inspection:	14 th December 1994

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Mrs J W Biltcliffe, Lay Inspector		Attendance
Mr H Meggitt, Lay Inspector		Partnership with parents and the community Accommodation
Mr H Heller	Special educational needs Personal and social education English as an additional language	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Leadership and management
Mr A F Barringer	English, drama	
Mr R Heath	Mathematics	Efficiency of the school
Mr C P Hewson	Science	Staffing
Mrs W Burke	Art	
Mrs S M Mansell	Design and technology Information technology	
Mr B M Greasley	Geography	Curriculum
Ms C Evers	History	Learning resources
Mr A E Nutton	Modern foreign languages	
Dr J D Ward	Music	Assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr R D Gaunt	Physical education	
Miss M A Warner	Religious education	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The school is very well led and managed. Senior managers believe strongly in a policy of continuous improvement.

- .Teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection and is now good, overall.
- .The school's pastoral care of pupils is comprehensive, friendly and effective.
- .The school offers a good range of subjects, courses and extracurricular activities.
- .Pupils with a variety of special educational needs are well taught and carefully integrated into all school life.
- .Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and effective.
- .The school is held in high regard by its pupils and by parents.
- .This is a good school for pupils to learn and grow up in.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Pupils' overall attainment and progress can improve further throughout the school, especially in mathematics, science, art and design and technology.
- II. The quality of teaching is not monitored sufficiently, with enough emphasis on pupils' achievements and progress.
- III. Pupils' spiritual development is inadequately promoted.
- IV. A small range of statutory requirements is not met.

Beckfoot is a sound school with significant strengths. It has considerably more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during 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 broadly satisfactory progress since 1994. It has improved to at least a satisfactory level most of the major weaknesses identified then. For example:

- . Managers in the school evaluate their effectiveness satisfactorily, overall and systematically.
- . The further training of staff is well planned and monitored.
- . Teaching has improved considerably and is now good, overall.
- . The weakness previously identified in art has been improved (although more remains to be done).
- . The short daily tutorial time is used constructively.

Weaknesses identified in 1994 do, however, remain:

- . Despite the school's best efforts, the length of the teaching week still falls a little short of the 25 hours nationally recommended at Key Stage 4. The school has firm plans to reach this target at its reorganisation in September 2000.

- The school still does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. It does not teach RE sufficiently in Year 11 (to be remedied from September 2000) or in the sixth form.
- These weaknesses contribute to pupils' spiritual development still not being promoted satisfactorily – in contrast to good (and sometimes very good) provision in other aspects of pupils' personal development.

Pupils' standard of attainment in GCSE examinations is about the same as at the last inspection. Overall, however, since 1994 the school has shown a broadly satisfactory capacity to improve its practice. Its new management has clearly identified the need to secure further improvement and has well-focused plans to do so. This school has the required quality of leadership, management and determination to make good progress in the future.

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	
			<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
			<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
			<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
			<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
			<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>
Key Stage 3	C	C		
GCSE examinations	C	C		
A/AS – levels	C	-		

Attainment at the end of Year 11 is broadly average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. Attainment is above average in the sixth form in art and geography, but below average at the end of Key Stage 4 in design and technology and in modern foreign languages.

Results of the national tests in Year 9 in 1999 (as measured by pupils' average points score) were average. Results in the three core subjects varied. English results were highest: they were broadly in line both with the national average and with schools of a similar kind (as measured solely by the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals). Results in mathematics were below average on both these criteria. The results in science were below the national average and well below the average for schools of a similar kind.

Results in GCSE were in line with the national average in 1995 for the proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-C, dropped noticeably below average in 1996 and 1997 and have risen to a point a little below average in 1998 and 1999. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G was average in 1999. The overall standard of achievement in 1999 (as measured by "points scores") was close to the national average and broadly similar to that achieved in schools of a similar character. Pupils in this school had their best results in GCSE in 1998 relative to other subjects [later national comparative data not available] in English language and literature, mathematics, geography, history and French. Science, art, design and technology, music and drama were the weakest subjects. Girls did a

little better than boys in 1998, but much better in 1997 and 1999. There is evidence of slight slippage in overall attainment between the ends of Years 9 and 11.

At GCE Advanced level pupils' average points scores have usually been around the national average. The school's best results (a good average level) were in 1998 and those in 1999 were not far behind. Pass rates are average. Pupils' progress from their earlier GCSE studies was sound overall in 1999, but almost a third made insufficient progress. Results on vocational courses were average in 1998 and 1999, except for a low performance at Intermediate level in 1999. Pupils' rate of progress through the school depends largely on the quality of teaching they receive.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Year 9	Satisfactory	English, mathematics, history, information technology (IT), music, physical education (PE), religious education (RE).	Science, art, design and technology, geography, modern foreign languages.
Years 10-11	Good	English, mathematics, science, art, geography, PE, RE.	Design and technology, history, IT, modern foreign languages.
Sixth form	Good	Most subjects.	Mathematics, IT.
English	Good	/	/
Mathematics	Good	/	/

Teaching was at least satisfactory, overall, in 97 per cent of lessons seen, good in 51 per cent and very good (or better) in 15 per cent of those seen. Three per cent of lessons had unsatisfactory teaching (in contrast to 26 per cent at the last inspection). In well-taught lessons pupils make good progress through a brisk pace of teaching, rigorous work, searching questions and thorough discussions. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by little intellectual challenge, unclear explanations and a slow pace of work.

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	Good, with few exceptions, both in class and around the school. A very orderly community. Pupils noticeably calm and cooperative outside lessons too.
Attendance	A little below average until recently. Good this term. School vigilant for truancy. Punctuality for school and lessons good – an improvement since the last inspection.
Ethos*	Most pupils are interested in their work, concentrate and try hard. The school has an open style and trusts pupils, who accept responsibility well. Quality of relationships high – a notable strength.
Leadership and management	Clear-sighted and effective senior management under inspiration of new headteacher. Governing body well organised. Middle management good, overall. School's leadership determined to improve school further. On the right track.
Curriculum	Good breadth and balance of traditional and vocational subjects, but insufficient information technology and religious education. Post-16 consortium further extends school's range. Low teaching week soon to change. Gaps in careers education.
Pupils with special educational needs	School has strong and effective provision, including that for pupils with physical difficulties. Pupils make good progress. Energetic leadership. A strength.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good, overall. Pupils' moral and cultural development strongly promoted. Very good social development, but unsatisfactory spiritual side. Poor collective worship.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers, but insufficient technical staff. Some deficiencies in accommodation to be rectified by imminent building. Sufficient equipment except in science. Generally enough books. Library sub-standard.
Value for money	Effective financial planning and monitoring of key expenditure. Efficient use of staff. Money available is below average. Sound 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

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The clear vision and leadership of the headteacher. ▪ Children's good progress and personal development. ▪ The commitment and approachability of staff. ▪ The rapid growth of pupils' self-confidence on joining the school in Year 9. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient detail about the content of subjects

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views parents express. The headteacher has made a very favourable impression on parents and the whole school community in the two years he has been in post. His leadership and approachability are major reasons for the optimism expressed by many parents about

the school's future. The school generally enables most pupils to make suitable progress. Pupils feel that staff look after them and encourage them to do well. Inspectors confirm the view held by some parents that pupils grow rapidly in confidence and maturity on joining the school. The school rightly prides itself on the way it nurtures children's confidence and capability.

In contrast, inspectors agree that the school does not provide enough detailed information about the content of the subjects or courses that it teaches - a task that the school has indicated it will pursue seriously.

The fifth of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressed very strong support for the school. The level of dissatisfaction was unusually low. Overall, parents and the wider community have an increasingly favourable view of the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To build upon the sound quality of education that pupils already receive, the governors and senior management of the school should:

- a) improve still further pupils' attainments and progress by
 -) securing greater pace and challenge in a minority of lessons (## 31 45 48 50 121 141 182 214 233);
 -) ensuring that pupils' discussions are given greater priority in class and that they are always appropriately rigorous, detailed and audible (## 21 24-25 48 116 123 137-138 142 154-155 182);
 -) raising the overall attainment of boys (particularly in English), based on further research, a written plan of action and careful evaluation of the success of measures taken (## 11 16-18 28 114-115 147 169 209);
 -) establishing a comprehensive database about pupils' attainments in order to assess accurately the rate of pupils' progress and the school's overall performance (## 30 64 93);
 -) securing greater diligence and self-control by a small minority of pupils (## 33 49 151 154 165 213); and
 -) increasing (as planned) the time pupils are taught to at least the minimum 25 hours nationally recommended for Key Stage 4 (## 56).

- a) monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching across all subjects to criteria that focus primarily on what pupils achieve and how they learn (## 95).

- b) improve the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development to match the high standards achieved in their moral and social development (## 73-75).

- c) ensure that statutory requirements are met by
 -) undertaking the formal appraisal of teachers (## 98 102);
 -) carrying out and following up a full audit of risks to health and safety (## 83 98 235);
 -) providing pupils with sufficient experience of all aspects of information technology in Key Stage 4 (## 55 98 157 186 199 250);
 -) providing sufficient teaching of religious education in Year 11 (as planned from September 2000) and in the sixth form (## 55 98 248); and
 -) providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils (## 80 98).

In addition to the key issues above, other less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the school's future plan of action. These are indicated in paragraphs 22-23 26 29 37 54 60-62 65 84 86 101 104 107-109 and in subject sections.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is situated on the south-eastern side of the small town of Bingley. It serves a suburbanised area of both private and council-owned housing, as well as several small villages around the town. Only about a third of pupils come from the two Bingley local government wards and less than half this group come from the town itself. It has a comprehensive range of pupils, both in attainment and background, although a small minority of pupils from its contributory schools attend selective or other schools nearby. The school is due to be reorganised into an 11-18 school in September 2000.
 2. The school has 1077 pupils on roll, including a large sixth form of 241. It is also part of a consortium arrangement (The North Bradford Commonwealth), for a few sixth-form courses, with four neighbouring schools and a college of further education. The number of pupils has been fairly stable over the last few years. The school draws nearly all its pupils from ten 9-13 middle schools in the surrounding area, but receives three-quarters of its pupils from just five. The headteacher has been in post since September 1997.
 3. The social and economic background of the pupils is mixed, but broadly average, overall. There are slightly more boys than girls in the school. The school has 39 pupils with statements of special educational need, an above average proportion. There are 167 pupils (also an above average proportion) in the school from ethnic minority backgrounds, 156 of whom speak English as an additional language. About 14 per cent of pupils (but 17 per cent of pupils below the sixth form), a proportion that is broadly average by national standards, are known to be eligible for free school meals. At the end of Year 11 about two-thirds of the pupils continue in full-time education at 16, either in the school or elsewhere.
 4. The school's prospectus sets out clearly the school's main aims and values: to educate pupils to explore ideas and use their talents to the full; to learn how to learn; to grow up as confident, responsible and civilised young people; and to live their school lives in attractive and stimulating surroundings. All these are encapsulated in the school's motto of "Achieving Together".
 5. The school's development plan (SDP) for the 1999-2000 academic year identifies four key areas as priorities for action:
 - enhancement of the curriculum offered at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form;
 - providing more information technology (IT) equipment, staff training and usage;
 - improving teaching through observation, recognition and dissemination of best practice; and
 - successful implementation of the school's reorganisation in September 2000.
1. Each of these main aims is linked to specific objectives, actions, personnel and timescales for the whole school. All subject departments also have plans for improvement allied to the school's overall aims and values.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	156	124	280

7. National Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	87 (82)	86 (98)	69 (86)
	Girls	87 (84)	72 (79)	62 (59)
	Total	174 (166)	158 (177)	131 (145)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	62 (59)	56 (63)	47 (51)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	22 (33)	29 (38)	14 (19)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

7. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or Above	Boys	78 (103)	104 (101)	73 (86)
	Girls	88 (92)	95 (87)	69 (82)
	Total	166 (195)	199 (188)	142 (168)
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	59 (69)	71 (67)	51 (60)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	24 (38)	33 (31)	14 (26)
	National	29 (31)	40 (37)	28 (31)

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to 1998

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	134	133	267

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	40 (51)	126 (132)	127 (139)
	Girls	62 (59)	124 (126)	126 (131)
	Total	102 (110)	250 (258)	253 (270)
Percentage achieving Standard specified	School	38 (39)	94 (91)	95 (95)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	34	53%
National		n/a

Attainment in the Sixth Form²

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	35	36	71

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	17.4 (18.2)	18.2 (18.8)	17.9(18.5)	4.0 (3.3)	0.0 (4.8)	4.0 (4.1)
National	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	17.9(17.6)	n/a (n/a)	n/a (n/a)	2.8 (n/a)

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications & Percentage of *such students* who achieved these

Number	% Success rate

qualifications:

School	Adv-13	69%
	Inter-25	48%
National		n/a
		n/a

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to 1998

2

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions)

		%
Authorised	School	8.1
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	2.6
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year: 1998-1999

	Number
Fixed period	28
Permanent	2

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	15
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. The overall standard of attainment of pupils in the school is broadly in line with that expected nationally at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils' achievement in national tests and examinations is usually a little below average. Attainment in the sixth form is overall in line with course requirements. Standards of attainment are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
2. When pupils come to the school in Year 9, their overall attainment is, on the limited evidence available, similar to (but slightly below) that of pupils of the same age across the country. The proportion of higher-attaining pupils entering the school, though varying from year to year, is also a little below average overall. Attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 9 in 1997-1999 was close to average. By the end of Year 11, pupils' achievements in GCSE have been a little below average in the last few years. These results and the standard of work seen during the inspection point to the school usually sustaining pupils' attainments and progress satisfactorily as pupils move through the school. There is scope for further improvement.
3. In the national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 the proportion of pupils who achieved the national standard of at least Level 5 in the three core subjects was average in English, a little below average in mathematics, but below average in science. The proportion reaching at least Level 6 was below average in English and mathematics, but well below average in science. In the previous two years overall results had been close to average. On the average "points" that pupils scored over the 1996-1998 period and in 1999 their attainment in all three subjects were close to average, although science was slightly lower than the other two subjects.
4. In the Year 9 tests in 1999, girls performed noticeably better than boys in English, but the sexes had fairly similar achievement in mathematics and science. Overall girls do slightly better than boys in relation to the national averages for their respective sexes. Teachers' assessments of pupils in 1999 were fairly similar to the average test results pupils achieved - higher than they achieved in mathematics, but about the same in English and science.
5. When the average points score of all this school's 1999 Key Stage 3 results is compared with that of schools which have a similar background (as measured solely by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals), the performance of pupils in this school was close to average. Results in English were in line with the average for similar schools, but in mathematics and (especially) science they were below average.
6. In the five other (non-core) subjects formally assessed at the end of Key Stage 3, teachers judged the overall attainment of pupils over the 1997-1999 period as broadly average in history and information technology (IT), but below average in design and technology, in geography and in modern foreign languages. In these five subjects together pupils' level of attainment was assessed by their teachers as average in 1997, but below average in 1998 and 1999. Inspectors' judgements are that the standard of attainment of pupils currently in Year 9 is broadly average in geography and history, below average in design and technology and in

modern foreign languages and slightly above average in IT.

7. In GCSE examinations in 1999, pupils' overall achievement was a little below average – very slightly so for pupils' average points score, but a little further below for the proportion of them gaining five or more grades A*-C (38 per cent in the school, compared with 46 per cent nationally). The proportion gaining five or more grades A*-G was above average. Over the period 1994-1999 there was a slightly rising trend in the school's average points score (after a dip in 1996 and 1997), but at a slower rate than the rising trend nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more of the higher (A*-C) grades over the last six years was 33-40 per cent against a national average of 41-46 per cent; the achievement in 1998-1999 was very similar to that in 1994-1995. The school's average points score over the same period at 32-36 was slightly lower than the national range of 34-37. The pass rate was below average on the General National Vocational Education (GNVQ) course in IT at both Foundation and Intermediate levels in 1999.
8. In the core subjects pupils' achievements in GCSE in 1998 were close to the national average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. In 1999, attainment in mathematics remained close to average, but there was a large drop in both English and science. When pupils' performances in the other subjects they took in 1998 are compared with one another (the latest year for which a full set of national comparative data is available), pupils did better in English literature, history, social science and (very significantly so) in English language, geography and French, but worse in double science, art, design and technology, music and drama. In 1999 no pupil achieved the highest A* grade in art, history, German, music or religious education (RE). In the core subjects no boy achieved an A* grade in English language and no girl did so in mathematics. In 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining a grade in the A*-C range in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science was 24 per cent in contrast to a national level of 36 per cent.
9. Girls have achieved a much greater proportion of the higher A*-C grades in GCSE than boys in two out of the last three years. The gap has ranged from seven percentage points in 1998 to 19 points in 1997 and 18 points in 1999; in these last two years girls achieved nearly double the rate of boys. Girls achieved much more than boys in English (more than double the A*-C grades, for example, than boys in 1999). The sexes have usually done very similarly in mathematics and science, but boys slumped badly in science in 1999. One third of the girls, compared with about one-seventh of the boys, achieved at least a grade C in all the core subjects in 1999.
10. Based on pupils' average points scores at GCSE, both boys' and girls' results were close to their respective national averages in 1998 (the latest year for which authenticated sets of national data were available at the time of the inspection). Over the 1996-1998 period, however, boys in this school have been further behind boys nationally than girls have been behind girls nationally. In 1999 boys' average level of achievement slipped further behind that of girls.
11. When the school's results at GCSE in 1999 are compared with those in schools with a similar "free school meals" background, this school's performance was just below average for the proportion of pupils gaining either five or more A*-C grades or one A*-G grade. Its mean points score was average and the proportion of its pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G was above average. These ratings need, however, to be interpreted with a little caution. They do not, for example, take into account the fact that the school's entry contains lower than average proportions of high-attaining pupils or that (with a 13+ entry) the school has less coordinated time to prepare pupils for GCSE than schools which typically have an entry at

age 11. Nevertheless, the results do suggest some degree of underachievement, particularly by boys.

12. In the sixth form overall results at GCE A-level for those pupils who were entered for two or more subjects have been broadly in line with the national average over the 1993-1999 period (except for a dip in 1997). The pass rates have been consistently at the national average over recent years. The quality of grades achieved shows a rising trend over the last five years; in the last two years the proportion of the higher A-C grades obtained (over half) has been in line with the national picture. Pupils' performances at A-level usually show at least satisfactory (and quite often good) progress from their previous achievements in the same subjects at GCSE, but in 1999 about three-tenths of pupils made insufficient progress. Pupils' pass rates on the GNVQ Advanced-level courses in 1999 were above average for business education, but below average for health and social care. Pass rates on the three courses at Intermediate level were low.
13. In work seen during the inspection pupils' overall standard of attainment was broadly in line with that expected nationally for pupils of similar ages. Attainment is broadly similar throughout the school. In the sixth form it generally meets course requirements.
14. In English the overall attainment of pupils is average by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and above average in the sixth form. High-attaining pupils generally produce work of a good and sometimes of an exceptional, standard. Pupils' reading in the main school is average in accuracy and for searching out key information. Opportunities to read for pleasure are carefully incorporated into lessons. Pupils, with few exceptions, listen well. Their speaking is, however, often below average in clarity, because insufficient attention is paid to its importance in class. Most written work is about average in content and range. It is usually neatly presented. Pupils' spelling and punctuation are of an average standard.
15. In other subjects across the school pupils' standard of reading is broadly average in fluency and accuracy. Most pupils read texts with reasonable facility, although a significant minority stumble over technical language, as for example in science. In few lessons, however, do pupils read aloud as a means of increasing their competence, confidence and understanding.
16. The standard of writing varies widely. Most pupils write in an appropriate style and at an average standard for the tasks they are set. A small minority write very briefly and scappily and leave work uncompleted, but higher attainers often produce extended writing of considerable quality and with much relevant detail, as for instance in coursework in history. The standard of note-taking is broadly average: its quality often depends on the amount of specific guidance and training given by teachers. The presentation of work is generally good and a little above average, although a small minority of pupils are untidy and messy. Punctuation and spelling are broadly average: common vocabulary is usually tackled well, but the spelling of technical words is frequently done with insufficient care.
17. Most pupils listen carefully in lessons. They generally concentrate hard, but a small minority are lethargic. Some pupils are very assured in their speech and have a wide range of appropriate vocabulary. This gives them confidence to argue and discuss issues with conviction and precision. In geography and history, for instance, many pupils take good advantage of the opportunities provided to discuss matters such as the reasons for the location of places or the causes of events. The overall standard of speaking is, however, a little below average in clarity and expression, partly because oral work is insufficiently practised, valued or trained.

18. In mathematics, attainment is a little below average at Key Stage 3, but rises to an average level in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In numeracy across the curriculum, standards of attainment are a little below average overall, particularly in the accuracy, speed and confidence of handling basic number facts orally. Sets of data are represented and interpreted soundly in most subjects. Calculators are, in the main, used reasonably.
19. Attainment in science is broadly average in Year 9, but below average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils have a fair grasp of the basics of the subject in biology and physics, but understanding of chemistry is weaker. Attainment in the sixth form is below average overall. Attainment in IT is slightly above average overall in Key Stage 3, particularly in word processing and handling data. The overall level of attainment drops slightly to an average level in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, because of insufficient opportunity to use it or a lack of coordination of usage across all subjects. It is generally above average in the specialist courses.
20. In other subjects the overall attainment of pupils is above average in the sixth form in art and geography. Attainment is below average at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 in design and technology and in modern foreign languages. In other subjects and key stages pupils' overall level of attainment is in line with what pupils achieve nationally.
21. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their studies both in lessons and over longer periods of time. In nearly half the lessons pupils make good progress and in a further few lessons make very good progress. Progress is unsatisfactory overall in about four per cent of classes. Pupils make a fairly similar rate of progress through the school. Girls, in general, make slightly greater progress than boys, particularly in Key Stage 4, because they tend to sustain their concentration better.
22. Pupils usually make good progress in Year 9 in IT and physical education (PE); in Years 10-11 in mathematics, geography and PE; and in the sixth form in English, art, design and technology, geography, history and modern foreign languages. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress overall in Year 9 in design and technology, partly because there is some "marking time" as teachers attempt to harmonise, or fill in the gaps in, pupils' previous experience of the subject. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all other subjects and in other key stages, as well as on vocational courses.
23. The rate of pupils' progress in their studies is closely related to the quality of teaching they receive, except in the small minority of cases where pupils tend to be lethargic. Pupils are usually made clearly aware of the importance of hard work and the standards to aim for. Their progress is monitored closely from year to year, though not comprehensively across the whole school. The school's strong ethos of wise guidance, friendliness, cooperation and mutual respect secures a positive approach to learning.
24. In the minority of cases where progress is insufficient, pupils are not pushed hard enough to think or comment in depth, do work that is too easy or learn at a leisurely pace. High-attaining pupils generally make satisfactory progress. They progress well in English, mathematics (especially in the sixth form) and in art, but not enough in Key Stage 3 in design and technology and in history. Pupils with special educational needs usually make sound progress. They progress well in English and mathematics, but not enough in art in Key Stage 3. Pupils for whom English is an additional language generally also make sound progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

25. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good both in class and around the school. In their lessons

pupils of all ages and abilities show interest in their work and sustain good spans of concentration. In just over two-thirds of lessons pupils' attitudes are good (sometimes very good) and they are satisfactory in all but a handful of the remaining lessons.

26. In the best lessons, as in a mathematics lesson for the lowest-attaining group in Year 9, pupils show eagerness to work, are ready to answer questions and are unafraid to ask for help, whilst taking justified pleasure in their success. In those few lessons where attitudes are unsatisfactory, pupils are not fully engaged in the tasks set for them or are not clear about what is expected of them.
27. The school is a very orderly community. Movement around the building is sensible and efficient. A strength of the school are the calm and cooperative attitudes pupils show when assembled together during breaks or social activities. Pupils are courteous and reliable and display a friendly maturity in their dealings with one another and with teachers and other adults. Property is well respected and there are very few signs of litter or graffiti. Pupils work well in groups and collaborate readily on joint projects.
28. Pupils show respect for other people's values and beliefs and exercise considerable tolerance in their relationships. Conflict is generally handled without anger and differences are readily negotiated. The significant number of pupils with physical difficulties are full and unobtrusive members of the school community.
29. Pupils show a marked capacity for assuming responsibility and exercising initiative. This is particularly impressive in the sixth form as, for example, when a meeting of the student council considered a new constitution drafted by one of their number. This was followed by a mature discussion of the role and responsibilities of representatives. Many other outlets for displaying such initiative are actively sought throughout the school. The number of exclusions, both permanent and fixed-term, is moderate for a school of this size and careful safeguards are built in before such action is taken.

Attendance

30. The attendance of pupils is below the national average for secondary schools. In the 1997-1998 academic year pupils' overall attendance was 89.2 per cent, almost two per cent lower than the national average of 91.0 per cent. It rose a little in the last academic year to 89.6 per cent, continuing a steady upward trend over the last four years. It was still, however, below the national minimum yardstick of 90 per cent, owing to a low overall level of attendance in the spring term by pupils in Year 11. Overall attendance was, however, significantly better in the first two-thirds of the Autumn term 1999, at almost 92 per cent.
31. The level of authorised absences in 1997-1998 (8.1 per cent) was close to the national average. The amount of absence without good reason (2.6 per cent) was well above average. This problem has been particularly acute in Year 11. It does, however, show a clearly improving trend over the last four years and is lower than at the time of the last inspection. Examination of attendance records and other evidence suggests that the above average amount of unauthorised absence is owing to a small number of pupils having very low attendance.
32. The school's public documents have little to say to parents and pupils about the importance of good attendance and punctuality, but the school puts much emphasis in practice on these matters. The school has a thorough and effective computerised system for recording and analysing pupils' attendance. The up-to-the minute analyses produced by it are used very well

to identify patterns of attendance, to spot potential truants and to follow up pupils' absences.

33. Pupils' punctuality for school is generally good; the lateness of a small minority of pupils is usually caused by transport problems. Punctuality for lessons is good, an improvement since the last inspection. The school has very effective systems in place to combat truancy and all available evidence suggests that truancy after registration is not a problem.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

34. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons - satisfactory in a third of lessons and good in half of them. Additionally, teaching is very good in about one in every seven lessons. Only six lessons out of the 193 inspected had teaching that was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is similar across Years 9-13, but is slightly lower in Key Stage 3 than in the rest of the school and is highest in the sixth form.
35. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. In 1994 26 per cent of the school's teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, but the proportion in this category has now dropped to three per cent.
36. Teachers generally have a good level of knowledge of the subjects they teach. It is noticeably good in geography and in English (particularly with the sixth form). This enables teachers to teach in a lively and well-structured way, to sequence their material thoughtfully and to draw on relevant topics and themes to illustrate and enliven lessons. For example, in a lesson in the sixth form on Shakespeare's *Othello* the teacher's deep knowledge of the text and background enabled her to pose appropriately searching questions that extended pupils' understanding of the play considerably.
37. The majority of teachers set appropriately high standards for pupils. In the best lessons the information and ideas they present make pupils think hard. Their high expectations encourage pupils to work carefully, to clarify their understanding confidently and to express their meaning precisely and with correct terminology or specialist vocabulary. They do not allow slipshod work and instil in pupils a pride in achieving high standards. In a mathematics lesson with low-attaining pupils in Year 11, for instance, the teacher rounded off a wide-ranging discussion on the use of protractors by requiring pupils to describe in very precise terms what they had to do.
38. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers do not challenge pupils to think deeply enough about what they are learning and set work which makes little demand on pupils' thinking or effort. Quite often pupils are allowed to give brief and superficial answers and sometimes to coast through the lesson. In these cases teaching lacks the intellectual sharpness to open up new horizons or possibilities for pupils who are quite content to settle for routine solutions to problems. Occasionally introductions to lessons are unclear and explanations fuzzy. In a few lessons which were otherwise satisfactory there was an over-readiness by teachers to tell pupils what to do rather than to require them to think for themselves.
39. Lessons are nearly always well planned. Teachers frequently revise quickly what has been taught in previous lessons and explain the purpose and structure of new lessons carefully to pupils. In the best cases they set firm timescales for the different stages of the lesson and ensure that a thorough review of the lesson is undertaken in the last few minutes. In a few

cases, however, learning objectives are unclear and lessons end inconclusively. The planning of work in Year 9 is unable to draw sufficiently on what pupils have previously studied in contributory middle schools.

40. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods - well in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and satisfactorily overall in Key Stage 3. Most revise the content of previous lessons succinctly, explain new material to the whole class carefully and wind up lessons clearly. This approach is usually balanced by a suitable amount of time being spent investigating issues through work in pairs or small groups. In the best lessons teachers interact very skilfully with pupils, encouraging them to explore all facets of their subjects and not be content with superficial answers. Their constructive criticism helps pupils to make good progress. Teachers effectively practise skills and routines in mathematics and music. English teaching makes particularly effective use of video-recorded material.
41. In a minority of cases, however, teachers inadequately stretch pupils' thinking during lessons or draw significant features out at the end. There is little use of such methods as brainstorming or making quick notes for class discussion. The extensive use of worksheets in science, though providing a secure framework, also constrains pupils' thinking and more extensive analytical writing. A more common weakness across the curriculum is the underuse and undervaluing of oral work to clarify or reinforce understanding. The narrower range of teaching methods used overall in Key Stage 3 is partly explained by some teachers' attempts to harmonise pupils' knowledge, after their varied experiences in different middle schools, by an over-reliance on didactic teaching.
42. Lessons are, with few exceptions, well managed. Classes are usually calm, orderly and generally good humoured. Most teachers' relationships with pupils are warm, caring and encouraging and convey the teachers' own interest and enthusiasm. Pupils are well supported. Teachers usually exercise friendly and effective control over classes, but in a few cases with insufficient firmness, allowing pupils to interrupt inappropriately or to waste time.
43. Teachers generally use time well and keep closely to the times they plan for the different stages of lessons. Lessons begin on time and most proceed at an appropriately brisk pace. In a significant minority, however, more ground could be covered or (sometimes even in lessons that are otherwise good) greater depth of understanding achieved. Most pupils concentrate well throughout lessons. Teachers' assessments in class and marking are usually carefully done; a minority offer thoughtful written guidance as to how work could be improved. Much detailed help is given in class orally in mathematics and music. During the inspection homework was set appropriately to reinforce or extend what had been learnt in lessons, a judgement similar to that also held by most pupils and their parents.
44. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good overall in the rest of the school. It is satisfactory in science, art, design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3; in design and technology, history, IT and modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4; and in mathematics and IT in the sixth form. In all other subjects or in other key stages teaching is good. Nearly all subjects have at least some teaching that is very good and almost a quarter of it was of this high quality in the lessons seen in Years 10 and 13. Teachers work hard and conscientiously on behalf of pupils, both in timetabled lessons and in extracurricular activities (sometimes even long before the start of the school day), a feature appreciated by pupils.

The curriculum and assessment

45. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are good throughout. These qualities help to ensure that all pupils are suitably prepared for the next stage of education or employment and have appropriate opportunities for personal and physical development. At Key Stage 3 all subjects of the National Curriculum and RE are appropriately covered. All pupils study personal and social education (PSE) and IT. They also follow short courses in two modern foreign languages before the majority study one in greater depth; about a quarter continue to study two foreign languages.
46. At Key Stage 4 all pupils study the core subjects (including double science), a full course in design and technology, PE and PSE which includes careers education and health education. An appropriate range of optional subjects is offered for GCSE examination. A suitable vocational course is also offered, consisting of units of the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ) courses in business studies, health and social care and leisure and tourism.
47. A satisfactory range of courses leading to GCE A-level examinations is provided for pupils in the sixth form. This is supplemented by additional courses provided through successful consortium arrangements with neighbouring schools. Whilst the consortium extends the range of courses available to pupils, there is a significant cost to the school, because far fewer of the school's pupils take courses in other schools than are attracted to this school as a result of these arrangements. Courses for GNVQ are offered in engineering to Intermediate level and in business studies and in health and social care to both Intermediate and Advanced levels. In addition, all pupils study PSE and over half take a general studies course leading to GCE A-level. As stated in the previous report, there is no timetabled course for PE in the sixth form, although approximately 30 pupils take the Sports Leadership award.
48. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, except in IT and RE. There is no timetabled or guaranteed provision for all pupils to experience the full range of IT at Key Stage 4. Provision in other subjects across the curriculum is inconsistent and insufficient to enable pupils to develop the full range of IT skills required to meet national requirements. Insufficient time is allocated to RE in Year 11 for the Agreed Syllabus to be covered in sufficient depth, but this is planned to be remedied in September 2000. As reported at the previous inspection, no time is provided for RE in the sixth form. The relatively low percentage of time allocated to design and technology at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the poor continuity between work in the contributory middle schools and in Year 9 impede progress and lower standards in the subject. Curricular plans already made for September 2000 are designed to rectify this situation.
49. As reported previously, the total teaching time each week of 24 hours 10 minutes is below the 25 hours at Key Stage 4 recommended by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This shortfall is attributable to the constraints imposed over several years by transport arrangements that are outside the school's control. There are, however, firm plans to increase the total teaching time to 25 hours in September 2000. During the period of the inspection appropriate homework was set and marked regularly and tutorial time was used effectively.
50. All pupils have access to all subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are taught in "ability" sets in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages and in mixed-ability groups elsewhere. These arrangements are effective. The match of work to the differing needs of pupils is at least satisfactory in all subjects. Sensible alternative accreditation is offered in some subjects (including English, mathematics and science) and an appropriate literacy course is available for pupils for whom GCSE examinations are not considered appropriate.

51. The procedures and structures for curricular planning are good. The school has made appropriate plans for the pattern of the school curriculum for the whole of Key Stage 3 to take effect in September 2000. Schemes of work are very good in music, good in English, science, art, geography, IT, modern foreign languages and for GNVQ courses and satisfactory elsewhere. Curricular links to ensure effective continuity with contributory middle schools are not good enough, resulting in slow progress in Year 9 in many subjects, including mathematics, science, art, history and IT. Procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the curriculum are very good, through strong links between the senior management team and individual departments and a thorough system of departmental review.
52. A very good range of extracurricular activities enhances the curriculum. Out-of-school activities include visits to France and Germany, fieldwork visits, a range of visits to local theatres and a joint art and history visit to the Maritime Museum in Liverpool. At the end of the summer term a wide range of activities, both residential and school-based, is arranged during an Activities Week. The school also mounts a very successful music and drama production each year. A good range of clubs, organised by subject departments, takes place regularly. Sports teams participate in over twelve sports, with the school being particularly successful in volleyball. Over a quarter of pupils take part in inter-school competitive sports and there is a strong commitment to these from eight members of staff.
53. The school's provision for careers education and guidance has many satisfactory features, but also has gaps. A suitable scheme of careers education is taught by form tutors as part of the PSE programme, but (though now planned) there are no procedures for the systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of this provision. The programme for those sixth-form pupils who seek employment is unsatisfactory. Good relationships exist with the careers service, which provides impartial guidance and focuses its support on "disaffected" pupils. No formal or coherent procedures have been developed by the school, however, to ensure that appropriate guidance is available for those pupils who do not receive guidance from the careers service. Guidance for sixth-form pupils who wish to continue their education is sound.
54. All pupils in Year 10 participate for two weeks in generally well-organised work experience. During the placement pupils complete a workbook and are visited by a member of staff. At the time pupils prepare for work experience, however, opportunities are missed to strengthen their knowledge of job applications, selection and workplace procedures. Staff ensure that all pupils are familiar with the careers library; this is satisfactory and appropriately situated and includes appropriate information available on computer. A library containing information about university courses is situated in the sixth-form area and is not easily accessible to all pupils.
55. The school has a clearly written policy which provides satisfactory guidance on the assessment, marking, recording and reporting of pupils' work. Within subject departments the quality of day-to-day assessment of individual pupils' work is good overall, but there are weaknesses in design and technology and in RE. Assessment in music is very good: in this subject all aspects of work are assessed in every lesson and, before pupils begin their tasks they are reminded what they need to do to achieve higher levels.
56. In Key Stage 3, assessments of pupils' work relate well to National Curriculum levels of study. In Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, assessments are closely tied to the requirements of external examinations and, as a consequence, give clear indications of the progress of pupils, as well as providing targets for improvement. Although subject departments adopt

different procedures for assessing pupils' work, consistency is maintained across the school by the adoption of a common system of grading which is clear to teachers, pupils and parents.

57. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in establishing a system for recording the assessment data of all pupils in every subject. Whilst this system is used to monitor some aspects of the performance of individuals and groups, it does not ensure that monitoring is comprehensive, particularly across the whole of Years 9-11. Within departments, assessment is used well overall to enable teachers to vary the pace of work for groups of pupils with different levels of attainment. It is also used to place pupils in sets in mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good.
58. One annual and two interim reports to parents on pupils' attainments and progress are generally clear and informative. Teachers' written comments do not, however, always spell out clearly how well pupils are progressing and what they should do to improve. Records of Achievement are completed at the end of Year 11. These include targets for both academic and wider personal achievements. They include appropriate end-of-year reviews, evaluations of work experience and certificates of sporting and artistic achievements.

65. **Pupils with special educational needs**

59. The school has a strong local reputation for the quality of its work with pupils who have special educational needs. This includes its area provision for pupils with physical difficulties and its committed policy on the inclusion of all pupils within the curriculum of the school. This positive image of the school is fully borne out by the evidence of the inspection. Pupils who have a wide range of learning and physical difficulties are well integrated into the life of the school, have access to the full curriculum and receive appropriate, additional specialist support.
60. The quality of work produced by pupils with special educational needs is good overall and, on occasions, very good. They generally make good progress and are able to reflect appropriately on their work and assess their own achievements. In Year 9 small groups receive intensive support and tuition, using a phonics approach based on work designed for dyslexic pupils. This programme is well taught and pupils are helped to identify and practise the drills and techniques to improve their reading, writing and spelling. At Key Stage 4 small groups are provided with curriculum support lessons which offer individual coaching and enrichment, to enable them to cope more effectively with the full curriculum, although the room in which these activities are provided is cramped for both pupils and staff.
61. In many classes there are support assistants (SSAs), who offer additional help to such pupils. These assistants are well trained and flexibly deployed. They make a positive contribution to the continuing progress of pupils with special educational needs. The use of a computer-based programme, designed to boost the achievements of pupils experiencing difficulties in language and number work, fulfils an important and effective role. This facility is well used and it is planned to use it to support more pupils in the future.
62. Pupils with special needs work conscientiously and show good powers of concentration, especially where the work has been adapted to their individual education plans (IEPs). These are well drafted and made accessible to staff across the school to assist the planning and preparation of work for individual pupils.

63. The governing body takes its responsibilities for special educational needs seriously, particularly through the involvement of a link governor, who demonstrates a high level of insight and commitment to this work. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) is an energetic and imaginative leader. The department is very well managed. She deploys staff and resources with flexibility and flair and carries considerable influence across the school and in the wider community. She offers valued advice and guidance to subject departments and pastoral teams about the management of pupils with special needs. She knows the pupils well and has a very effective relationship with their families to secure the best education for their children. Annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational need are conducted in a very open and collaborative way, involving pupils and their parents to the fullest extent.
64. The special provision for pupils with physical difficulties is resourced and supported well by the LEA. Appropriate adaptations to the building have ensured that pupils have ready access to the full facilities and curriculum of the school. Pupils with special needs are valued as members of the school community. They feel secure, talk positively about their lives in the school and are helped to have an optimistic view of their own prospects.
65. Relationships with external specialist agencies are good. Medical and physiotherapy support for pupils with physical difficulties is generally available. The agencies show their respect for the school's work by responding with support wherever possible. The administration of the department's work is good and meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

66. The provision for these aspects of pupils' development is good overall and sometimes very good. The promotion of pupils' spiritual development, however, is unsatisfactory. This weakness was identified in the previous inspection.
67. The school has made some progress since 1994 in its provision for pupils' spiritual education. It has improved the provision for RE, although there is still insufficient teaching in Year 11 (to be remedied from September 2000) and the sixth form. Weekly themes which have a spiritual content are presented in assemblies and are discussed in some lessons. Texts, including quotations from poems, are displayed around the school in order to guide pupils to reflect on the weekly themes. Celebrations of Armistice Day, Ramadan and other significant religious events are formally placed on the school calendar.
68. Subject departments have very recently identified activities which include a spiritual dimension, but no strong examples of these were observed during the inspection. The school is taking steps to raise staff's and pupils' awareness of and to make provision for, the needs of pupils of all faiths. These plans include training for teachers and the allocation of a space for prayers for Muslim pupils. Overall, however, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development remains unsatisfactory.
69. Provision for pupils' moral education is good. The school's expectations of acceptable behaviour and indications of what is right and wrong are made clear to pupils in most lessons and as they move around the school. In particular, staff in senior positions demonstrate a very clear stance on moral matters. Themes in assemblies include clear moral messages. Issues such as drug abuse, racism and child labour are dealt with in lessons, particularly in

geography and history. In PE notions of teamwork, rules and fair play are especially well emphasised. There are prominent displays in school of the rules of daily conduct and of charts showing pupils' merit awards for both academic and personal achievements. These achievements are also celebrated in special assemblies. Pupils raise significant sums of money for charities through various activities such as a "non-uniform" day and the Christmas pantomime. Some pupils have worked with the Bradford Soup Kitchen project.

70. Pupils' social development is promoted very well. In some lessons (as, for example, in English, design and technology and in music) pupils learn by frequently working collaboratively with partners or in groups. Pupils enjoy positive social experiences through a very good range of extracurricular activities, which include music ensembles, sports activities and homework clubs. Pupils devote much time both before and after school to some of these activities. There is, additionally, a good range of visits out of school. These include a visit to the Liverpool Maritime Museum, linguistic studies in France and Germany and a range of trips in connection with the Activities Week, including some residential experience for pupils in Year 9.
71. Elements of citizenship and experience of responsibility are promoted well through pupils' membership of year councils and the school council, as well as by the experience of running the school bank and duties as receptionists. A number of pupils have been involved in the planning process for the school's proposed new buildings. Pupils in the sixth form pair up with younger pupils, as, for example, in lessons on drug awareness.
72. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well. In lessons pupils learn about their own and other cultures. In art, for instance, pupils appreciate similarities and differences in the images of Western, Asian and African cultures. Within school the good relationships existing amongst pupils of different ethnic origins provide substantial opportunities for the sharing of diverse ideas, traditions and beliefs. A visiting sculptor has enhanced the school's arts provision and the continuing presence on site of the Bradford schools music service enables pupils to make wider cultural links. The school puts on a regular programme of drama and music productions. These have included a specially written cabaret and the musical *Grease*.
73. The school is far short of meeting the legal requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. This remains a substantial gap, despite the progress made since 1994 and significantly lowers the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual development.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

74. The school's arrangements for providing support, advice and guidance to pupils are good and well established. A strong team of coordinators leads groups of form tutors who are effective and are seen as the crucial day-to-day link with pupils. Pupils' personal development, behaviour and attendance are well monitored and recorded. Increasingly effective procedures are being put in place to monitor pupils' academic progress. These include individual mentoring in Year 11 (which extends to about a quarter of the year group) and well-attended Student Review days, at which pupils are helped to set their own targets in collaboration with their parents.
75. Policies to manage and reward pupils' behaviour are good and effective. There is little evidence of bullying, but incidents are swiftly and firmly dealt with when they are detected. Arrangements for Child Protection within the school are good and all staff are kept appropriately informed and updated. Pupils feel very secure within the school and know that they can turn to a wide range of adults for support, if they experience difficulties.

76. Provision to secure pupils' health, safety and wellbeing are generally good. A nurse is available for consultation on two days each week and is able to offer individual counselling for pupils needing more personal guidance. Teachers are vigilant in monitoring pupils' needs and quick to call upon specialist help from external agencies, where this seems appropriate. The policy for ensuring pupils' health and safety is sound, but assessments of risk across the school are not fully carried out or followed up systematically, as statutorily required. The movement of traffic around the school's site presents significant hazards which require immediate attention. Arrangements for dealing with pupils who are unwell do not provide sufficient quiet and privacy.
77. The programme of personal and social education (PSE) is soundly constructed and broadly based. The quality of the teaching of this programme by form tutors is not, however, systematically monitored.

Partnership with parents and the community

78. The school's partnership with parents and its wider community is strong and has some very good features. The pre-inspection questionnaire completed by a significant minority of parents indicated an unusually high level of parental satisfaction with the school. The school's prospectus is an attractive and informative document and a very helpful pack of information is given to all newcomers. Parents' evenings are well attended and the recently introduced Student Review days have proved a great success. The Pupil Planner is well used. It provides a good means of communication between home and school, reinforcing the Home-School Agreement and parents' contribution to pupils' learning.
79. A newsletter goes to parents twice each term and the school magazine's first edition was produced this term. There is, however, scope for improvement in providing more information to parents about what is taught and in securing greater consistency in recording pupils' attainment and progress in annual reports. The two additional "interim" written reports sent annually to parents provide very useful summative checks on pupils' progress. The governing body's annual report to parents meets statutory requirements and provides a good account of the year's activities and achievements.
80. The Beckfoot Partnership (the parent-teacher association) is active and raises a significant amount of money for the school's funds. It also arranges a variety of social events, as well as meetings when teachers talk about their subjects and objectives. Parents make a valuable contribution in helping with paired reading and with visits out of school.
81. Links with the community are well organised and coordinated and are a significant feature of the school. The recently launched "Beckfoot Futures" aims to promote further this partnership with business and the community. This initiative, together with the school's expansion programme and its application for both Charter Mark and Specialist School status, is creating a significant education force at the heart of the school's business and residential community. The school actively promotes music and drama productions, its premises are well used by local community groups and pupils are closely involved in social and community service.
82. The work experience programme is well organised and local businesses provide support and expertise for some GNVQ courses. Well-planned visits are made to local factories and commercial institutions and there are useful links with the nearby universities of Leeds and Bradford.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

83. The quality of leadership and management has significantly improved since the last inspection report. The governing body, the headteacher and the senior management group are effective and strongly committed to improving the school. They make considerable efforts to support managers and teams of staff at all levels, so that their vision for the school's future can be translated into higher standards of achievement.
84. Members of the governing body bring considerable specialist experience and enthusiasm to their role. Their work is well organised and effectively conducted. They fully identify with the school's expressed values and goals and show responsiveness to the needs and concerns of parents, pupils and staff. They also demonstrate a capacity for rigorous analysis of proposals and a commitment to effectiveness and accountability in their decisions.
85. The headteacher has provided, over a short period of time since appointment, impressive qualities of vision and leadership. He is highly visible around the school and immersed in its daily life, working alongside pupils and staff. By his personal involvement he sets high but realistic expectations of commitment and achievement. His open and accessible style of leadership has positively engaged governors, parents, staff and pupils in the quest to sustain the school's strengths and to improve the school's standards further.
86. The senior management group shows energy and dynamism in its work. It has set itself purposeful and relevant targets for the school's development. Members of this group fully support the headteacher in their accessibility and commitment to staff, pupils and parents. They practise effective delegation, whilst exercising diligent supervision of those areas of the school for which they are responsible. The key area of establishing accurate benchmarks to judge the quality of the school's overall performance is, however, insufficiently coordinated.
87. The quality of leadership shown by staff with responsibilities for subject areas and pastoral teams is good overall. Planning, documentation and teamwork are sound. There is a good pattern of meetings and consultations. These promote the goals of the school well and involve a wide range of staff in decision-making. Administrative and non-teaching staff fulfil their roles effectively and feel valued as members of management teams.
88. The aims, values and policies publicly espoused by the school command wide acceptance. They are, in general, positively implemented. The governing body and senior staff consciously strive to monitor the realisation of these aims through their personal commitment and intervention. Regular reviews of departments by groups of staff, led by senior managers, have improved the base of information about the effectiveness of teaching and curricular development. These procedures do not, however, fully achieve consistency of expectations, quality of teaching or standards of achievement across the school.
89. On his appointment, the headteacher introduced an appropriate three-year (1998-2001) strategic plan for the school. This plan is reviewed and updated annually and most of its targets are still relevant. It has successfully alerted staff with leadership roles to the need for aligning their own planning targets with those of the whole school.
90. The ethos of the school is distinctive and has a positive impact on pupils and staff alike.

There is a manifest climate of tolerance, good relationships and acceptance of all, regardless of origins, abilities and talents. The school has a clear commitment to pupils' all-round achievement and development, an effective feature commented upon strongly by a number of parents. Achievement is interpreted in a broad and sympathetic way, covering academic progress, personal development and extracurricular endeavour.

91. The school does not, however, comply with statutory requirements in several areas. It fails to provide sufficient teaching of RE for all pupils in Year 11 (to change in September 2000) and in the sixth form. Inadequate time is provided to cover all aspects of IT at Key Stage 4. The school is far from providing a daily act of collective worship for all pupils. It does not conduct comprehensively, or follow up sufficiently systematically, assessments of risk to health and safety across the school. The formal appraisal of teachers is in abeyance.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

92. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers to cover the subjects it teaches, except in RE. In modern foreign languages many classes are taught by more than one teacher; this makes continuity difficult and impedes pupils' progress. There is a good match between teachers' initial qualifications and the subjects taught, except in food technology in Year 9. It is planned that the appointment of new teachers at the forthcoming reorganisation will remedy these problems. Women occupy many of the senior posts in the school, which has a good gender balance amongst staff.
93. Teachers are fairly deployed and most teach across the full range of pupils' ages and abilities. The proportion of time spent by teachers in lessons is about average overall. Whilst the overall size of classes is close to average, there are wide variations and some in Year 9 are large.
94. The number of support staff is well above average overall. This is owing to the large number of learning assistants who are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. On the other hand, technical support in science, in art and in design and technology is limited. The number of administrative staff is below average for a school of this size.
95. Staff development is effectively organised and carefully integrated into the school's action plan. Priorities are clearly set out and reflected in departmental plans. The implementation of staff training has a good structure and gained the award of "Investors in People". The formal appraisal of teachers is currently in abeyance, although there are individual reviews which are considered helpful by staff. New and newly qualified teachers are well supported by the school through a comprehensive programme of meetings and classroom observations. This programme is well managed to provide a firm basis for career development.
96. The school is set in pleasant surroundings and is generally well maintained. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection the grouping of classrooms has been improved in most subjects and further improvements are anticipated when the school's expansion programme is completed.
97. The school has, however, significant deficiencies in its accommodation for science, design and technology and IT. In science the small size of some laboratories restricts movement and practical work for larger groups. In design and technology the inadequate provision of specialist rooms reported in the previous inspection remains and limits pupils' achievements and progress. The facilities for IT are inadequate and their location inappropriate. The

library is small for a school of this size and is poorly located. The plans for the new building work, scheduled to be completed by September 2000, show that these weaknesses have been recognised and are in line for improvement.

98. The school's corridors carry interesting displays. Litter is well controlled. The accommodation provides good facilities and access for pupils with physical difficulties. All parts of the school can be accessed by wheelchairs or by pupils using walking aides. In addition there are showers, a physiotherapy room and toilets for these pupils.
99. Spending on learning resources is well above average for a school of this size and type, although there has been a decrease in the last year. The provision of resources is satisfactory overall. The deficiencies identified in the last inspection report have largely been remedied as a result of the high spending on resources in the last two years.
100. The provision of resources within departments is good in English, mathematics, geography and history. It is satisfactory elsewhere, with the exceptions of science, where some equipment is old and unreliable and of modern foreign languages and PE, where there are insufficient textbooks for pupils taking GCSE to have a book to use at home. The resources for pupils with special educational needs are very good.
101. The provision of centrally available IT is not satisfactory. Although the ratio of computers to pupils is average and the machines are of good quality and industry-standard, the location of the equipment is not satisfactory. The provision of IT within departments is variable. It is good in English and for pupils with special educational needs. Although there are clusters of machines in some areas of the school, many departments do not have easy access to machines of good quality. The unsatisfactory provision restricts the effective use of IT across the curriculum, especially for the sixth form. The school's plans for the development of its IT facilities promise to improve the provision considerably.
102. The library is much too small for a school of this size and type. The stock of books is adequate in quality, but not in quantity. There is only one computer within the library with access to the Internet and a small stock of CD-ROMs. Two quality daily newspapers and a small stock of periodicals are taken. The library has no video facility, nor enough space to create effective areas for study or reading for pleasure. The resources in the library are insufficient to give pupils, especially those taking public examinations, adequate facilities for independent research. The separate careers library is satisfactory in scope. The school's plans to expand the library and to develop it as a multi-media resource centre promise to create much improved facilities. The school makes good use of off-site resources both in this country and abroad.

The efficiency of the school

103. The governing body maintains effective oversight of the strategic planning and spending of the school's budget through its finance committee. The financial information available to it is of good quality: it is prepared to a useful level of detail and is used effectively to monitor spending. The administration officer works closely with the headteacher and governors to ensure efficient management of the funds delegated to the school. The few deficiencies in accounting procedures identified in a recent audit by the local education authority (LEA) have been rectified. The school is successful in raising additional funds. Nevertheless, the school's overall income per pupil is below the national average.

104. Expenditure is generally targeted carefully at the priorities in the school's development plan. Several of the school's areas of expenditure, however, have significant variation from national norms. Expenditure on teaching staff is well below average, resulting in a higher than average ratio of pupils to teachers. The teaching staff is deployed efficiently and effectively and lessons in nearly all cases are taught by specialists. The total teaching time each week is, however, below that recommended nationally. Spending on pupils with special educational needs is well above average and the high quality of support provided for these pupils contributes significantly to their good progress. The provision of administrative and clerical staff is relatively low, but they make a strong contribution to the smooth running of the school.
105. Higher than average spending on educational resources during the last financial year and their effective use have had a positive impact upon the quality of learning. Efficiency of spending has been improved by the school taking responsibility for its own cleaning and by improving the boundary fence and installing surveillance equipment to limit vandalism. The monitoring and control of spending on utilities such as electricity, are, however, unsatisfactory.
106. Pupils' attainment in national tests is, overall, a little below average and could be higher. Their progress is sound, because the teaching is almost entirely competent and much of it is good. Accommodation is clean, attractive and used well. In view of all the above factors, considered in relation to a cost per pupil which is below average, the school provides sound value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

107. Pupils' standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with that found nationally. In national tests in 1999 the percentage of pupils reaching at least level 5 was close to the national average and the percentage reaching at least level 6 was below average. Girls performed better than boys. Results in 1999 were close to the average of pupils in schools with a similar proportion of free school meals. Pupils' average points scores over the last three years have been in line with the national average.
108. The general standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national expectation. In GCSE English language in 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* - C was well below the national average. The performance of boys was particularly poor. A number of scripts were re-marked on appeal and some upgraded; a significant sample has still to be re-marked. Over recent years results have been in line with the national averages. In English literature in 1999 results were slightly above the national average. Girls did much better than boys. The overall standard of attainment in the sixth form is well in line with course requirements. In GCE A-level in 1999, results were well above the national average.
109. Throughout the school pupils listen attentively and work productively in pairs or small groups. The quality of speech varies greatly throughout the school and the overall standard is below that found nationally. Most high-attaining pupils speak fluently and audibly, but a significant number of average and lower-attaining pupils do not speak clearly or think out precisely what they want to say before answering. Pupils in the sixth form talk with maturity and confidence as when, for example, a group discussed articulately and perceptively the subtle and complex relationships between the principal characters in *Othello*. Some pupils sustain effective, lively and audible improvised speech such as, for example, those in Year 9 during role-play presentations on the theme of racism. When talking to adults, pupils are courteous and confident. Some of the weaknesses in oral work identified in the last report have not been remedied.
110. Attainment in reading is in line with that found nationally. The general standard of reading comprehension throughout the school is average and enables pupils to enjoy a wide range of literary and non-literary texts. Ten minutes at the start of lessons in Year 9 are devoted to private reading and this enriches the quality and quantity of pupils' experience of literature. A number of pupils in Year 9 who feel the need for help with their reading benefit greatly from paired work in school with senior pupils and parents. Imaginative use is made of video and other media to aid pupils' understanding of texts. For example, two different film versions of *Henry V* helped to make aspects of the play more vivid. In media studies pupils analyse a rich mixture of non-literary material, identifying the different purposes and audiences for the texts being studied.
111. Written work is average overall. It is, in the main, neatly presented throughout the school. Most pupils draft their work effectively, as is shown by the improved quality of finished work in folders. The best work in Key Stage 4, often in narrative form, is imaginative in content, carefully planned, skilfully crafted, fluently expressed and technically accurate in grammar, spelling and punctuation. In Key Stage 3 some low-attaining pupils make frequent mistakes with sentence structure, vocabulary and spelling and their handwriting lacks care. Lively and

interesting examples of pupils' poems are displayed.

112. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. The overall level of literacy on entry is close to the national average. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are in line with the national average, demonstrating that steady progress has been maintained. Such progress is continued through Key Stage 4, as GCSE results are generally close to the national average in both English language and literature. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because of effective additional support in lessons and other assistance with basic skills. Pupils in Year 9 show rapid improvement in the pace and effectiveness of groupwork. They quickly learn to listen, discuss and make agreed decisions. The standard of pupils' response to literature improves rapidly throughout the school, as they study texts of increasing complexity. In the sixth form, pupils quickly develop knowledge and understanding of a new range of concepts and technical vocabulary in the combined language and literature course at A-level.
113. Almost all pupils throughout the school are well motivated and eager to learn, sustaining concentration well. Many clearly enjoy their work. Relationships are mutually respectful. In groupwork pupils show sensitivity and respect for the views of others. Pupils in Key Stage 4 show initiative in choosing personal projects for media studies. In the sixth form, pupils select and pursue individual studies in language. Pupils of different levels of attainment benefit greatly from working closely together in mixed-ability classes. The high standard of behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning are a particular strength of the department.
114. The quality of teaching throughout the school is never less than satisfactory and is good (or even better) in three-quarters of lessons. In media studies teaching is consistently good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good, with particularly high academic standards in the sixth form. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared. Teachers use a wide range of appropriate methods and approaches. They manage pupils skilfully, especially at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. In the best lessons, tasks are clear, targets are set and kept, a stimulating range of language activities is used, all pupils are appropriately challenged and progress is carefully reviewed. In the few lessons which are less successful, some activities go on too long, targets are not clear and work lacks pace and focus. Relationships with pupils are almost always good. Pupils' work is marked conscientiously and constructively, with some very helpful comments suggesting ways forward.
115. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Departmental documentation is very thorough and informative. The curriculum is constantly under review and clear developmental plans are in place. Provision for and the use of, IT is better than average. Relationships are positive and purposeful. Staff share the same concerns and aspirations for pupils. The department is managed with great energy, skill and vision.
116. In most subject areas across the curriculum pupils listen attentively. The quality of speech varies, but in general pupils' answers to questions tend to lack audibility and fluency. In several subjects (such as mathematics) pupils are insufficiently encouraged to use discussion as a way of learning. Oral work is rarely built into lessons as a way of exchanging ideas and learning through the experience of others. Pupils are rarely required to put forward a point of view and justify it in the face of rigorous questioning. Planned talk and discussion are not widely accepted as an essential way of communicating understanding and learning.
117. The reading comprehension of the great majority of pupils is adequate for them to understand their textbooks and other materials. In science pupils encounter difficulty in pronouncing correctly some technical vocabulary. Pupils are seldom encouraged to read aloud in most

subject areas and they are rarely exhorted to read more widely for research or to broaden their knowledge and understanding.

118. Written work is carefully presented in most subjects, except history, where it is sometimes untidy. In most departments pupils are not expected to write at length and in a few the frequent use of worksheets precludes writing in sentences.

125.

Drama

119. The overall standard of attainment is a little below that found nationally. Although results in 1999 in GCSE were below the national average, they showed a significant improvement upon those of previous years. As the subject is not taught at Key Stage 3, pupils opting to take the GCSE examination have to complete the course in five terms. In these difficult circumstances pupils make sound progress.

120. Pupils work effectively in small groups, listen closely and arrive at agreed decisions. They show enjoyment and interest in their work and are energetic and cooperative. The standard of some key skills is below average - particularly those of movement, spatial awareness and speech. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in developing control over gesture and facial expression. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. The subject is managed with energy and enthusiasm and, through major regular productions, makes a valuable contribution to the general cultural life of the school. Present accommodation is inadequate in terms of space, lighting and floor covering.

Mathematics

121. The proportion of pupils who achieved the basic national standard expected of 14 year olds in the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 was below average. The proportion achieving the higher levels was also below average. Based upon the average points score achieved by all pupils, the school's results were below average compared with all schools and were also below average when compared with those of schools in similar circumstances. The results in previous years were consistently close to national averages. Boys' attainments in 1999 were very similar to those of the girls.

122. The proportion of pupils who achieved grades A*-C in the GCSE examinations in 1999 was below the national average. Few pupils achieved the highest grades, but a larger than average proportion of pupils achieved a grade in the range A*-G. Boys' attainments were broadly similar to those of the girls, contrary to the national picture. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, the results were broadly average. The results over recent years have risen to near the national average, but dipped in 1999.

123. Examination results at GCE A-level in 1999 were below average: 23 per cent of the candidates achieved the highest (A-B) grades, but 31 per cent failed to reach an A-level grade. During recent years the overall quality of the grades achieved has improved slightly. In each of the last few years, however, too many candidates failed to reach an A-level grade.

124. By the end of Key Stage 3, the standard of work of a larger than average proportion of pupils is below that expected of 14 year olds by the National Curriculum. Pupils in the top sets make good progress and attain at least the expected standards in, for example, arithmetic, geometry, trigonometry and statistics. They apply this knowledge competently to solve more

complex problems, such as the design of a container to hold ten tennis balls. This activity led high-attaining pupils to extend the problem and to develop sequences of numbers from which they determined the general term. In response to thorough and systematic teaching, the large majority of pupils make satisfactory progress, but too often their attainment is limited by a lack of ready recall of number facts, by forgotten skills and knowledge and by insufficient understanding of earlier work.

125. Those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language respond positively to very good teaching and the effective support of classroom assistants and make good progress. For example, a class with this range of pupils analysed data they had collected to determine the mode of size of shoe as part of a sequence of lessons on the use of averages. They responded well to the thorough and systematic teaching, conducted at a good pace and went on to apply their knowledge to a variety of situations with increasing confidence and enjoyment of their success.
126. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' attainment is average overall. It could be higher. Those in the top sets achieve high standards in, for example, arithmetic, algebra and geometry and use their skills and knowledge accurately to solve problems such as percentage error in the manufacture of items to a given range of tolerance. They demonstrate an increasing understanding of the basic features of the graphs of a variety of mathematical functions. One top set, for example, used calculators effectively to extend their knowledge of basic trigonometry to drawing a graph of the sine function, quickly realising its shape and periodicity. Lower-attaining pupils make steady progress through a broadly based programme towards the foundation tier at GCSE or a Certificate of Achievement. In response to very good teaching they occasionally make good progress as, for instance, the group who consolidated their knowledge of estimating, measuring and drawing angles. They responded well to their teacher's humour and encouragement, worked hard at the sequence of activities and enjoyed their successes.
127. In Key Stage 4, pupils whose attainment is broadly average make sound progress and generally achieve an appropriate standard in the prescribed skills of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and data-handling. Two such sets of pupils, for example, developed secure competence in using the tangent ratio to find unknown sides and angles of right-angled triangles. Many pupils, however, lack the confidence, urgency or determination to make better progress and gain firmer understanding, in order to use their knowledge appropriately in unfamiliar situations. Consequently, their attainment in GCSE examinations is below that which they demonstrate in class.
128. Pupils' progress in Year 10 is sound and often good. On occasions their progress is impeded by a lack of understanding of basic numeracy. For example, a set of pupils of average attainment studied the reciprocal of numbers and the meaning of index notation, using both positive and negative indices. The progress of many of them towards understanding such notation was lost through their inability to handle the equivalence of fractions. Pupils in the top sets make good progress in an appropriate range of mathematics. Equally, low-attaining pupils respond positively to lively teaching and make good progress as, for example, in their interpretation of 24-hour clock notation and in using train timetables to calculate the time of travel. Pupils who have English as an additional language are assimilated well into the full range of attainment groups across the school. Some of these pupils achieve very high standards.
129. The progress made by A-level pupils is generally sound and a few achieve high standards. They generally learn to work with more independence, although they are not pushed

sufficiently often to think for themselves. In contrast, a pupil studying further mathematics works independently for much of the time and makes very good progress.

130. Pupils' response to the teaching they receive is good overall and frequently very good. Many pupils have pride in their work and present it neatly and logically, using mathematical symbols and terminology correctly. The work of a significant minority, however, is plagued by misspelling of mathematical vocabulary, which remains uncorrected. Pupils are positive and cooperative in attitude and work hard at the tasks set. Many are willing to answer questions, although a large proportion of pupils lack the confidence to make their contributions to discussion using the correct terminology.
131. Pupils' response to challenging work is good. For example, a set of high-attaining pupils in Year 9 used real data to extend their understanding of different forms of average, which included discrete and continuous variables. The nature of the data promoted good discussion amongst the pupils. They worked hard and productively and gained a firm understanding of the details of the subject. In contrast, too many pupils at A-level rely heavily on being told by their teacher what to do. They display a marked reluctance to offer clearly expressed contributions to the discussion of a topic and consequently their confidence in the subject is low overall.
132. Behaviour in lessons is almost invariably good. Pupils generally show respect for their teachers and respond positively to admonition. They form constructive relationships with their peers and their teachers and enjoy humour. They frequently help one another to clarify misunderstandings.
133. The quality of teaching at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is entirely competent and in one lesson in three is very good. The teaching of A-level pupils is satisfactory overall, but occasionally lacks the vitality so frequently present in the teaching in the main school, with a consequent lacklustre response from the pupils. The weaknesses in the teaching identified in the last inspection report, however, have been very largely rectified.
134. Teachers are suitably qualified and their collective experience is wide. These factors are clearly evident in the quality of teachers' explanations and questioning and in their planning and expectations of what pupils can do. They are also adept at anticipating where pupils are likely to make mistakes. Lesson objectives are generally clear and teachers build current work well on that done earlier. Lessons usually include a suitable range of activities. Expectations of what pupils will learn are well matched to National Curriculum attainment targets. At A-level some lack of clarity in the fine detail of the subject, such as the relationship between natural logarithms and the exponential function, or a lack of pace in the learning appropriate to A-level reflects insufficiently high expectations of what pupils can do.
135. Methods of teaching include many clear demonstrations and explanations of mathematical skills and techniques. In a significant proportion of the teaching, however, pupils are not sufficiently invited to participate actively in discussion, using correct terminology, as a means of learning. In such lessons teachers' questioning does not push pupils enough to think things through for themselves and to articulate their ideas in order to achieve firmer understanding. For example, too little is done to enable pupils to learn effectively through discussion of their methods of mental calculation or to explain the reasoning behind the answers they offer. On several occasions teachers are too eager to tell pupils what to do. This high dependence on the teacher partly accounts for examination results being, overall, lower than pupils are capable of.

136. Skills and routines are practised effectively. Often such lessons are thoughtfully interspersed by short discussions which revive pupils' motivation. Practical work is used well as a means of understanding ideas, especially in geometry and in developing pupils' confidence in tackling mathematical investigations. Solving mathematical problems in everyday situations is taught well, but too many pupils get away with not writing their answers logically and clearly. Problems occasionally use real data, such as the medical data used to good effect in the study of exponential growth and decay by A-level pupils. Effective use is made of IT to enhance pupils' learning. For example, a program that allows pupils to explore how graphs of functions change by varying the parameters in their equations is used effectively both at A-level and in main school. Equally, a program which diagnoses pupils' difficulties and provides systematic practice motivates low-attaining pupils very highly.
137. In many lessons the nature of the work and the high quality relationships between teachers and pupils provide a good climate for learning and lead to good behaviour. Where necessary, pupils' behaviour is managed very competently by teachers using effective strategies, such as a well-targeted question or humour which avoid outright confrontation. The pace of lessons is mostly good and resources are used well. During lessons teachers make good, ongoing assessments of pupils' understanding and many errors are followed up effectively by discussion with individual pupils. Formal written assessments are made regularly to check progress through the modules of work. Marking is regular and brief encouraging comments are frequently added. Attainment is recorded consistently, but progress is not sufficiently recorded in relation to National Curriculum attainment targets. Homework is set regularly and used effectively to reinforce pupils' learning. The subject is soundly organised and the teaching staff has the potential to make the necessary improvements.
138. Pupils' overall standard of numeracy is slightly below average, but broadly adequate to support their learning in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils generally understand how formulae are manipulated and solve equations with reasonable accuracy. Calculations are completed with acceptable accuracy in both science and geography and appropriate methods are used to represent data graphically. In design and technology, pupils estimate and measure with reasonable accuracy. Most pupils use calculators well for appropriate purposes, but often rely too heavily upon them to perform trivial calculations that should be done mentally. This is because mental arithmetic is not taught systematically and with sufficient frequency. In part this explains why the results in the Key Stage 3 national tests dipped in 1999, when the use of calculators was restricted.

Science

139. The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 is close to average. Their performance in the 1999 national tests in Year 9 at the significant levels of 5+ and 6+ was below the national average. Over the period 1996-1998 pupils' attainment fell gradually from being in line with the national average to being below and was well below that of those schools with a similar intake of pupils. Boys have tended to perform a little worse than girls. The performance of ethnic minority pupils is not significantly different from that of the majority. Whilst most pupils have a sound knowledge of basic ideas in physics and biology, understanding of chemical processes is less secure.
140. At the end of Key Stage 4 overall attainment is below average. In the 1999 GCSE Double Science examination a little over a quarter of Year 11 gained grades A*-C; this proportion was below that in 1998. Over the last four years, performance at the higher grades has been consistently below the national average; girls have generally done better than boys. Most pupils have reasonable recall of the significant terms in science and appreciate, for example,

the importance of bacteria to life, but some find concepts such as ions and molecules difficult to retain. Pupils appreciate the value of safe working practices and evaluate investigations confidently. In both key stages they use mathematics appropriately to calculate the results of experiments such as the speed of sound and the acceleration of objects.

141. In the sixth form, performance in the A-level examinations (by small numbers of pupils) has been variable, but generally below national averages in all three subjects – strongest in biology and weakest in physics. Whilst high-attaining pupils are confident with the complex ideas at this level, others find them increasingly difficult to comprehend.
142. Over Key Stage 3 most pupils make steady progress, although high-attainers sometimes fail to reach the higher levels of understanding by the end of the key stage. Whilst average pupils make satisfactory progress when they are stimulated to concentrate on the work, low-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs generally progress well, when (as is usually the case) they are given support. Pupils begin satisfactorily to build concepts to explain their observations and results, such as in electrolysis and in the identification, parts and function of cells.
143. Over Key Stage 4, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress. High-attaining pupils make better progress at this stage and begin to understand complex ideas such as the explanation of physical phenomena and the function of parts of the human body. Average pupils learn new ideas when they are clearly directed, whilst the progress of low-attaining pupils is still dependent on their own attitudes and the adult support they receive. Overall girls make slightly better progress than boys. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress.
144. Most pupils in Key Stage 3 show interest in what they do and carry out experiments enthusiastically. They look after equipment carefully and discuss sensibly, with both teachers and one another, what they are doing. In the main they behave well and listen closely to their teachers. Only seldom do pupils lose concentration and disrupt the smooth running of lessons. When the pace of lessons slackens, however, pupils begin to chatter about things other than science. Pupils usually move around the crowded laboratories sensibly, but in some lessons a minority of cheeky boys are insufficiently checked. At this stage, few pupils take much responsibility for their own learning.
145. Over Key Stage 4 most pupils maintain their interest in the subject. A minority of pupils in the lower sets, however, easily become disengaged, slow the pace of learning and tax the patience of teachers. The majority of pupils concentrate well on their work and answer questions when asked. They relate well to one another and generally discuss their work thoughtfully. They create a sound working atmosphere and discuss the outcome of experiments sensibly. When given the opportunity, pupils produce thoughtful assignments for their investigations.
146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and was good in half the lessons seen – especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. At Key Stage 3, pupils are expected to work consistently in lessons, but poor knowledge of what they have learnt in their previous schools results in some marking of time. The planning of lessons is thorough, but often omits objectives being shared with pupils. Teachers use a wide range of methods. These include exposition, demonstrations, practical sessions and worksheets. The worksheets used discourage interest in the topics, unless teachers actively intervene and elaborate on their content.

147. The questioning of pupils is not, in general, sufficiently probing to elicit clearly what pupils know, because teachers are too often content with simple responses which they seldom follow up. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good and caring and the discipline in lessons is generally firm. This sometimes breaks down, when pupils are unsure of what they have to do or when a few are determined not to work. Homework is set regularly and marked thoroughly, with encouraging comments.
148. At Key Stage 4, lessons have sharper objectives and expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers explain clearly what pupils are to learn and use questions and marking to find out what they know. There is still, however, too little in-depth discussion, even with high-attaining pupils, to extend their understanding of topics. Relationships are friendly but firm and discipline in general is sound. Homework is set appropriately and plays a vital part in pupils' learning. In the sixth form, teaching is thorough and engages pupils' interest and intellect well.
149. Schemes of work are well presented and include advice on approaches to teaching, aims to be reached and references to resources. Pupils in the lowest sets study appropriately for the Certificate of Achievement, which is more suited to their needs. The assessment of pupils' performance is thorough and is used for monitoring their progress as well as for setting.
150. The department is now well managed and has clear policies and direction. It promotes an ethos of care and aims towards the highest standards for the pupils. The well-qualified teachers are competently supported by reliable technicians, who are under pressure of time to service the nine laboratories. The laboratories are serviceable, but generally well worn. Some are very cramped and make practical work difficult to organise. Resources are well deployed, although the use of computers is restricted by difficulty of access and shortage of suitable software. There is sufficient equipment for the courses taught and many pupils have textbooks for study at home.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

151. Over the period 1997-1999, GCSE results were well below the national average for the proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C. The proportion of grades A*-G obtained was above the national average in 1997, slightly below it in 1998 and below average in 1999. Girls performed better than boys. In 1998 pupils' overall performance in this subject was significantly below what pupils achieved in most of their other school subjects. Each year a number of pupils who are entered for the examinations do not complete the course, thereby depressing the results. At the end of Key Stage 3, in contrast, the majority of pupils achieve the standard expected nationally. In the sixth form, GCE A-level results were well below the national average over the period 1997-1999 for the proportion of pupils gaining grades A-B and were below average for grades A-E.
152. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is average overall. Their artistic skill is generally above average, but their knowledge and understanding of artists' styles and their ability to work independently and to think creatively are below the normal expectation. In Year 9 the majority of pupils are confident when drawing and painting from observation. They communicate clearly when engaged in discussion about their current work. Their knowledge of art and artists is, however, minimal. This weakness prevents many pupils from making connections between what appear to them to be isolated ideas. Written work is

limited in range and depth, although generally neat and carefully presented. Where the main focus of a lesson is on knowledge and understanding rather than on the acquisition of skill, lower-attaining pupils listen and concentrate poorly.

153. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' attainment in applying artistic techniques and in thinking creatively is generally average and occasionally above average. Higher attainers in Year 11 show above average skills when undertaking observational drawing and three-dimensional work (as, for example, on cubist sculptures), although the standard of experimentation and problem-solving activities in sketchbooks is weak. This current higher overall standard of attainment than that suggested by previous GCSE results is largely owing to better planning and more focused teaching.
154. By the end of the sixth form, students' current attainment is above average overall – again because of improved teaching, especially in critical studies. There is a more even balance between students' technical skill and their knowledge and understanding of their chosen area of study. Students talk fluently about artists and their styles. They recognise the importance of opportunities such as life classes and visits to galleries for their aesthetic development. Paintings in the present Year 13, based on the observation of oranges (after studying the work of Cezanne), are above average in standard. Plans for most individual special studies also show above average levels of commitment.
155. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3, although the lack of consistency in pupils' prior experiences in Years 7-8 slows their development in Year 9. Sketchbooks are well used for homework, but not within lessons, to help pupils to think and to solve problems. Pupils with special educational needs have extra support staff within lessons and make satisfactory progress when engaged in practical activities. Their progress in literacy is unsatisfactory, partly because no displays of key words or other visual aids support their learning. Those with physical disabilities are well supported within lessons and make satisfactory progress. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in IT.
156. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. During the inspection pupils in Year 10 made good progress in the cubist painting project, undertaken both in developing their skills and in their knowledge and understanding of cubist techniques. Higher attainers in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in their understanding of African culture and in designing African posters. Deeper thinking is limited by teachers not helping pupils to identify links between the separate units of work being studied – as, for example, on African and cubist art. Pupils in Key Stage 4 made good progress in planning and producing an expressive slide and musical performance as part of an extracurricular activity. Progress by lower attainers in acquiring knowledge and understanding and in working independently is unsatisfactory. This is owing to their lack of concentration and their unwillingness to listen to key facts.
157. Pupils' progress in the sixth form is good. Pupils gain confidence in delivering prepared talks and in discussing their emerging ideas. They acquire sound personal opinions and the ability to express and defend their ideas, using a range of materials. The (present) larger group sizes and the regular attention of four art teachers aid pupils' progress.
158. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are generally sound in both key stages and good in the sixth form. The majority of pupils enjoy art and behave well. A significant minority (mainly boys) in one class in Year 11 are disruptive.
159. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and in two-thirds of the lessons seen was good.

It is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, but good overall in the rest of the school. The best teaching is where teachers work closely with pupils and involve them actively in all aspects of lessons, including the assessment of the quality of work done. Weaknesses stem from the use of a narrow range of teaching methods and insufficient support for literacy and assessment - for instance, because of the lack of display of technical words or assessment objectives for Key Stage 3. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and committed to achieving higher standards. They are confident and competent in teaching the art element within IT.

160. The accommodation is sufficient, but has inadequate display facilities and sinks. Statutory requirements are met. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection in planning for progression within the school, although links with middle schools are inadequate. The management of the subject has improved to a satisfactory level and departmental documentation is good.

167.

Design and technology

161. At the end of both key stages the attainment of pupils is a little below what would be expected for their age. With the exception of food technology, there has been insufficient progress in the subject since the last inspection report, mainly because of deficiencies in resources that restrict the scope of teaching and limit the standards that pupils can achieve. The level of attainment in the sixth form is average.

162. At the end of Key Stage 3 the proportion of pupils achieving at least level 5, the standard expected for their age, is a little below the national average. The results of the National Curriculum assessments in 1999 were better than in 1998 and pupils achieved an overall standard just below the national expectation, although girls' results were well ahead of boys'. By the end of Year 9, all pupils have basic knowledge and understanding of the design process and satisfactorily plan and create designs for different products.

163. Pupils in Year 9 show average competence in graphics and drawing to explain their ideas for designs. They understand the working characteristics of a range of materials and know how to use tools safely and with reasonable accuracy - as, for example, when creating a pyramid game in wood and metal. They understand the use of mechanisms to create movement and are familiar with basic electronics. Pupils know how raising agents are used in the creation of food products - when, for example, producing a swiss roll. Pupils have inadequate experience in electronics, computer control and textiles, however, because of sparse resources. This gap restricts higher-level work in all years.

164. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is below average overall, although in a minority of cases it is above average. The GCSE results in 1999 were near average and better than results in 1998. Since the last inspection, results in food technology at GCSE have improved significantly. The results in 1999 were well above average and similar to the results in 1998, although they had been below average in previous years. The 1999 GCSE results in resistant materials were just below average and showed improvement over previous years, but those in electronics were well below average. The 1999 GCSE results in the new combined short courses in design and technology and business were also a little below average. Examination results at A-level were below average in 1999, having been well above average in 1998. The standard of current work is average. Standards in electronics and control are restricted by resources.

165. Pupils generally make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 3, because overall time is insufficient on entry to the school in Year 9 to cover work to the expected range and depth.

The discontinuity with teaching in Years 7 and 8 also lowers standards and impedes pupils' progress. In contrast, factors assisting pupils' progress include the overall satisfactory standard of teaching and pupils' own good attitudes to learning. Pupils are given the opportunity to develop a range of skills in design and construction to create their own ideas for products. Investigative skills, based on scientific knowledge, are well developed in food technology. Pupils develop the ability to plan their own work and to evaluate it against objective criteria - as in tests on raising agents.

166. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4 and good progress in the sixth form. Pupils make very good progress in food technology, because they are set clear, short-term targets to achieve and apply a good range of knowledge in solving design problems. In resistant materials pupils make satisfactory progress in traditional methods of designing and construction, but insufficient time in Year 10, coupled with limited resources in materials, electronics and control, hamper their progress. Sixth formers take increasing responsibility for the independent management of their work and make good progress. They are aware of industrial practices and economic, social and environmental issues. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially where extra support is provided in lessons.
167. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in all years. They behave well in lessons and relationships are constructive and purposeful. Pupils work productively in small groups and appreciate opportunities to share ideas with others. Although boys show genuine interest in their work, girls tend to review and evaluate their practical work in greater detail to improve on their success and consequently their progress and attainment are higher. At Key Stage 4 a minority of pupils underachieve, because they show little sense of urgency towards work, prefer practical work to theory and tend to rely heavily on their teachers for direction. Sixth formers show mature attitudes to work and appreciate the relevance of their studies to their careers.
168. Teaching in Years 9-11 varies from good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. It is good in the sixth form. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and they are committed to raising pupils' performance, but insufficient time and sometimes low expectations in Years 9 and 10 limit the range and depth of work covered. Teaching was unsatisfactory in some lessons where resources were inadequate to extend the older and more able pupils - as, for example, in electronics and in computer-aided design and manufacture. Although a new computerised assessment and recording system is in place, the results of assessment are not adequately used, for instance, to raise boys' performance. Teaching in food has improved since the last inspection, because pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to investigate and share ideas and because theory is taught rigorously. Teachers are very confident in using IT.
169. Statutory requirements are met at both key stages. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The department has responded well to the last inspection by, for example, improving schemes of work and introducing new courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The imbalance of specialist staffing (too little for food studies) restricts planning in all years. There is good provision for extracurricular activities and industry and community links are very good. The unsatisfactory accommodation (also identified in the last inspection report) is due to be replaced in the building work planned for the school's reorganisation in September 2000.

Geography

170. Pupils' level of attainment at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 is in line with the national expectation. In the sixth form attainment is above the national norm. When teachers assessed pupils' work in 1999 at the end of Key Stage 3, the results indicated that pupils' achievement was below average and that the overall level for girls was higher than that for boys. In 1999, GCSE results were below the national average and few boys gained the higher grades. Results declined in 1999, but the trend in the previous two years was upward and in 1998 results were above the national average.
171. In 1999, GCE A-level results were above the national average, but were well below it for the proportion of the highest grades obtained. In contrast, results in 1998 were well above the national average. The department has carried out a thorough review of the 1999 results and has implemented clear strategies for raising pupils' attainment in the future.
172. At the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of how landscapes are formed, what places are like and how people can manage their environment. They have a satisfactory knowledge of where places are and of geographical terms. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils provide relevant named examples of the features they have studied. Pupils in the sixth form have a good knowledge of the subject and use it effectively to understand new material. One group of pupils in Year 12, for example, had very good knowledge of wind energy as a source of power, the local environment and the procedures for agreeing plans for new developments. When studying a proposal for a wind farm, they used this knowledge very effectively to discuss, purposefully and fluently, the issues involved, making good use of geographical terms and arriving at sensible conclusions.
173. Pupils have satisfactory skills in collecting and selecting information from resource material. In the sixth form they use the information they have collected very effectively. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form pupils have a sound understanding of the methods of geographical enquiry in collecting data, interpreting the results and forming conclusions. Written answers are usually in full sentences and accurate. Pupils listen well. In Year 12 oral skills are particularly well developed: pupils discuss complex issues clearly and fluently, sustain arguments and make good use of appropriate geographical terms. Pupils have sound numerical skills in interpreting the basic tables and graphs they are required to use.
174. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Good progress is made when there is a brisk review of previous work, clear explanations with well-directed questions, a clear focus and structure for the lesson and a well-thought out exercise to enable pupils to use the knowledge they have learnt. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 10 made good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the links between people and their surroundings through taking rice farming as an example. Following a brisk review of the previous work and homework and a lively, clear explanation with well-focused questions, the pupils collected information from the textbook to complete a well-constructed worksheet. With the support of the teacher they used the information they had collected to produce a systems model for rice farming to compare with other types of farming in a variety of environments.
175. Pupils make sound progress in learning geographical terms, owing to displays in all classrooms of key words which are used regularly by teachers. Slow progress is made when there is a lack of pace, insufficient rigour in questions or challenge in work and when pupils

are not asked to use the knowledge they have learnt. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 and good progress in Key Stage 4, particularly when there is in-class support and work is well matched to their needs.

176. Pupils have a good attitude to the subject. They are interested and have a positive approach to their work. They listen carefully to explanations, but there is a significant minority who are reluctant to make a voluntary contribution to lessons. Behaviour is very good. Exercise books and files are maintained in good order and pupils present work with care. They generally work hard and have a good ability to maintain concentration. Sixth-form pupils are conscientious and well motivated.
177. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There has been an improvement in teaching since the last inspection, through greater consistency in the pace of lessons, challenge in the work set and more purposeful exercises. In one lesson, for example, pupils in Year 13 completed an exercise in which they had explained the main features and formation of waves as part of homework. Following a clear and brisk explanation of the changes in wave formation as they reach a coastline, pupils reinforced their knowledge with a well-designed exercise. They then gained a deeper understanding by using the theoretical knowledge gained to explain to other members of the group the changes in wave formation as waves approach a series of different coastlines.
178. Teachers use their very good understanding of the subject to provide clear and well-illustrated explanations and to plan carefully structured lessons with a clear focus. Lessons start briskly. The resources used are relevant and of good quality and are used effectively. Work often lacks, however, the rigour required to challenge higher-attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3 and there is often a failure to involve all pupils in discussion. The management, preparation and organisation of lessons are good. Positive relationships with pupils result in an orderly, calm and effective working atmosphere. Work is generally well matched to the needs of pupils. Marking is up to date and of satisfactory quality. Homework is set regularly and is generally purposeful.
179. The scheme of work is well written and provides a good basis for teaching. There is no fieldwork in Year 9 to provide support for GCSE coursework. The use of IT is inconsistent and insufficiently developed, as access to computers is difficult. The system of assessment and the recording and analysis of results are very good, but this information is underused to guide individual pupils or for curricular planning.
180. Leadership of the department is good. There is a good ethos, effective monitoring and development planning for the future, based on a clear educational direction for the subject. Accommodation is very good. The subject is taught by three well qualified, experienced and hard-working members of staff, who are well deployed. The quality and quantity of resources are good and all pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form have their own textbooks. There is, however, a shortage of atlases and library resources are unsatisfactory. The department responded well to the issues raised in the previous report and is in a strong position to make further improvements.

187.

History

181. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' attainment is in line with that expected nationally. Teachers assessed their pupils as being slightly below the national average in 1998 and in line with the average in 1999. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The standard of work seen during the inspection was similar to that seen nationally.

182. Pupils taking the GCSE course in Key Stage 4 reach standards which are below the national average and lower than those seen at the last inspection. The percentage achieving grades A*-C in 1999 was well below the national average. The percentage of boys who achieved grades A*-C has declined steadily between 1997 and 1999. The attainment of girls has fluctuated from above average in 1997 to well below average in 1998 and below average in 1999. The percentage of those who gained A or A* grades has been consistently below and often well below, the national average for the last three years. The standard of work seen during the inspection was in line with the national average, although only a small minority showed the potential to reach the very top grades.
183. The attainment of pupils taking GCE A-level is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving grades A-E and grades A-B has risen steadily between 1997 and 1999 and in 1999 was above the 1998 average. The work seen during the inspection was in line with that expected nationally.
184. Pupils in Key Stage 3 use an appropriate range of sources competently to build up evidence about the past. Higher attainers evaluate sources effectively. Many lower-attaining pupils have difficulty using sources for more than simple information. Most pupils see that different views of the past may exist; higher attainers begin to explain why this may be so as, for example, in work on attitudes in the 19th century towards children working in factories.
185. Pupils taking GCSE see and explain satisfactorily the causes of past events and the motives for actions taken. In a lesson on the aims of the great powers at the peace conference to end World War 1 many pupils showed good understanding of the differing aims and the reasons for such aims. They use sources competently, interpreting effectively and making reliable deductions from evidence about past events. Lower attainers have difficulty using and making deductions from complex sources such as political cartoons.
186. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Most pupils acquire sound knowledge and understanding about the past and learn to use sources for evidence, in order to explain why things happened. In some lessons where work is sufficiently challenging and teachers' expectations are high, the progress of higher-attaining pupils is good. Lower attainers and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, helped by appropriately matched work and some well-organised group work. The positive attitude to work of most pupils contributes to their progress.
187. The majority of pupils taking the GCSE examination course make satisfactory progress. They extend their knowledge and further develop their understanding of how to use evidence to explain the past. In most lessons the work set by teachers gives higher attainers the opportunity to develop the higher-level skills needed for the top grades in the examination. The progress of lower attainers is satisfactory but, despite the best efforts of teachers to use methods which support pupils' learning, often restricted by the requirements of the course to read, understand and use difficult sources. Pupils' progress is helped by effective teaching of the content and skills for GCSE and by a positive approach to work by the majority of pupils.
188. The progress made by pupils taking A-level is good. This is the result of effective teaching which gives pupils the opportunity to research, discuss their findings, form their own opinions and challenge, with valid evidence, those of historians and their teacher. A mature approach to work from the pupils is also a major factor in their good progress.
189. The behaviour of pupils is nearly always good and is often very good. Most have a mature

approach to work, show interest and want to do well. Most pupils participate well in lessons, working cooperatively in pairs or small groups. They organise themselves well, show consideration to others and help one another. The support given to pupils with special educational needs by other pupils in their groups is especially noticeable.

190. The quality of teaching is good overall, occasionally very good and never less than satisfactory. It is best in Key Stage 3 and the 6th form and is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Teachers know their subject well at all levels, plan their work effectively and expect all pupils to work hard and behave well. They use an appropriate range of teaching approaches, including some effective group work at all levels, to deepen pupils' understanding. In a lesson at A-level on Henry VII, for example, pupils were asked to consider, in groups, the relative importance of the problems facing Henry on his accession and were helped to develop and justify their own views of the past.
191. Teachers communicate their enthusiasm for the subject to the pupils, who respond well. Pupils are given good opportunities to consider moral issues - as, for example, in a lesson in Key Stage 3 which made links between the attitudes to child labour in the 19th century and the problems of working children in the world today. Marking is regular, although comments on work do not always show pupils clearly enough how to improve. Relationships are good and lessons proceed briskly in a firm but friendly atmosphere.
192. Statutory requirements are met for Year 9 at Key Stage 3. The department is led effectively and staff create a good ethos for learning which contributes much to pupils' progress. Assessment is satisfactory. The present lack of any detailed planning for the arrival of Years 7 and 8 is a weakness. There is no up-to-date IT hardware within the department and access to centrally provided IT, especially for the use of the Internet, is not always easy at times convenient to the department. As a result, little progress has been made since the last inspection in the effective use of IT. Good use is made of off-site resources through fieldwork in Year 9, visits to history workshop days and public lectures for examination groups.
- 199.

Information technology

193. At the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of the majority of pupils is above the national average, mainly in handling information and data. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in 1999 indicate that the significant majority of pupils in Year 9 achieve at least level 5, the basic standard expected for their age. Girls' results were marginally better than boys'. In the corresponding National Curriculum assessments in 1998, results were just below the national expectation and there was no significant difference in attainment between girls and boys.
194. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 9 have good basic knowledge and skills in using computers to organise information and data, to investigate measurement and to control devices. They have mastered the basic competencies of word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets and databases and have reasonable experience of the Internet to search for information. Pupils are familiar with simple programming in order, for example, to investigate shapes in mathematics or to measure and log data in science. Higher-attaining pupils work largely independently, as when using a spreadsheet to calculate the profits of a small tuck shop. Lower-attaining pupils complete their work satisfactorily, with appropriate support from teachers.
195. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is average overall, but generally above average in the specialist courses. Higher-attaining pupils are confident enough to work independently and

maintain near average standards, mainly in processing information and handling data. A small number of pupils in Year 10 follow a new GCSE course in information studies; recent policy has been not to enter pupils from GCSE courses in IT, because increasing numbers of pupils complete GNVQ vocational courses. In the sixth form, A/AS-level provision is mainly through the local post-16 consortium. Students' attainment is in line with course requirements, although the small number of students currently entered by the school makes national comparisons inappropriate.

196. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. Pupils enter Year 9 with levels of attainment that are very varied. They make good progress in tasks that are carefully structured to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in handling information and data, simple programming and computer-aided design. Very good guidance materials for pupils enable them to work independently at their own pace and to enhance their progress. Pupils have good opportunities to use IT in many subject areas to consolidate their progress. This aspect has improved since the last inspection report. For example, pupils use spreadsheets for data-handling and graphical representation in mathematics and science, word processing in English and geography and drawing packages in art and in design and technology.
197. At Key Stage 4 and above, pupils build satisfactorily on their knowledge of applications as they become more confident. They develop a critical awareness of IT within society through planned work in subjects and options at GCSE and GNVQ - as when pupils in Year 11 produce a report on the data-handling systems for stock control in a supermarket. At sixth-form level pupils use IT skills effectively to enhance their learning in several subjects and often exploit higher-order skills - as, for example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 13 when pupils used a graph-package to investigate the effects of changing parameters in formulae.
198. Pupils are well behaved in lessons in all years. They settle to work quickly and maintain good levels of concentration to produce work to a good standard. They listen carefully so as to understand what is expected and enjoy working individually at their own pace, using detailed guidance materials that develop their independence. They persevere to master new skills and show concern for accuracy - as when drawing designs for a toy train to show the detail of how components are fixed together. They appreciate the regular discussion and assessment of their work which enables them to know how well they are doing. Pupils with special educational needs work confidently with the good support given.
199. Teaching in the specialist courses is never less than satisfactory and is usually good throughout the school. Across the curriculum teaching varies widely, but is satisfactory overall. Specialist teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan well to ensure that pupils achieve good standards. Lessons have clear short-term objectives and teachers' expectations are high. Careful attention is given to the range and sequence of activities to ensure a rigorous and consistent approach. Guidance material for pupils is very well written, develops their ability to work independently and contributes to a good pace of learning. Pupils' work is assessed frequently and teachers give helpful guidance to ensure that pupils know what to do to improve.
200. Many teachers in other subjects have high levels of competence in IT and contribute to taught courses in the subject. There is good use of IT in English, design and technology, special educational needs and vocational courses. In mathematics, art, modern foreign languages and music it is satisfactory. It is insufficiently used in science, geography, history and RE, mainly because of inadequate access to hardware or software, but these deficiencies are likely to improve substantially with the new building. Although there is much good work in

departments, not all pupils experience the full range of IT usage. Information technology is not centrally coordinated and monitored effectively in Key Stage 4 and National Curriculum requirements are not fully implemented at this key stage.

201. The school has made good progress in addressing weaknesses raised in the last inspection report. For example, it has improved schemes of work to raise pupils' levels of achievement and has increased resources and staff training to use IT confidently. Information technology is valued as a crucial part of pupils' learning and features prominently in the school's strategic plan for the next five years. The school is meeting its targets for 1999-2000 to support and enhance the use of IT across the curriculum. The present organisation and location of IT restrict access to resources for several other subjects and there are insufficient numbers of computers within departments. The present plans for new building are designed to ease the situation. The technical and teaching support for IT is good.

208. **Modern foreign languages**

202. Attainment at the end of both Key Stages 3 and 4 is below average. In GCSE examinations in 1999 the proportions gaining grades A*-C in both French and German were below the national average. Over the last three years GCSE results in French have fluctuated between above and below average, but have been below average overall. They are consistently well below average in German. Girls outperform boys in both languages by more than is the case nationally. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-G was above average over the last two years. In 1998, results in modern foreign languages compared favourably with most other subjects in the school.

203. Attainment in the sixth form is average on the GCE A-level courses in both French and German. Examination results in 1999 were above average. Over the last three years results for the small number of entries have risen steadily from below to above average. Some pupils at this stage show high-level skills: they cope well, for example, with unfamiliar language when listening and reading and are confident in the use of the foreign language and its structures in their speaking and writing. The attainment of others is at a lower level, but still satisfactory for the course. Overall, pupils consolidate their knowledge of grammar and have a satisfactory range of linguistic skills for the examination.

204. In Key Stages 3 and 4 the majority of pupils lack confidence in speaking and listening. Nevertheless, some pupils in both French and German show quick understanding, good fluency and confidence as, for example, when pupils in Year 10 made arrangements to go out or said how they preferred to travel. Pupils read short phrases or paragraphs for information satisfactorily and in Key Stage 4 higher attainers cope well with longer texts for GCSE. More extended reading for enjoyment is insufficiently developed. The standard of writing is below average, except in the sixth form where it is average. From Year 9 onwards, however, higher attainers use different tenses with satisfactory understanding. In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, pupils often produce a good, average standard of extended writing for examination coursework, occasionally using word processing to good effect.

205. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 and is good in the sixth form. It is occasionally unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3, owing mainly to the poor attitudes of a few pupils. In general, higher attainers extend their range of vocabulary soundly and improve their confidence in handling linguistic structures. Sixth formers consolidate their grasp of grammar, extend their reading skills and successfully combine higher-level linguistic skills in relating past experiences and in discussing topical issues such as mobile phones or the Berlin

Wall. Throughout the school pupils learn to use a foreign language for realistic purposes. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good overall, especially when they receive extra support in class.

206. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. They are satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3, except where the poor attitudes and behaviour of a small minority of pupils spoil the atmosphere for learning. In the best lessons pupils participate willingly in class activities and show interest and enjoyment. Concentration is mostly good. A minority of pupils work well independently and develop satisfactory reference skills, but many are too reliant on frequent guidance from their teachers. Pupils work well in pairs or small groups, when the activities are well structured.
207. Teaching is satisfactory in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and is good in the sixth form. In two-fifths of lessons seen teaching was good and occasionally very good. In one lesson it was unsatisfactory. Occasional weaknesses in teaching are the insufficient or ineffective use of the foreign language in lessons, the unnecessary use of English and activities that lack pace or do not involve pupils actively enough in learning. Teachers have sound command of the foreign languages and, in the vast majority of lessons, use them appropriately. In the best lessons teachers' expectations of pupils are suitably high, relations are positive, routines and discipline are good and feedback to pupils by teachers is encouraging. Teachers give good advice on examination requirements. Suitable homework is given regularly and is used effectively to consolidate learning or to prepare for the next lesson. There is generally satisfactory use of resources, but insufficient opportunities for pupils to read extensively.
208. The leadership and management of the department are good, focussing well on raising standards of both teaching and learning. Planning for future developments is thorough in the short and medium term, but lacks sufficient detail and priorities in the longer term. Assessment procedures are very thorough, but manageable. The use of information for curricular analysis and planning is very good. There are, however, insufficient textbooks for pupils to take home, so inhibiting the development of study skills. The high proportion of part-time teaching results in too many shared classes, with consequent problems of continuity in pupils' learning.
209. The department's response to the last inspection report has been positive. Most lessons now have reasonable pace and sufficient challenge. There is still a good programme of foreign visits and exchanges. Specialist rooms are well maintained and some displays are good. Staff morale and teamwork are high. All these factors create a positive ethos for the teaching of the subject.

Music

210. By the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment of pupils is in line with the national average. Pupils perform and compose to a satisfactory standard. They use their voices, electronic keyboards and percussion to improvise and compose simple phrases and melodies and to add chords and drum tracks. Through practical activities they learn how melody and harmony fit together and how pieces are structured when, for instance, they practise and perform the Blues. They also understand how music can be expressive by composing short tracks to film sequences.
211. Pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge of the rudiments of music through the practical tasks they undertake in almost every lesson. They acquire in Year 9 a fair background knowledge of modern popular styles of music, including rap, blues and jazz. They also learn about the classical and romantic periods of music and the typical orchestral instrumentation associated with them.
212. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is in line with the national average. In the 1998 and 1999 results in GCSE, taken together, 14 out of 24 pupils gained grades of A-C. None of them gained an A* grade. During the inspection, evidence drawn from lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that attainment in all required areas is higher than that indicated by these earlier GCSE results. This is owing to the appointment of a new head of music who has introduced good class teaching, individual instrumental lessons and a lively programme of extracurricular activities.
213. At Key Stage 4 most pupils play instruments, with varying degrees of skill. Most develop a useful facility on the keyboard and competent skills in the use of notation. They use these skills in order to perform and compose and as an aid to musical understanding. By the end of the key stage they compose pieces in a fair range of styles and with varied instrumentation. Compositions include piano studies, percussion pieces and pieces for solo instrument with accompaniment. Pupils acquire a good working knowledge of Western music from the main historical periods – as, for example, in their study of a suite by Bach and Handel's *Water Music*. Theoretical studies are almost always reinforced by the pupils' playing of pieces from the period. At both key stages pupils' attainments in performance on an instrument are satisfactory overall, as exemplified by Associated Board examination results.
214. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school in Year 9 with a wide range of musical experiences, but overall their attainment on entry is broadly average. In early lessons there is an emphasis on establishing common ground and on revising basic knowledge and skills. This is achieved mainly through practical activities, including rhythmic work and learning simple scales and short chord sequences and through exploring the expressive possibilities of musical instruments. Throughout the year pupils' confidence is boosted as a result of a strong emphasis on performance. Progress in the knowledge and use of scales, chords and notation is hampered by the lack of continuity which results from pupils' very varied experiences in their previous schools.
215. In Key Stage 4, pupils make sound progress. Progress in Year 10 is rapid. In their early lessons they experience the challenge of performing before their own peers, consolidate their knowledge of musical terms and the main historical periods and develop a facility with time and tune in order to compose. As they work to the requirements of the GCSE course, their musical knowledge and skills are extended well enough to enable them to listen analytically to major musical works. These skills include a good working knowledge of terminology. For example, in a lesson on Handel's *Water Music* they learnt to distinguish solo lines or groups of instruments and to identify the form of the music.

216. In all lessons pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils show a genuine interest in their work, listen well and respond readily to teachers' questions. Pupils behave very well in lessons and show respect for one another and towards their teachers. Pupils take good care of instruments, equipment and furniture. In all classes they are encouraged to work in groups both in the main classroom and in adjacent spaces. They get on well with their work, even when they are not directly supervised. Pupils take advantage of the department's facilities outside lesson times, often with minimal supervision. By the end of Key Stage 4 almost all pupils have acquired a good (and sometimes very good) level of self-discipline for successful study.
217. Teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good teaching. Teachers know their subject well and have good skills as performers, accompanists and conductors. These skills are especially evident in the GCSE work. Discipline is very good in lessons and time is used very efficiently. Pupils are always given a time limit within which they should complete their tasks; this leads to a real sense of urgency in their learning.
218. Long-term planning is good and lessons are always well prepared. Teachers know the pupils well and make suitable allowances and give reasonable challenges according to individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs are given extra attention, where appropriate. All pupils' work is assessed very regularly and pupils are always told what is expected of them in order to achieve a higher level. At Key Stage 4, assessments are accurately carried out with proper reference to GCSE requirements. The head of department provides additional theory lessons outside lesson times. A team of visiting teachers gives tuition on most instruments. Provision of individual lessons has only recently been fully introduced, but is already having a positive effect on standards.
219. Approximately 35 pupils receive instrumental lessons and at least 150 take part in extracurricular activities which include a brass group, woodwind ensemble, several rock bands and a school choir which performs to a very good standard. Vocal work has improved since the last inspection. A recently introduced novel feature of the provision is karaoke, which attracts up to 150 participants.

226. **Physical education**

220. Pupils' overall attainment at the end of both key stages is broadly in line with the national expectation, although a significant minority of pupils attain above average standards in a range of games. In Year 9, boys and girls perform the basic skills of passing, catching, stopping and dribbling a ball to at least a sound standard. Many pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of tactical play and of the rules of the games they play. The previous inspection report indicated that many boys did not achieve the standards of which they were capable. Except in gymnastics, where boys' movement often lacks control and finesse, this issue has been addressed satisfactorily. Girls plan their sequences well and perform with greater fluency than boys.
221. At Key Stage 4 pupils extend their range of skills in at least two activities and participate competently in the full adult versions of games. A significant minority attain standards that are beyond those expected nationally, especially those who are regularly involved in extracurricular activity. Some pupils achieve county and national recognition. More than 20 pupils have represented their county, the North of England and, in one instance, England, at volleyball - an outstanding achievement.

222. Results in the GCSE examination have improved significantly since the 1994 report. In 1997 only six per cent of pupils achieved the higher A*-C grades. In 1999, although the proportion was still below the national average, 37 per cent of pupils were successful at this level. The majority of pupils currently taking the GCSE course attain good standards in practical work and a significant minority attain similar standards in lessons on the theory of the subject. They have a good grasp of the advantages and disadvantages of sponsorship in sport. A smaller minority find the theory in the course too difficult and attain below average standards. Seven pupils are currently taking the subject at GCE A-level as part of the local post-16 consortium.
223. In both key stages pupils, including those with special educational needs, make mainly good progress in lessons and over longer periods of time. In games lessons pupils in Year 9 continue to increase their range of skills and their understanding of tactical play. In one gymnastics lesson girls made satisfactory progress as they planned and performed sequences of movement with a partner or a member of a group. Progress in gymnastics, however, is unsatisfactory and many pupils, especially boys, still perform at a level more appropriate for (at best) eleven-year-old pupils.
224. In Key Stage 4 the best progress is made in games lessons by pupils in Year 10. They continue to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills in an appropriate range of activities. In a badminton lesson higher-attaining pupils made very good progress not only in developing their skills, but also in their ability to observe and analyse the performance of their peers. The high expectations of the teacher and the mature attitudes of the pupils were key factors in this success. Most pupils on the GCSE course make good progress in practical and theory lessons. Least and often unsatisfactory, progress is made by a minority of lower-attaining pupils who do not approach their studies with the necessary level of diligence and determination.
225. In the great majority of lessons pupils work with considerable enthusiasm and sustained commitment. They listen well, observe demonstrations carefully and, in the main, make good use of time to improve their skills. They cooperate well with partners, in groups and in teams. In competitive situations they play fairly and with due respect for rules. Pupils generally take much care to present their written work neatly. Pupils behave well and dress appropriately for practical lessons. The poorly developed learning skills and poor attitudes of many boys in Key Stage 3 reported as prevalent in 1994 are not now evident; on the contrary, the skills and attitudes of boys are now strengths of lessons in Year 9.
226. In about two-fifths of lessons teaching is good. In a further fifth it is very good (and occasionally outstanding) and always at least broadly satisfactory overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and in many lessons expect much from the pupils. Teachers usually set tasks that are both appropriate and challenging. In gymnastics, however, boys are inadequately challenged. In the best lessons teachers make good use of question and answer sessions to check on pupils' progress and understanding. In a few (but not enough) lessons teachers group pupils according to their prior attainment. This arrangement is used effectively in GCSE theory lessons and ensures that the higher-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged.
227. Teachers take particular care to share their time equitably amongst pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils who spend much time in wheelchairs are well integrated into lessons and are given good help not only by the teachers and learning assistants but also by other pupils. Pupils who, for whatever reason, do not participate in practical work are usually, but not always, given appropriate tasks that require them to observe and analyse how other pupils

perform and learn.

228. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met at Key Stage 4. The programme of work for pupils in Year 9 is typical of that found nationally. The work schedule in Year 9 suggests that statutory requirements are met, but the school has only very limited knowledge of the programmes of study taught in its contributory middle schools. This is a weakness that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency, in order to ensure that all pupils receive a balanced curriculum. The time available for the subject in Year 9 is below the national average. Only 14 pupils in the sixth form have timetabled provision for the subject; this situation is as unsatisfactory as it was in 1994.
229. The head of department has been in post for only two years. In this time she has achieved much. In particular standards of attainment have risen and there is a positive ethos in a department in which teachers and pupils enjoy working. The 1994 inspection reported that the indoor teaching areas were not well maintained, that the gymnasia were poor and that the radiators in them were a hazard. The level of maintenance is now satisfactory and the gymnasia, whilst old, are of an acceptable standard. The radiators remain as before. A statutory assessment of risks to health and safety has not been completed. Resources for the subject are now adequate, except for a shortage of textbooks for GCSE work.
230. About a quarter of pupils are regularly involved in one or more of a good range of extracurricular activities. Eight members of staff, including all PE specialists, give up much time to coach, supervise and officiate at these activities that afford the pupils many good opportunities to enhance their skills and their personal and social development.

237.

Religious education

237.

238. Pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 3. Pupils know about the significance of Christian and Jewish initiation ceremonies such as baptism and circumcision. They bring their own understanding and experiences appropriately to their written work - for example, when describing the meaning of "awe" and relating it to the feeling of being applauded after a first piano performance. They relate the life of St. Francis to the need to care for living things today and write in a thoughtful and reflective way about what it would be like to be a parent.
231. In Key Stage 4 all pupils in Year 10 study the GCSE short course in RE and some undertake further study for the GCSE full course. In Year 11 pupils either study the full GCSE course or follow the Agreed Syllabus, since the two-year short course only began in the school in September 1999. The GCSE examination in the subject was taken for the first time in 1999, when 57 per cent of pupils gained grades in the range A*-C.
232. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is average overall, although ranging from well above to well below average. In Year 10, pupils studying for the GCSE full course reach an average standard overall. Pupils generally give and write full answers to questions, showing a clear understanding of what has been taught. For example, when studying Islam, they have fair recall of facts about the early upbringing and life of the prophet Mohammed, understanding how his experience may have helped him to sympathise with the poor. They are secure in their knowledge about aspects such as "The Night of Power" and on such basic information as that the prophet Mohammed's wife was his first convert. In Year 11, pupils have a good understanding, for instance, of the life of Malcolm X and how Jihad changed his negative to positive and inclusive views. In a minority of lessons attainment is below average

(and for some pupils well below), when considering Jihad and social change. In these lessons many pupils have difficulty in considering the importance of, or conflict between, political and religious laws and the higher status accorded by Muslims to religious law – as, for example, when they learn about Farid Esack.

233. Those pupils following the short course in Year 10 reach an average standard overall. The majority of pupils with English as an additional language also reach an average standard, as texts provide good support for them. Pupils consider carefully, for example, the Five Pillars of Islam, apply the giving of charity to their own experience and are aware of the importance of prayer in the daily life of a Muslim. In Year 11 those following the Agreed Syllabus take notes well when watching a video, comment thoughtfully on what may cause a breakdown in relationships and show a good level of understanding of social problems. The depth of their understanding in Year 11 is limited by the small amount of time given to the subject.
234. In Key Stage 3 pupils make sound progress in lessons. In their first term at the school progression from one topic to the next is not always clear and different topics are covered in parallel classes. The scheme of work, however, shows good overall progression and coherence across Year 9. There is no evidence of progression from what pupils studied in Years 7-8 in their previous schools.
235. Those studying the GCSE course in Key Stage 4 make good progress in learning to think deeply and in coming to their own conclusions about important issues. Good teaching encourages pupils to put forward ideas, to consider beliefs carefully and to understand the importance of standing up for them. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge of Islam, for example and in developing an understanding of the nature of a spiritual journey. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers, who set tasks well matched to their individual levels of attainment.
236. Those studying the short course and the Agreed Syllabus make good progress overall during the time they are taught. On the short course pupils made good progress, for instance, when the teacher started with his own experience of watching people win large sums of money on television, encouraged pupils to consider how that money should be spent and finally helped them to understand better the meaning of Zakah and the third pillar of Islam. In Year 11, pupils made very good progress in thinking through the responsibilities of parents and children to each other, analysing problems and coming up with solutions - such as the importance of parents doing things with their children, in order to set an example. Limitations of teaching time, however, inevitably impose some restriction on the breadth and depth of the progress pupils make.
237. The response of pupils is good in Key Stage 3. Pupils show interest in lessons, listen attentively and are keen to answer questions. Boys and girls contribute equally. Many pupils comment with appreciation on the quality of experience that the school offers them. In their written work most pupils write at speed and with concentration. They respond positively when asked about their previous work and generally take a pride in the presentation of their work. The response of pupils in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory, although in two-fifths of lessons seen it was good and occasionally very good. In the best lessons pupils respond enthusiastically, discuss and collaborate well with one another in groups and express their personal views sensitively and clearly. A minority of pupils, in contrast, do not readily volunteer answers and have to be coaxed to put forward their views.
238. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall in both key stages. In Key Stage 3 teachers have very good subject knowledge and imaginative ways of

making lessons interesting - for example, using a microphone to emphasise the voice of God and the importance of what is read from the Bible. Lessons include a good range of activities which motivate pupils well. Teachers are particularly good at ensuring that all pupils are questioned and contribute their views, even when they are diffident. Praise and encouragement are used well to boost pupils' confidence. Pupils respond well to their teachers' warm appreciation, although they occasionally become over-excited. Pupils with special educational needs are very well helped both by support staff and teachers and take a full part in lessons. Higher-attaining pupils, with greater knowledge than others, occasionally have to be restrained, so that other pupils can answer questions, but are sometimes insufficiently challenged. Occasionally tasks are not clearly explained. Pupils are clearly told what standards are expected in the presentation of homework and how to improve it.

239. In Key Stage 4 teachers have sound subject knowledge. In the best lessons pupils are given very clear information about what they will learn, as for example when low-attaining pupils were taken step by step through activities to ensure that they succeeded. Lessons have a good balance of discussion, activities and writing. The teachers' calm and confident approach gives pupils the security to put forward different points of view. Good use is made of a range of resources. Although non-specialist teachers do not always approach topics from a religious angle, good use was made, for example, of the story of the Prodigal Son to discuss the responsibilities of parents and children towards one another.
240. Planning is satisfactory in all lessons. Where teaching is good, there is clear progression from one activity to the next and teachers question pupils thoroughly. Much time is well spent on ensuring that pupils understand concepts and almost all lessons incorporate both learning about religion and from religion: when learning about Islamic prayer, for example, pupils observe a minute's silent reflection in the lesson. Work is, in the main, well matched to pupils' levels of attainment through the choice of course they follow and the additional support they receive from adults. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported. The occasional unsatisfactory teaching is typified by unclear objectives, unnecessary asides or comments which distract pupils, or by homework not being clearly set. The standard of presentation of overhead projector transparencies and classroom display is unsatisfactory.
241. Experienced teachers teach very well, but there is only one specialist in the department, with the result that all responsibility for development falls on one person. Very short departmental meetings are held only once each half-term. The school has addressed the shortage of specialists for the coming academic year, but progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory overall, despite the very good progress made by the head of department in improving provision. For example, the Agreed Syllabus, the GCSE short course and the GCSE full course have all been introduced in Key Stage 4, where previously no RE was taught. The ethos for learning is good. The current teaching time in Year 11, however, is too short to cover the syllabus in appropriate depth and RE is still not taught to all pupils in the sixth form.
242. Lessons are taught in three different parts of the school, but most lessons are taught near the music rooms. The sound of instrumental practice is not conducive to good learning and quiet reflection – as, for example, when the RE teacher was teaching about “The Night of Power” and the nature of a spiritual journey. Resources are now adequate and there are enough textbooks to cover the courses taught. There is no provision, however, for the use of IT.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

Time spent observing lessons during the inspection

KEY STAGE	3	4	6th	TOTAL
lessons seen	53	95	45	193
hours	45	86	37	168

243. The team of 16 inspectors visited the school for a combined total of 53 days. During the week of the inspection the team observed 193 whole lessons or parts of lessons, many morning and afternoon registration and form-tutor sessions, all assemblies and a range of extracurricular activities.
244. All teachers at school during the inspection (including the headteacher) were seen teaching, most several times. One hundred and five planned discussions were held with governors, the headteacher, the senior management team, all heads of departments and other staff responsible for particular policies or aspects of the school's work. Inspectors had 11 further discussions with a wide range of non-teaching and support staff, including staff from the local education authority. The headteacher of a contributory middle school was also interviewed.
245. Inspectors looked in depth at all the work of a representative sample of 16 pupils (three drawn from each of Years 9 to 11, four from the sixth form and three pupils with special educational needs). Planned, formal discussions were held with these 16 pupils and informal discussions took place with many more.
246. Documentation provided by the school about all aspects of its work was analysed by the team in detail before and during the inspection. Three meetings were held at the school before the inspection - with the teaching staff, with the governing body and with 26 parents at a specially arranged meeting. The team considered responses from 203 parents to a questionnaire about their opinions of the school. The inspection team gave feedback on their performance, both formally and informally, to all teaching staff. The Registered Inspector reported back after the inspection to the senior management team (both orally and in writing) and to the governing body.

247. DATA AND INDICATORS

255. 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
Y9 - Y13	1077	39	128	153

255. Teachers and classes (Y9-Y13) :

Qualified teachers

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	57.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.7

255. Education support staff

Total number of education support staff:	26
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	668

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	78.1
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Average teaching group size:	KS3	27
	KS4	24

Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	2,350,558
Total Expenditure	2,353,517
Expenditure per pupil	2,237
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,327
Balance carried forward to next year	1,368

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

1077

Number of questionnaires returned:

203

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	23	67	7	2	1
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	32	60	7	1	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	22	57	19	1	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	20	55	19	5	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	47	45	6	1	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	27	62	9	1	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35	52	9	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	36	55	7	1	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	25	57	14	3	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	30	58	9	2	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	41	49	8	1	1

Other issues raised by parents

There were additional comments from parents on 23 of the 203 questionnaires returned.

Amongst the many positive points mentioned were:

- the clear vision and leadership of the headteacher;
- the good progress children make in their studies and overall personal development;
- the commitment and approachability of staff;
- the rapid growth in pupils' self-confidence when they join the school in Year 9; and
- optimism about the school's future progress.

Amongst the very few concerns expressed in questionnaires were:

- insufficient detail about curricular subjects.