

INSPECTION REPORT

Monk's Walk School
Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 117536

Headteacher: Mr Richard Foster

Reporting inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild
15918

Dates of inspection: 22 – 26 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708149

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Marj Otty
Date of previous inspection:	November 1994

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Rosemary Hussain, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour & personal development Attendance Support, guidance & pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Declan McCarthy, Core Inspector	Science Equal opportunities Special educational needs	Efficiency
Alastair Matthews	English (leading) Religious education	Curriculum & assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
Barbara Baughan	English (supporting)	
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Jennifer Adey	Art	
John Hardy	Business education	Staffing, accommodation &
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The school enables pupils to achieve results in National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 which are well above those for schools nationally and above those for similar schools; results are especially high in English.
- GCSE results are above the national average and higher attaining pupils succeed in gaining a significant number of A* and A grades.
- Through the sixth form consortium, students at post-16 have access to a wide range of A / AS level courses, and the average point score at A level has generally been well above that nationally over the last few years.
- Teaching is at least good in two-thirds of lessons and very good in a quarter of lessons.
- The Principal sets high expectations for staff and pupils. He provides very clear educational direction to the school and is ably supported, both individually and collectively, by members of the senior management group.
- The information the school provides for parents is exemplary.
- There are excellent links with the local and extended community.
- The integration of pupils from Tewin Water Special School into Monk's Walk provides them with excellent opportunities; this link enriches both schools.
- There are very good extra-curricular opportunities.
- Careers education and guidance is excellent, and the school's system of pastoral care is very effective.
- Pupils are courteous and relationships between pupils and teachers are of a high quality.
- The school makes very good arrangements for the professional development of its staff.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, and it makes insufficient provision for pupils' spiritual development.
- II. Statutory requirements are not met for information technology at Key Stage 4 or for religious education in Years 11 to 13.
- III. Teachers do not all consistently match work to the full range of ability in their classes.
- IV. Individual education / learning support plans do not contain sufficiently specific or measurable learning targets.
- V. There is insufficient formal monitoring of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has many strengths and provision is exceptional in some areas; its strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis for the governors' action plan, which will be sent to parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has a very good capacity to improve further. There is a clear commitment to continual development and very good progress has been made on almost all issues identified in the previous inspection. Line management has been strengthened and there are now clear systems for monitoring the curriculum and assessment. Senior and middle managers have undertaken a considerable amount of lesson observation in the last two years and the quality of teaching has improved substantially in this time. There is more variety of teaching approaches, for example in mathematics and science, but work is not always sufficiently matched to the full range of ability and the learning needs of all pupils in the class. The school evaluated its provision in relation to its equal opportunities practices, giving a particular emphasis to improving the attainment of boys. Inspection evidence shows that boys and girls are making similar progress. The school carried out an audit of its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development following the last inspection, but little further action has been taken to improve provision for

spiritual development. Provision for spiritual development remains unsatisfactory and the school still does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils or to ensure that religious education is taught to pupils in Years 11 to 13.

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

In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1999, the school’s results were well above the national average and above those for similar schools. In English, results were well above those nationally and very high compared with similar schools. In mathematics, they were well above results nationally and above those for similar schools. In science, results were above the national average and broadly in line with those for similar schools. A particularly high proportion of pupils gained the higher Levels 6 and 7 in English and mathematics. There has been a clear improvement in results since the last inspection. The school has introduced a revised curriculum in science in an attempt to bring science results more in line with those in English and mathematics; from pupils’ attainment in lessons, it is evident this is already having a positive effect.

At GCSE in 1999, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades was above that for schools nationally and broadly in line with that for similar schools. The percentages gaining five or more A* to G grades and one or more A* to G grades were both in line with the national average but below those for schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, when the performance of the 1999 GCSE group is compared with the results they achieved in Key Stage 3 tests in 1997, it is evident that pupils’ achievement at GCSE was much higher overall than could be expected and very high in English and mathematics. This shows that a great deal of value is being added as pupils move through the school. Outstanding results were achieved in 1999 by a number of higher attaining pupils who gained several A* and A grades, the highest attaining pupil gaining ten A* grades at GCSE.

At A / AS level, the average point score of students entered for two or more A levels or AS equivalents was in line with the national average in 1999. Results at A level fluctuate somewhat from year to year. In 1998, the school’s results were well above those nationally and results since the last inspection have been high overall. In 1998, girls achieved the best results but this was reversed in 1999.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7 - 9	Good	English, mathematics, science, information technology, physical education	Design & technology
Years 10 - 11	Good	English, art, geography, history, information technology, physical education	Modern foreign languages
Sixth Form	Good	English, science, art, history	
English	Very good		
Mathematics	Good		
Science	Good		

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95% of lessons; it is at least good in 65%; it is very good and occasionally excellent in 23%.

There are examples of very good teaching in most subjects and there is a considerable proportion of very good, and occasionally excellent, teaching in English and physical education. Teaching is also of a particularly high quality in art and history at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and in science at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Teaching is very good in occasional lessons in mathematics, food technology, geography, information technology, and in modern foreign languages in the sixth form.

There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching - amounting to 5% of lessons seen - in modern foreign languages, design & technology, art, mathematics and science. In those lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory and in some others where there is scope for improvement, work is insufficiently matched to the different abilities and learning needs of pupils in the class. Occasionally, this reduces the progress made by higher attaining pupils but it is more often lower attainers whose progress is adversely affected.

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	Behaviour is good. Pupils nearly always display positive attitudes in lessons and cooperate with what is expected of them. The school operates as an orderly community and only rarely does inappropriate behaviour impact on pupils' learning.
Attendance	The attendance rate is good.
Ethos*	The school has a very positive ethos. There is a joint commitment to high academic achievement and to the pastoral care of pupils.
Leadership and management	The Principal and the senior management group provide very effective leadership. Other staff who hold positions of responsibility generally fulfil these effectively.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced overall, but statutory requirements are not met for information technology at Key Stage 4 or religious education in Years 11 to 13. Some subjects in some years at Key Stage 3 are allocated less time than they should ideally receive.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development, good provision for moral and cultural development, but provision for spiritual development remains unsatisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staff are well qualified and the level of staffing is adequate overall. Learning resources are generally sufficient except for information technology (IT). Necessary improvement in facilities for IT are dependent upon the school's proposed building programme as well as upon increased IT resources.
Value for money	The school provides good value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>VI. The good standard of work their children achieve.</p> <p>VII. The 'completely rounded approach' the school adopts to enabling pupils to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>VIII. Pastoral provision and the positive values the school instils in their children.</p> <p>IX. The leadership of the Principal and the senior management group.</p> <p>X. Induction and careers guidance.</p> <p>XI. The commitment of the staff and very positive relationships between staff and pupils.</p> <p>XII. The link with Tewin Water Special School.</p> <p>XIII. The information the school provides for parents.</p>	<p>XIV. The match of set tasks to pupils' ability and</p> <p>XV. That peer pressure sometimes adversely affects that the school is doing what it can to address this).</p>

Inspectors' judgements wholeheartedly support parents' positive views and the strengths identified by parents are very similar to those identified by the inspection team. Parents are right to feel that work is not always sufficiently matched to the different abilities of pupils in a class. To some extent, this is less of an issue in those subjects where there is more setting but this is not always the case. Pupils' overall examination results are highest in English which does not set in Years 7 to 9, so the inspection findings suggest that setting is not the obvious answer. Peer pressure invariably impacts on the progress that pupils make. However, a greater majority of pupils at Monk's Walk display positive attitudes to learning than is the case in many secondary schools and it is the judgement of the inspection team that the school does what it can to support high achievement. This is evidenced by the excellent performance of a number of the school's highest attainers evident in the recent GCSE results.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to build on the school's existing strengths, the Principal, senior managers and governors should:

I. Raise standards*, by:

XVI. ensuring that work is sufficiently matched to the learning needs of pupils of different ability;

XVII. developing targets in individual education / learning support plans which are specific and measurable, and increasing the formal monitoring of special educational needs provision;

XVIII. providing whole school training in differentiation.

** See paragraphs 17, 18, 51, 70, 86.*

II. Improve provision for information technology*, by:

XIX. meeting statutory requirements for teaching information technology to all pupils at Key Stage 4;

XX. improving resourcing and accommodation for information technology, in line with existing intentions.

** See paragraphs 30, 64, 66, 206, 208, 210, 211, 214.*

III. Improve provision for pupils' spiritual development*, by:

XXI. documenting a whole school approach to spiritual development;

XXII. including spiritual development within schemes of work across the curriculum;

XXIII. fulfilling statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and ensuring that all assemblies include an element of worship;

XXIV. meeting curriculum requirements for religious education in Years 11 to 13.

** See paragraphs 64, 66, 88, 92.*

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

XXV. the current timetable results in some subjects having a limited time allocation in certain years, and continuity for subjects involved is reduced by the rotation arrangements at Key Stage 3 (*see paragraph 63*);

XXVI. the twenty minutes allocated to morning registration and counted as part of the 25 hours taught time is not used productively by all form tutors, so that some curriculum time is effectively lost (*see paragraph 67*).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. Monk's Walk is an 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school situated on the north-western fringe of Welwyn Garden City. There are 1190 pupils on roll; a somewhat higher figure than at the time of the last inspection, marking a continued rise in numbers. It is anticipated that the steady growth the school has experienced over recent years will continue for a further five years, with the school roll eventually reaching between 1270 and 1300. Of the schools in Welwyn Garden City, Monk's Walk has consistently had the highest number of first preferences at secondary transfer. The school gained Investors in People status in 1995 and 1998 and Hertfordshire Business Awards in 1991 and 1995.
2. The existence of a single-sex school in a neighbouring town leads to a slight, but not significant, gender imbalance. The vast majority of pupils are ethnically classified as white; pupils of Black-African, Chinese, Black-Caribbean and Indian heritage form a small proportion of the school population. No pupils are supported through Section 11, although 18 pupils come from homes where English is not the first language and this is a bit higher than in most shire county schools. In the school as a whole, forty-two pupils (3.5 per cent) are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is much below the national average and below the number at the time of the last inspection. However, 9.13 per cent of pupils were eligible for free school meals in the year group that took GCSE in 1999.
3. The school is genuinely comprehensive, providing for the full ability range and social mix in a town with a significant amount of social disadvantage. The school was part of the Sherrards ward at the time of the last census, and this placed 41.1 per cent of children in high social class households and 21.8 per cent of adults with higher education. However, the school takes its population from nearly 30 feeder primary schools, many located some distance from the school. Results in cognitive ability tests which pupils take on entry suggest that the ability of the school's intake is low average. Their scores in National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 show prior attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science to be broadly average, with some fluctuation from year to year.
4. There are 196 pupils (16.5 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs; this is slightly above the national figure. Most pupils who are at the higher stages on the register have learning difficulties; a very few have emotional and behavioural difficulties or speech and communication disorders. Of these, 38 pupils (3.19 per cent) have a statement maintained by the local education authority; again, above the national figure. In addition, the school integrates pupils from Tewin Water School, which relocated to the Monk's Walk campus in 1997. Tewin Water is a residential special school for deaf and hearing-impaired pupils, and most of its pupils attend Monk's Walk on a full or part-time basis. The senior teacher from Tewin Water is seconded to Monk's Walk as the full-time support teacher. In addition, Tewin Water support assistants give support in those lessons at Monk's Walk which are attended by Tewin Water pupils.
5. The school is a member of the Welwyn 16-19 Education Consortium, along with two secondary schools in the town and a college of further education. The consortium provides a wide range of courses for 16 to 19 year olds, including A level courses and GNVQ operated on a joint basis over the four establishments. There are currently 132 students in the sixth form at Monk's Walk. An unusually high proportion of pupils commence a course in school or further education at the end of their compulsory schooling, and over three-quarters of those who go into the sixth form continue with their studies when they leave school. The school regularly supports students in applying to Oxbridge and a number of students in the last few years have gone on to Oxford or Cambridge.
6. The school has as its mission statement, 'Getting it right and doing it well' and to this end, it aims:

- to provide a high quality education for its pupils and students within an orderly, understanding and well-resourced environment in which all are encouraged to realise their full potential;
- to ensure that learning is valued as a lifetime experience;
- to nurture respect for all;
- to promote high standards and aspirations, thus enabling all members of the school to develop and make a full contribution to society throughout their lives.

1. Particular priorities in the school improvement plan for 1998 to 2001 are:

- improving pupil / student attainment;
- improving and extending evaluation systems;
- extending the school's resources development programme.

• **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	99	102	201

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	77	70	67
	Girls	93	79	65
	Total	86	72	65
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	86(78)	72(74)	65(68)
	National	63(65)	62(60)	55(56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	55(53)	50(46)	27(32)
	National	35(35)	37(36)	24(27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	61	71	69
	Girls	86	83	69
	Total	74	77	68
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	74(68)	77(74)	68(70)
	National	64(61)	64(64)	60(61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	38(31)	54(38)	27(34)
	National	41(30)	37(37)	28(30)

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	101	86	187

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	50.5	87.1	94.1
	Girls	52.3	96.5	98.8
	Total	51.3	91.4	96.3
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	51.3(52.6)	91.4(90.3)	96.3(92.3)
	National	46.3(44.6)	90.7(89.8)	95.7(93.4)

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

	Number	% Success rate
School	-	-
National		-

.....
1&2 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	28	36	64

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	19.0	16.8	17.9(22.6)	-	-	- (5.0)
National	-	-	18.2(17.6)	-	-	- (2.8)

Number entered for the IB Diploma, and percentage of
such students who achieved this qualification:

	Number	% Success rate
School	-	-
National		-

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and
percentage of *such students* who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% Success rate
School	2	100
National		67.3

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

• **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed

%

through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

Authorised	School	7.1
Absence	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised	School	0.2
Absence	National comparative data	1.1

-
-

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	116
Permanent	3

-

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	23
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

1. In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1998, the school's overall results were well above the national average and above those for similar schools. The best results were achieved in English, where pupils reached levels well above those nationally and also well above those for similar schools. In mathematics, results were well above results nationally and above those for similar schools. In science, results were above the national average and broadly in line with those for similar schools. In 1999, there was a significant rise in standards in English so that 86 per cent of pupils reached Level 5 or above, 55 per cent reached Level 6 or above and 16 per cent reached Level 7. These results were very high compared with schools with a similar intake. In mathematics, the results in 1999 were close to those in 1998 but, as in English, a high proportion of pupils gained higher grades: 50 per cent reached Level 6 or above, and 15 per cent reached Level 7. The results in science in 1999 were similar to those in 1998.
2. At GCSE in 1998, the percentage of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades (52.6 per cent) was above that for schools nationally and broadly in line with similar schools. The school was close to the national average for pupils gaining five or more A* to G grades (90.3 per cent), but well below that for similar schools. The number of pupils achieving one grade A* to G was a little below that nationally. In 1999, the percentage of A* to C grades (51.3 per cent) was again above that nationally (46.3 per cent) though fractionally lower than in 1998. However, the proportion of pupils gaining five A* to G grades improved somewhat and there was a more marked improvement in the number achieving one A* to G.
3. At GCSE, the best results over the last two years have been in English, mathematics, art, music, photography, and religious education. In 1998, results were also well above average in science, drama, German, history and vocational studies; results in information and business studies were above those nationally. Results in design & technology, French and physical education were broadly in line with national results. In 1999, the results in science, German and drama declined, bringing them broadly in line with results nationally. Results in geography were below average in 1998 but improved to an average position in 1999. The results in physical education in 1999 fell well below the national average.
4. Outstanding results were achieved in 1999 by a number of higher attaining pupils who gained several A* and A grades, the highest attaining pupil gaining ten A* grades at GCSE. When the performance of the 1999 GCSE group is compared with the results they achieved in Key Stage 3 tests in 1997, it is evident that pupils' achievement at GCSE in 1999 was much higher than could be expected overall and very high in English and mathematics. This shows that a great deal of value is being added as pupils move through the school. It was known that the 1999 results were likely to be lower than those in 1998, as the year who took their GCSE in 1999 had been a lower attaining year from its intake in Year 7.
5. At GCE A / AS level in 1998, the average point score of students entered for two or more A levels or AS equivalents was well above the national average. The results of students entered for less than two A levels or AS equivalents was also above those nationally. Girls did better than boys in 1998, achieving an average point score of 24.2 compared with boys' average points score of 20.2, giving rise to an overall average point score of 22.3. These scores were very high and showed a further improvement on those described in the 1994 report as 'excellent'. There is some variation from year to year and in 1999 the average point score of students entered for two or more A levels was 17.9, bringing the school in line with national averages. The average point score of boys, at 19.0 was above that of girls, at 16.8. The overall pass rate at A level in 1998 was 91.7 per cent and it was 89.86 per cent in 1999. The best results in the last two years have been achieved in English literature, mathematics, art, and photography. Students also achieve good results in history and psychology. Two high attaining students gained four A grades at A level in 1999.
6. Since the last inspection in 1994, the school has sustained and built upon its very good end of Key Stage

3 results. Since 1994, the school's GCSE results have shown a rising trend, though at a slower rate than the national trend. However, this is partly explained by the fact that results between 1994 and 1996 were relatively static then began to climb. The performance of boys in relation to girls largely follows the national pattern: there have been some years where girls have done slightly better relative to the national picture in terms of gender, and some where boys have performed better. Since 1994, the average A / AS level point score for students at GCE A level or AS equivalent has been high overall.

7. Improving attainment is a current priority in the school improvement plan. The senior management group is leading a range of strategies to this end and all departments and faculties are involved in target setting and in tracking pupils' performance. A very good system has been devised but it is not yet firmly embedded within all subjects. Across the curriculum there is, however, a substantial amount of analysis of assessment results in an attempt to raise standards. Over the last few years, the school has concentrated especially on improving the performance of pupils on the C to D borderline at GCSE and seven subjects achieved their highest ever percentage of A* to C grades in 1999. It is evident that those subjects which engage in very detailed analysis of examination results and subsequently make precise adjustments to their curriculum, most notably English and mathematics, achieve the highest overall results. A recognition that attainment could be improved in science led the school to introduce a new curriculum which is already beginning to have a positive impact.
8. Although girls outperform boys in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in some subjects and generally do slightly better than boys at GCSE, boys and girls make equal progress in nearly all subjects. It is only in history where there has been a more distinct gap between the attainment of boys and girls and this is narrowing. At A level in 1999, boys taking more than two A levels achieved a higher point score than girls. Overall, boys do rather better at Monk's Walk than is the case in many schools. This is partly the result of the school's emphasis on academic achievement for all but it is also attributable to a system which quickly identifies any pupils who are not responding in the way that is expected of them.
9. There is no distinguishable difference between the attainment and progress of pupils from ethnic minorities and that of other pupils. The progress of pupils of different prior attainment is equal in many lessons, except where work is not sufficiently matched to different abilities. This more often impedes the progress of lower attainers but on occasion, higher attainers are insufficiently challenged. In general, however, the school caters very well for higher attaining pupils. This is evidenced by the outstanding GCSE results of a number of very able pupils and of a smaller minority of highest attainers at A level. The school arranges for sixth formers to attend summer schools, including those provided by Eton College, and students from Monk's Walk regularly apply to Oxbridge. The school has a tradition of successful applications to Oxford and Cambridge despite the fully comprehensive nature of its intake.
10. The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Progress in lessons is variable, ranging from unsatisfactory to very good. In lessons where learning support is provided, progress is at least good and often very good because learning support assistants match precisely the learning objectives of the lesson with the particular needs of the pupils. Where learning support is not provided in lessons, progress is sometimes good, usually satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory. The best progress takes place when teachers plan effectively to accommodate pupils' special educational needs and provide different or modified tasks, adapting their methods and targeting particular resources to ensure pupils achieve to their fullest potential. Conversely, unsatisfactory progress takes place where there is no planning to accommodate pupil differences and difficulties, no targeted support for pupils and where tasks are not matched to different abilities. Where progress is satisfactory, teachers either include some matching of work by ability in planning which is not wholly reflected in lessons, or they do not plan for differentiation but provide some targeted support to individuals. The best progress for pupils with special educational needs takes place in many English, mathematics and science lessons, where there is more often some degree of differentiation. In other subjects, progress is variable but broadly satisfactory. The variability is caused by inconsistencies in the use of resources, variations in the amount of targeted support pupils receive, a lack of differentiation and sometimes a failure to take account of a pupil's individual learning plan in lesson planning and teaching.

11. Progress of pupils with special educational needs towards their individual education / learning support targets is not measurable because the targets are expressed mostly as strategies or as long term educational aims. Pupils who receive support in the learning support base make good progress as a result of the high quality teaching of the support teachers, and the positive ethos for learning in the base. This is largely due to the highly effective joint planning with external specialists such as speech therapists to ensure that work and teaching methods are closely matched to the needs of particular pupils. Pupils who are integrated from Tewin Water Special School make very good progress in some subject lessons, through the excellent links that have been established between the two schools and the effective arrangements for supporting these pupils in lessons. Support includes the extensive use of radio aids, high quality support and good classroom organisation to accommodate the needs of pupils with hearing impairment.
12. In English by the end of Key Stage 3, pupils speak clearly and many are articulate. In group work higher attainers in particular negotiate well, but all pupils develop ideas effectively together, and display good listening skills. Pupils can cope with various texts and work in class shows good levels of understanding from reading a range of material. There is evidence that pupils develop a critical appreciation of literature by the end of the key stage. Higher attaining pupils write fluently and at length, with very good levels of accuracy of expression. The work of average attainers falls down sometimes in spelling and grammar, and is less varied. Higher attaining pupils by Year 11 write at length and know how to change the tone of their writing for different purposes. Most pupils use a good range of structures and interesting vocabulary. The highest attaining pupils know a great deal about literary technique by this stage, and their ability to relate the form of a work to its meaning is well above average. Lower attaining pupils produce a range of interesting writing; they mostly use basic grammatical structures correctly although their vocabulary is limited and their written work contains some inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation. Higher attainers listen perceptively and are sensitive to the development of a discussion. Lower attaining pupils listen to each other and to the teacher carefully, and can articulate their ideas and views on a topic, but use a mixture of standard and non-standard English. By Year 13, discussion is sophisticated and thoughtful, and writing is of high quality generally. In the language and literature course, students produce some very effective creative work.
13. In English, pupils make at least good progress in the vast majority of lessons and in some lessons, progress is very good and occasionally excellent. Over time, higher and lower attainers make good progress, whilst average attainers make very good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress, both reaching higher than average levels for their gender in national examinations and tests.
14. Pupils' standards in literacy when they enter the school are broadly in line with national averages. However, there is a wide range of attainment; for a small number of pupils with very limited literacy skills, the demands of secondary school subjects present severe problems. Attainment in the use of English is raised considerably throughout the school curriculum, at all stages. There are many opportunities to develop confidence in speaking, in lessons in English, science, mathematics and religious education, where much of the learning takes place through class and group discussion, and in extra-curricular activities, such as the drama club, drama productions and the school parliament. All pupils use the school library regularly in English lessons and are well supported in their reading development by the extremely active library staff, who involve themselves in library lessons and mount special book-based events throughout the year. Pupils acquire efficient research and note-making skills in history and geography and through guided and independent use of the Internet. All departments place strong emphasis on the need for good presentation of accurately expressed writing.
15. In mathematics by the end of the Key Stage 3, most pupils develop good number and investigational skills and are able to explain their thinking strategies. Higher attaining pupils are confident in algebra and lower attainers have satisfactory mental arithmetic. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is largely in line with or above national standards, with some pupils attaining at an outstanding level. Most pupils can use and rearrange formulae and use spreadsheets to manipulate and present data. Higher attainers are able to apply trigonometry to complex situations. Lower attainers can use simple probability and explore number patterns. Attainment in the sixth form is at least in line with expectations and sometimes above. Most students can use calculus techniques and higher attainers in the further mathematics course are able to solve geometric problems using matrices and vectors. In mathematics,

progress for most pupils is good and pupils at Key Stage 3 are progressing more quickly than is expected nationally. Some higher attainers make very good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress.

16. Pupils' skills with number are well developed through regular practice in mathematics lessons. The mathematics faculty has an effective policy on numeracy and has begun to develop consistent practice across the school in the methods pupils use to do calculations. Pupils are able to apply their numeracy skills in other subjects. These skills are particularly well developed in Key Stage 3 science, where pupils are taught to measure in correct units and to handle data. They apply their measuring skills in Key Stage 3 design & technology lessons, and in Key Stage 4, they develop their ability to draw accurately. In geography, they learn to read maps and to collect and present data. In information & communication technology lessons in Year 9, they use algebraic formulae in spreadsheets to solve problems and they interpret the meaning of graphs. Good attention is given in A level physics to preparing students for the mathematics they will need in the mechanics part of their course.
17. In science by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, attainment is above national expectations. By Year 13, attainment is broadly in line with course requirements. Progress is good overall. In some lessons, average and lower attainers make satisfactory progress, whilst higher attainers are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress but occasionally they make unsatisfactory progress where work is not matched to their learning needs. There are no differences between the progress of boys and girls. Progress in the sixth form is occasionally very good, well supported by extensive use of information technology.
18. In art by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is mainly in line with national expectations but by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is higher than work nationally. Progress is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, good at Key Stage 4 and very good in the sixth form. Expectations are not always high enough for high attaining pupils at Key Stage 3. Most pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
19. In business studies, attainment is above national expectations. In the sixth form, it is in line with standards nationally. Progress is good at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form.
20. In design & technology by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils produce work that is above average in designing and making. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is close to national averages but with some variations in attainment across the four GCSE options of resistant materials, graphics products, electronics and food; attainment is lower in electronics and resistant materials than in graphics and food. Progress at Key Stages 3 and 4 is generally satisfactory and it is sometimes good at Key Stage 4. Lower attaining pupils are generally well supported in design & technology and make satisfactory progress.
21. In geography by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is in line with national expectations, whilst attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is above expectations. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and students in the sixth form undertake a quantity of relevant fieldwork which benefits their attainment. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. However, work is not always matched to the range of different abilities and this impacts on the progress that pupils make in some lessons and over time. At times, higher attaining pupils are given work that lacks challenge and this restricts their progress. Additionally, many pupils with special educational needs progress too slowly, as teachers tend to be unaware of their specific needs so lesson planning fails to address them adequately. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, progress is good.
22. In history by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is in line with national expectations. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is above the national average, as it is in the sixth form. Girls have significantly outperformed boys at GCSE, though this was less marked in 1999. Progress is generally good at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form, it is very good. In some lessons, work at Key Stages 3 and 4 is insufficiently matched to different abilities so that progress is no better than satisfactory.

23. In information technology (IT) by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is generally in line with national expectations and it is above the national average at Key Stage 4 for the minority of pupils who follow a GCSE course. Standards in A level computing, from lessons and work seen, are below average. Only a minority of pupils have access to the National Curriculum Programme of Study for IT at Key Stage 4 and the school does not meet statutory requirements in this regard. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in a narrow range of applications. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are given work appropriately matched to their capabilities and this supports sound progress. Higher attainers are well catered for and often work outside the lesson on projects set by teachers or of their own design. Progress over time is adversely affected by timetable arrangements which give each class half a term learning IT and the other half learning another subject. Those pupils who choose an IT-based GCSE course make good progress through the course.
24. In modern foreign languages by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is below national expectations. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form it is in line with expectations. Progress in lessons is usually satisfactory at Key Stage 3 but progress over time is less secure. Higher and average attaining pupils do not make as much progress in Years 8 and 9 as they would if the work undertaken were more demanding. Progress in lessons seen at Key Stage 4 was satisfactory in two thirds of lessons but unsatisfactory in the remainder as a result of unsatisfactory teaching. However, progress over time is satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Progress in the sixth form is good in lessons and satisfactory over time. There are very good opportunities for students to gain useful additional language skills through the school's provision of short courses in Japanese and business German in the sixth form.
25. In music by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is generally above national expectations. At Key Stage 4, quite small numbers of pupils opt for the subject but attainment is considerably higher than the national average. In 1999, all eleven pupils who took GCSE in music gained A* to C grades. Attainment in the sixth form work is mostly in line with the national average. During the last year, more than forty instrumentalists have been successful in external examinations over a range of grades, some attaining merit level and above. Progress is good at all key stages. Practical tasks are clearly matched to different abilities, allowing all pupils to progress at rates appropriate to their prior attainment and higher attainers to extend their work beyond the basic objectives. Overall curriculum time at Key Stage 3 is a little lower than the national recommendation and actual contact time varies considerably from year to year; this is further exacerbated by the rotational timetable system, especially in Year 9. This is managed satisfactorily at present but barely allows for the scheme of work to be met in any real depth or breadth and constrains continuity and progression for some groups. More talented older students take opportunities to help with the direction and accompaniment of ensemble rehearsals, thus supporting and enhancing their practical skills. Instrumentalists progress satisfactorily through the various grades of examination as set by external boards.
26. In physical education by the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above national expectations. In swimming, a significant number achieve high standards of performance in a variety of strokes and in life saving techniques. The attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 4 is also higher than national expectations. The school has a justifiably high reputation for the performances of its school teams, and individual pupils. Many teams take part in inter-school competitions and gain much success. A number of pupils have been selected to represent Hertfordshire and one of the pupils has gone on to gain national honours. Progress is good at all key stages. The school also provides pupils with opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, which are enthusiastically taken up by large numbers of pupils and contribute significantly to their overall progress. Pupils are given the opportunity to go on skiing holidays abroad, to work for the Duke of Edinburgh Award, to join teams who are competing in the Ten Tors expedition on Dartmoor and to visit national sporting events.
27. In religious education by the end of Key Stage 3, overall attainment is in line with or just above the levels expected nationally. Pupils' written GCSE work in the current Year 10 reflects a good level of detailed knowledge. In non-examination work in Year 10, pupils increasingly understand concepts like suffering, and exhibit a well-developed moral sense of the need to help others less fortunate than themselves. In the sixth form, the course folders of A level students reflect a good range of work. Progress is at least satisfactory and sometimes good in lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress, but they would progress faster if work was

matched to pupils' different abilities. At Key Stage 4, pupils in the GCSE group and those who take the non-examination route make good progress, as do those taking A level religious studies.

34.

34. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

34.

28. The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning and this has a very positive impact on the progress that they make. A small minority are less motivated but pupils generally display attitudes to their work and to one another in keeping with the school's high expectations. As a result, those who want to work hard and do well are rarely prevented from doing so by the negative attitudes of others. Pupils interviewed were of the opinion that the school enables its pupils to make good progress and they expressed appreciation for the wide range of opportunities provided. Replies to parents' questionnaires confirm that the vast majority of pupils are happy at Monk's Walk and enjoy school.

29. Pupils pay attention, they respond well to teachers' explanations, and willingly answer questions. Homework is conscientiously completed by most pupils, above average numbers of books are borrowed from the library, and pupils' planners are used well, especially at Key Stage 4 when examination targets are set and monitored. Some exceptional levels of interest, enthusiasm and sustained hard work were seen in lessons. For example, a Year 7 English class was able to sustain quiet reading in the classroom even when unsupervised; a Year 9 class was totally absorbed by Martin Luther King's speech for freedom, and a Year 11 class was enthusiastic about poetic structure. In Key Stage 3 lessons and in some classes at Key Stage 4, pupils show a genuine interest in tackling mathematical challenges. Some pupils experience a sense of awe and wonder when they connect their scientific knowledge to the real world, for example when they saw and heard hydrogen gas explode in 'Chemistry Week'.

30. Behaviour is good overall, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils move from lesson to lesson in orderly groups and behave appropriately in communal situations, for example in the dining room at midday. Most pupils queue in an orderly manner when waiting to enter the classroom and quietly follow instructions. Pupils' good behaviour generally supports their learning and where teaching is particularly good, pupils' behaviour is impeccable and their concentration is exceptionally well focused on whatever tasks they are set. However, in rare lessons where attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, pupils call out, talk while the teacher is talking, lose interest in the topic and waste time. Very occasionally, pupils' behaviour is poor and effectively disrupts others' learning.

31. Although the number of fixed term exclusions is now falling the figures are higher than at the time of the last report. This is partly because the school has taken a number of pupils who have been excluded from other schools. It also reflects the school's high expectations for behaviour: fixed term exclusions are used as a sharp deterrent for persistent inappropriate behaviour or poor attitudes. Although some pupils have been excluded a number of times, many pupils do not offend a second time and the general level of good behaviour suggests that the system is working well.

32. When pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning, they respond well. In English, younger pupils show initiative in their choice of books and know where to go for information. Sixth formers express their own views in their writing, higher attainers beginning to develop an approach to literary analysis which is not wholly dependent on existing critical theory. When carrying out experiments in science, pupils often help each other and take responsibility for getting information, rather than relying on the teacher to provide it. In mathematics, pupils in some mixed ability lessons at Key Stage 3 organise their own work under the supervision of the teacher. Pupils develop an ability to think independently and communicate their understanding orally and in writing. Sixth formers organise their work well and use resources sensibly to further their own learning. A significant number of pupils extend their mathematical thinking through the mathematics club and through the many competitions that are offered in mathematics and science.

33. Pupils readily take responsibility, contributing to the life of the school. A school parliament meets twice a term to discuss school and local issues. Pupils debate topic issues in a very professional way, showing

awareness of parliamentary procedures. Two pupil representatives play a vital part, conveying the views of the pupil body to the governors. Sixty per cent of the pupil population acts as guides or demonstrators on open evenings. Over sixty pupils assist in the library. Pupils who are involved in the mentoring system, whereby younger pupils are supported by older ones, take their responsibilities very seriously and a significant number volunteered to be trained as mentors.

34. Relationships between pupils are good-natured and constructive, and relationships with teachers are predominantly open, mature and warm. Most pupils are courteous, polite and respectful towards staff and one another. They almost always collaborate effectively, staying on task and working well with each other. Pupils are supportive of their peers when they are presenting work and show respect for the beliefs of others, as when a Year 12 group showed mature consideration of each other's views in their discussion of feminism. Pupils generally show understanding and sensitivity to pupils from Tewin Water School who have hearing impairment. Some pupils from Monk's Walk learn sign language, and others were seen to make sure that hearing-impaired pupils played their part in collaborative work. They show respect for other people's feelings, for example in work on suffering in religious education, and for their values and beliefs, for example in lessons on aspects of world religions.

41. **Attendance**

35. The attendance rate is good; it is above the national average and there is almost no unauthorised absence. Pupils' regular attendance makes a positive contribution to their learning. Registers are marked accurately and efficiently at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions and at the beginning of each lesson, thus guarding against internal truancy.
36. The majority of pupils are punctual in getting to school, and procedures for recording any late arrivals are effective and consistently applied. Pupils' diaries are stamped with the time of arrival so that parents, pupils and staff are kept aware. Movement about the site between classes is purposeful and pupils arrive promptly to lessons, particularly considering the large site.

43.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

43. **Teaching**

37. Teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons, at least good in 65 per cent, and very good, with occasional examples of excellent teaching, in 23 per cent of lessons. Teaching is of a similar overall quality at each key stage and some very good teaching occurs in almost all subjects.
38. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, where 80 per cent of teaching was deemed to be satisfactory or better. The improvement in the quality of teaching confirms the effectiveness of the school's programme of lesson observation and feedback, the impact of staff induction and professional development, and reflects the emphasis senior managers have placed on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
39. Teaching is consistently strong in English, where 80 per cent of teaching is at least good and over a third is very good and at times excellent; this level of teaching is found across all key stages. There is a clear correlation between the quality of teaching in English, the high quality leadership of the subject and the outstanding examination success – the latter being especially evident at Key Stage 3. Teaching in mathematics is good in half the lessons and sometimes very good, the best teaching occurring at Key Stage 3. The school's examination success in mathematics is underpinned rather more by very effective subject leadership, a high quality curriculum and very well focused assessment procedures, than by a high incidence of very good teaching. Teaching in science is at least good in almost two thirds of lessons

and very good in half of these; the best teaching is found at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

40. Teaching is good overall in art, with 75 per cent of teaching being at least good and half being very good or occasionally excellent; strengths in teaching are particularly evident at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There is a direct link between the quality of teaching in art and the very good examination results in the subject. Although the most recent GCSE results in physical education fell significantly, teaching - as evidenced by the inspection - is frequently of high quality; it is consistently at least good and in over a third of lessons, it is very good and on occasion excellent. Teaching in history at Key Stage 3 is nearly always good and occasionally very good, and at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, all lessons seen were of very good quality. In information technology, teaching is consistently at least good and it is very good in a third of lessons. Additionally, teaching is very good in occasional lessons in business studies, design & technology, geography, health education, modern languages and music. Teaching in religious education, though at least satisfactory and often good, did not include any examples of very good teaching during the inspection. Unsatisfactory lessons occurred very occasionally in mathematics, in science at Key Stage 4, in art at Key Stage 3, in design & technology at Key Stage 3, and in modern languages at Key Stages 3 and 4.
41. There is a good match between teachers' qualifications and their subject responsibilities, and subject knowledge is at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is especially good in mathematics, science, physical education, in history at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and in art and business studies in the sixth form. In English, science and music, teachers carefully explain and use key vocabulary and in English, pupils are pushed to think and to understand the methodology of the subject, for example of how to interrogate a piece of text in literary analysis. In English, teachers' excellent subject knowledge is a particular strength, and in a Year 11 English lesson, very high expectations were founded on excellent subject knowledge. The teacher's interaction with the class was lively, warm, motivating and focused. She empowered pupils by clearly communicating what is required for A or A* grades at GCSE. The planning was excellent and most detailed, and objectives were shared helpfully with the class. What was already a challenging task for all pupils was backed up by further extension work for the highest attainers. The pace was fast, with seamless linking of previous work and pupils' prior knowledge to new material. The choice of poetry tasks was matched to the ability of different groups, and the teacher showed an exceptional capacity to lead pupils to an understanding of the relationship between form and content in effective writing. Assessment and record keeping was accurate, focused and helpful and attractive displays of high quality work contributed to the very positive ethos for learning.
42. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are nearly always at least satisfactory and often good. Expectations are particularly high in English throughout and in art in the sixth form. They are also evident in a range of subjects where teaching in individual lessons is good or very good. In an unsatisfactory lesson in design & technology in Year 9, the teacher's low expectations gave rise to work which was well below national expectations and in an unsatisfactory lesson in art at Key Stage 3, unsatisfactory planning was combined with low expectations. In a French lesson in Year 10, the teacher did not invite pupils to use the target language, the lesson objectives were unclear, both in the teaching and the lesson plan, and too much time was spent on low level language so that higher attainers were insufficiently challenged.
43. In English, a combination of excellent subject knowledge and high expectations gives rise to some very good lesson planning. Short-term planning is good in history, information technology, physical education, mathematics at Key Stage 3, in design & technology at Key Stage 4, and in art and geography at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Planning is very well linked to syllabus requirements in some subjects, for instance, in Year 12 chemistry and the lesson objectives are often shared with pupils. In English, objectives are often written on the board and this practice was also seen in some lessons in geography.
44. Where teaching across the curriculum is satisfactory, it often contains a number of good features but work is matched insufficiently to the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. Most classes at Key Stage 3 are of mixed ability, making it essential for teachers to match tasks to different abilities if all

pupils are to make the progress that they could. The best teaching includes careful attention to individual needs and this is especially the case in some of the good and very good teaching in mathematics. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, the teacher provided good targeted questioning and set more challenging work for three higher attainers; informal assessment was used to identify which individuals needed help; two pupils from that particular class attend mathematics masterclasses, where they enjoy the extension work. In information technology, additional extension activities are suggested, whereby higher attainers may undertake more challenging work. However, too frequently in a number of subjects, teachers give the same basic task to pupils of all abilities, varying provision only by the degree of support and guidance offered to individuals. In ability sets, teachers often pitch their teaching to pupils of average ability and on occasion, higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. More often, where work is not matched to different needs, it is lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs who are prevented from making more than satisfactory progress although average and higher attainers in the same class make good progress.

45. Supported by staff from Tewin Water Special School, Monk's Walk teachers are generally very effective in meeting the needs of pupils from Tewin Water. They consistently use radio aids to give pupils access to lessons, and excellent practice was observed in a science lesson, where technological aids enabled Tewin Water pupils to join the rest of the class in listening to and viewing a video on the set topic.
46. In the previous inspection report, the range of activities and teaching approaches was found to be somewhat limited and this formed the basis of a key issue. In response, the school revised schemes of work, particularly in mathematics and science, and introduced a number of other strategies to ensure that pupils experienced a broader range of activities within lessons. The effectiveness of these developments is evident in the improved range of experiences provided for pupils in many lessons. The variety of activities is good in mathematics at Key Stage 3; it is very good in science at Key Stage 3 and excellent in science in the sixth form. The careful planning and delivery of a sequence of contrasting and yet complementary tasks is a consistent strength in English at all key stages, and the methods and teaching approaches used in art in the sixth form are highly appropriate. In some lessons in science, there are very interesting demonstrations, for example of alkali metals reacting with oxygen and water in a Year 10 science, where the teacher sustained very high levels of concentration by pupils.
47. The management of pupils' behaviour is nearly always a strength of the teaching at Monk's Walk, ensuring that pupils learn in an orderly environment. This is particularly the case in English, history and physical education, and in many lessons across the curriculum. Most teachers are skilled in dealing with any minor incidents of inattention and the school's behaviour management system, together with a clear code of conduct, provides a very effective foundation for discipline in the classroom. Behaviour management is less secure at Key Stage 3 in art and design & technology, and in Key Stage 4 in science. Very occasionally, teachers ignore or are unable to deal effectively with poor behaviour and this leads to unsatisfactory progress for everyone in the class, this was evident in a lesson in science and in one in design & technology.
48. There is usually very good attention to health and safety and this is especially the case in science, but where teaching was unsatisfactory in a lesson in design & technology in Year 9, the teacher left the room on several times, thus paying insufficient attention to health and safety requirements. In the same lesson, much work consisted of copying worksheets, and the teacher talked too much, without questioning pupils or giving them sufficient opportunity for pupils to participate.
49. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very positive, and pupils appreciate the approachability of staff. In the best lessons – and in rather more lessons at Monk's Walk than in many other schools – teachers and pupils share an unspoken understanding that as much learning as possible must be packed into the time. In an art lesson in Year 12, the high quality of relationships formed the basis of an excellent lesson. Quiet excellence was immediately evident in the amount of progress students had already made since the beginning of term. The teacher's exposition at the beginning of the lesson was very good, brisk and to the point, reminding students of the organic but three-dimensional effect they were to try to achieve. The teacher's calm, good humoured management set exactly the right tone for young people, effectively bringing together three groups of students from the different schools in the

consortium. The teacher's very high expectations, and his ability to convey his standards to his students, was especially apparent in the superb sketchbooks.

50. Time and resources are used very effectively in English at all key stages and in science in the sixth form, where excellent use is made of information technology. The use of time and resources is good in history, information technology, music, physical education, and in some lessons in mathematics, geography, art and design & technology. Resources were used especially well in a history lesson in Year 10, where the teacher went into role play as George Stephenson, dressed in a tailcoat, cravat and whiskers. He enacted a press conference with pupils being either pro- or anti-railway. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace, with strict time deadlines. The teacher communicated building problems through answering questions in an exciting way, and this was followed up by providing source books for pupils to glean further details for their magazine article for empathy writing. The teacher placed strong emphasis on accurate research before writing, in a well-planned lesson, which offered excellent stimulus for pupils' own research.
51. Excellent use of resources, combined with high expectations, was also evident in a thoroughly planned physical education lesson in Year 7, where pupils were learning about life-saving. Very good use was made of previously prepared resources, and of the time available, together with good use of pupils to demonstrate the various life-saving techniques. There was a clear focus to the lesson and a demanding, vigorous pace was maintained throughout. Life-size models were used effectively to demonstrate resuscitation techniques and very good use was made of the excellent facilities.
52. Pupils work is regularly marked and the quality of day-to-day assessment is at least satisfactory in all subjects, except in art at Key Stage 3. It is good overall in English, business studies, history, information technology, physical education, making pupils aware of what they need to do to improve. Good assessment practices are evident also in lessons in mathematics at Key Stage 3, in geography at Key Stage 4, and in art and science in the sixth form. Where teaching is very good, teachers show a clear knowledge of pupils' individual capabilities, as in a Year 13 art lesson. There are examples of high quality diagnostic assessment in English. This is seen especially in the sixth form, where probing comments are sufficient to deepen and challenge the thinking of even the highest attainers, as in a piece of work on Satan as anti-hero in Milton. In a Year 8 English lesson, the teacher showed pleasure where pupils had produced a good amount of work and where they had arrived at the right answers. At the same time, she was not afraid to reject inadequate answers, so that verbal assessment was strong, and written comments focused on improvement as well as praise. Some subjects are already beginning to make very good use of the school's recently introduced targeting and tracking system; pupils are made aware of their progress against the minimum targeted grade and of how to improve, for example in English, and in geography in Year 11.
53. Parents at their meeting prior to the inspection expressed conflicting views about the amount of homework set. The overriding inspection finding is that the taught curriculum is effectively extended by the use of homework. The setting of homework is at least satisfactory in all subjects and it is frequently good. This is the case in English, mathematics, geography, information technology, in history at Key Stages 3 and 4, in science at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in art at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, and in business studies in the sixth form. Homework tasks make a particularly good contribution to students' progress in history and science at post-16.
60. **The curriculum and assessment**
54. The school's curriculum supports good progress for most pupils and examination success, as well as doing much to prepare pupils to take up their position as effective members of society. Certain aspects of the curriculum remain much as they were at the time of the last inspection but the curriculum is regularly reviewed and there is continual development and a preparedness to be innovative. The school is in the process of introducing a whole school literacy scheme to be implemented in September 2000. There are currently working groups considering the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and, together with other members of the sixth form consortium, the school is working on major curriculum changes at post-16 for the year 2000.

55. At Key Stage 3, pupils study all of the National Curriculum subjects, together with religious education and personal and social education. Drama is taught separately from English and there are discrete information technology lessons. All pupils experience two modern foreign languages in Years 7 and 8 (French and German); then most reduce to one language in Year 9 when a third possible language – Spanish – joins those which are available. Pupils who want to continue with two languages have a twilight session for their second language; there are twenty pupils at present studying two languages in Year 9. A number of subjects are taught in rotation with one another in Years 7 to 9 in order to fit in all of the subjects to which the school is committed.
56. This gives rise to a curriculum which is suitably broad throughout but its balance is compromised to some extent by limited time allocation for some foundation subjects. At the time of the last inspection, too little time was given to art and religious education and a generous amount was given to modern foreign languages and design & technology. The report noted that the rationale for teaching two languages at Key Stage 3 needed further evaluation and that pupils' experiences were fragmented in subjects taught as short modular courses in some years. The time allocated to art is now sufficient but the time provided for religious education in Year 9 is barely adequate to cover the Local Agreed Syllabus. Music is similarly placed in Year 9, though the total time allocated to it across Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory. Information technology receives insufficient time throughout the key stage and continuity in the acquisition of information skills is adversely affected by the rotation arrangements because pupils are not taught the subject continuously; some aspects of the Programme of Study need to be covered in greater depth. There is some lack of continuity for other subjects which rotate with one another, though the precise impact on attainment is difficult to pinpoint.
57. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is broad and reasonably well balanced. Pupils study a number of compulsory subjects, including English, mathematics, science, physical education, and personal and social education, together with further subjects chosen from options. In Year 10, all pupils study double science; in Year 11, a small number are taking single science. Pupils are required to include within their selection one modern foreign language and one humanities subject. All pupils follow a long course in design & technology at Key Stage 4 and they have as an option a course in religious education at Key Stage 4. A non-examination religious education course is included in the rotational arrangement for personal and social education in Year 10, allowing barely enough time to cover the Agreed Syllabus. In Year 11, the personal and social education rotation does not include religious education, and it is not provided for as a core course elsewhere in the curriculum. Lessons for GCSE in religious education and music, together with a course in Japanese, are timetabled outside normal hours. Pupils are able to take City & Guilds Motor Vehicle Studies and Information Studies GCSE through the school's links with Oaklands College.
58. Sixth form provision is a strength and it is clear that the school sets high expectations for its sixth formers. Emphasis is given to academic courses leading to GCE A level, together with preparation for university and higher education courses. In the sixth form, 155 students are following A / AS programmes; only two students are taking GNVQ (at Intermediate level) but GNVQ is seen as an area for development within the consortium. The sixth form consortium enables the school, in collaboration with others, to offer a very wide range of A level courses and opportunities offered through the consortium have gained recognition in publications by OFSTED and the Further Education Funding Council. Students take up to five A levels. An hour of additional studies is also offered one afternoon and one morning a week. Generally, additional study courses are run on termly modules and students build up credits for their reference. These courses include, for example, Japanese, Business German, drama technical work, cricket, and understanding industry. Students also take general studies for an hour a week; this is a non-examined course but an A level in general studies is also offered (taken up by 80 to 90 per cent of students). The school is to be one of four Hertfordshire schools involved in the pilot of a new work related learning scheme.
59. As at the time of the last inspection, the school is not meeting the statutory requirement to provide religious education in Years 11 to 13 and it is not fulfilling the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship. The requirement to teach information technology to all pupils at Key Stage 4 is also not fulfilled: the school recognises this and is currently unable to meet the requirement through limited

resources for information technology and lack of accommodation to set up a necessary third computer suite. Pupils receive appropriate personal and social education throughout, including well-considered sex education and drugs education programmes.

60. The total teaching time per week at Key Stages 3 and 4 is 25 hours, in line with the guidance of circular 7/90. However, this includes the daily registration periods. The twenty-minute session each morning (on days when pupils do not have assembly) is meant to contribute to pupils' personal and social education. In form periods observed during the inspection, this time was used constructively by some teachers but there were a number of occasions when pupils were allowed to chat for all or most of the time. At present, the relatively long time allocated to morning registration is therefore giving rise to some lost curriculum time.
61. The curriculum largely provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress. The school believes that Years 7 and 8 should be taught as mixed ability classes in order to ensure this, but this requires that work is matched carefully to the different levels of prior attainment that these classes will inevitably contain. Some subjects do this successfully in many lessons, for example in English, mathematics and in some lessons in science; others are yet at an early stage in developing the appropriate strategies. The core curriculum in Key Stage 4 is usually taught in groups set by prior attainment, which is appropriate. The school intends to review curriculum provision for lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 but has already usefully introduced some alternative forms of accreditation, including Certificates of Achievement, for those pupils who find a large number of GCSE courses too demanding.
62. Provision for the integration of pupils from Tewin Water Special School who attend classes at Monk's Walk is excellent. The system is sufficiently flexible to enable Tewin Water pupils to integrate into those subjects from which they will derive maximum benefit, whilst receiving an individually tailored package of support and input at Tewin Water. Liaison between Tewin Water Special School and Monk's Walk, identified in the last inspection as needing improvement, has been strengthened. There is a very good understanding of the issues relating to the integration of pupils with hearing impairment – both by Tewin Water and Monk's Walk staff - and the arrangement works very well between the two schools.
63. The school ensures that all pupils with special educational needs receive their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. However, the curriculum is not always suitably matched to the particular needs of some pupils with learning difficulties. In some subjects, this contributes to a lower rate of progress for the least able pupils when compared with the progress of other pupils. Although the special educational needs coordinator has produced very good guidance and provided training for faculties in matching work to different abilities, curriculum planning at the subject level takes insufficient account of the spread of ability within classes. This is especially evident in medium term planning, where particular strategies and resources for pupils with special educational needs are rarely specified. Although individual education / learning support plans provide good contextual information for staff, the targets they contain are mostly broad educational aims rather than precise, measurable learning targets. For example, most targets relate to the raising of a grade, rather than to small specific, measurable and achievable steps required to achieve the desired grade. There is little difference between targets for pupils at different stages of the Code of Practice and no difference in the format regardless of the stage of support. Targets do not stem sufficiently from individual diagnostic assessments and the school has adopted an identical formal individual education plan procedure at Stage 1, involving the special educational needs coordinator, which is unnecessary and time consuming.
64. Curriculum planning is at least satisfactory in all subjects and very good in some. It is particularly strong in English and mathematics, with clear systems for ensuring coherence across the subjects. In English, the effectiveness of this is evident in the high quality of teaching and the consistency of approach between different teachers of the subject. The system gives scope for individual interpretation but ensures that all staff share a common focus.
65. Curriculum planning is also very strong in mathematics and is a major contributory factor the success achieved especially in end of Key Stage 3 assessments. Although pupils are taught in mixed ability

classes in Years 7 and 8, through very good organisation of resources and very good records of pupils' attainment, teachers are largely successful in targeting work appropriately to pupils' needs. The scheme of work ensures a variety of activity in lessons, including the use of textbooks and individualised booklets, regular use of information and communication technology, mental arithmetic practice, investigations and the development of thinking skills through the Cognitive Acceleration in Mathematics project. In Years 9 to 11, the curriculum is well structured into units of work, progress in each unit being monitored by a test. At all key stages, pupils are provided with very good guidance and information, including links between the school curriculum and the National Curriculum.

66. The science curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. Significant developments have taken place at Key Stage 3 in the last 18 months which have yet to have an impact on end of key stage results. These include 'Spotlight Science': a new scheme of work which ensures continuity and progression in all attainment targets. The introduction of the science Cognitive Acceleration in Science Education programme in Years 7 and 8 provides further opportunities to develop scientific reasoning through discussion and group work. A clear outline scheme of work is in place that lists topics to be covered at each key stage. Pupils are set into broad ability bands which more closely match their likely attainment at end of Key Stage 3 tests and focus teaching more accurately to needs. At Key Stage 4, the GCSE double award science now features more strongly than the single award and there has been considerable consolidation in the delivery of this syllabus during the last year. For lower attaining pupils a recently introduced Certificate of Achievement, 'Science Plus', has been introduced and is having a very positive impact on pupils' attainment.
67. There is some individual subject liaison between Monk's Walk teachers and feeder primary schools and a primary / secondary liaison group operates in the town. National Curriculum meetings provide teachers with opportunities to discuss cross-phase issues and Monk's Walk staff take an appropriate part in these so that the school does not work in isolation from its neighbours.
68. Extra-curricular opportunities are extensive. There is a substantial number of lunchtime and after school clubs and activities (ranging from the club for remote-controlled car enthusiasts, through mathematics master classes, to lifesaving). The number of bands, choirs, and orchestra ensembles is a major strength of the music provision. These perform in school concerts and productions and also go on tour (together with teaching and non-teaching staff and parents). There are sporting clubs and fixtures, skiing trips and pupils have the opportunity to work for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. There are visits abroad in connection with modern languages, for example, tuition homestay visits to France and Germany for Years 8 to 11. A Normandy language trip is planned this year and a trip to Germany next year. Pupils at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form visit art galleries. A youth centre is located on the site and the youth leader works in close cooperation with the school.
69. In science, the curriculum is greatly enriched through a wide range of extended visits, including business links with Glaxo Wellcome for chemistry, Xerox for Physics and Smith Klein Beecham for Biology. The *Stars for Schools* project has allowed pupils to access high quality telescopes and the services of a university astronomer for two months. A level biology students undertake fieldwork in Devon each year and every pupil has the opportunity to participate in a Year 10 field trip. There is a flourishing new science club which produced a superb 'fireworks display' during chemistry week at the time of the inspection. Pupils take part in national science competitions and events such as the Festival of Chemistry run by Salter's Company.
70. A level students take part in an exchange with the Lycee de Dijon through the consortium and there is a new exchange link with a gymnasium in Berlin. In history, pupils go on a number of field trips. This year, these include: a Year 9 trip to the Battlefields; a Year 10 field trip a lead mining museum in the North East and Beamish Open Air Museum; a sixth form theatre trip to *Les Miserables*; A level European and British conferences and lectures by prominent historians on topics of interest. Sixth formers take part in a wide range of activities in this country and abroad.
71. Provision for careers education and guidance is excellent and has been developed significantly since the last inspection. The school is concerned to develop in pupils a sense of 'the vocational self', equipping

them with the knowledge, understanding and skills to participate in society as well as preparing them for further education, training or employment. From Year 9 onwards, pupils are given a range of careers experiences, including a college day, use of computer programmes related to career choices, work shadowing in Years 9 and 10, work experience and mock interviews with local businesses in addition to taught sessions with a careers focus.

72. In Years 12 and 13, careers guidance is provided by the head of sixth form as part of personal and social education. Curricular liaison with universities to prepare students for transition to higher education is very good and the school has developed close links with a number of higher education establishments. Students have opportunities to take part in summer schools, including courses provided by Eton College and a number of universities. High attaining students in particular are encouraged to apply for the Eton Summer School and to attend an 'Oxbridge' explanation evening. Other A level students are supported in applying for university summer schools in term 3 of Year 12. Older pupils show that they are aware of the choices to be made in deciding and achieving the next stage of their education, training or employment. They feel that they gain the help they need from the school, including impartial and external careers advice, and they make use of the careers library to gain information.
73. Assessment practices have been further developed since the last inspection and a policy statement on assessment and recording provides a useful overview of expectations. It places the responsibility on faculties and departments to operate systems that effectively assess attainment and measure progress in relation to the subject(s). National Records or Achievement have been introduced and parents now have a combination of detailed annual reports and shorter interim reports.
74. Most subjects are developing appropriate systems for assessing pupil achievement. Good systems are already in place in a number of subjects, including English, mathematics, science. These involve regular testing and a means of retaining the best work as well as recording attainment and progress in a way that is accessible to all the teachers in a subject.
75. In English, there are comprehensive systems for assessing and record keeping. Pupils are involved in the assessment of their work and are kept very well informed of how they are progressing and of what they might do to improve. At Key Stage 3, they take some responsibility for choosing pieces of work for their portfolio, so that it shows a range of tasks, styles and audiences. At Key Stage 4, pupils have two folders; one for final assessed pieces, including assessment records from Key Stage 3; and one for the storage of drafts. All test and examination results are carefully analysed and, where necessary, the curriculum is adjusted. For example, the previous underachievement of boys has been addressed by introducing topics in which they are likely to be interested. Particularly effective in its impact on standards is the department's targeting not only of C to D grades at GCSE but also of A to A* grades.
76. In mathematics, the system of assessment and recording is well organised and reliably implemented by teachers. A thorough analysis of examination and test results is used by the department to monitor and develop curriculum planning. This has led to improved GCSE results. Teachers use pupils' assessment records to target appropriate work to individual pupils.
77. In science, very good systems are in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress. At the end of each lesson, teachers record each pupil's progress using their own systems, which are then entered into the faculty database to form a central record. Records of Achievement are clearly annotated showing what pupils know, understand and can do and reports to parents are comprehensive in specifying progress in science over time.
78. Assessment is also good in physical education, geography, in music at Key Stage 3, in modern languages at Key Stages 3 and 4, and in art and history in the sixth form. A satisfactory system involving three assessments per year in Key Stage 3 is being developed in history, but records are not centralised, only held in the teachers' mark books. There is good recording, tracking and very good individual target setting in geography at Key Stage 4. Assessment is weakest in art at Key Stage 3, where a new system is only about to be introduced and as yet is not fully matched to the programme of

study.

79. The school administers cognitive ability tests (CATs) in Year 7 and has good arrangements in place for liaising with its 28 feeder schools. Information is collected about pupils via the primary transfer form. However, the assessment system that the school adopts to determine individual education plan targets is unsatisfactory. Baseline assessment information is used together with a period of observation in lessons to determine the stage of support a particular pupil will require. Staff and external specialists also contribute to the process of identifying the need for support. This part of the process is appropriate but diagnostic tests are not used to determine accurate targets, particular strategies or resources for individual plans. For example, there is no assessment system to identify strengths and weaknesses in cognitive preparation for learning number operations and no standardised test in mathematics to provide a profile of strengths and weaknesses in numeracy. The lack of precise assessment in relation to pupils' special educational needs is a major contributory factor in the lack of specificity in individual education plan targets.
80. At a whole school level, a great deal of statistical analysis is being undertaken to identify where attainment might be raised. Subject coordinators regularly meet with the Principal to discuss examination results and the school has recently introduced an impressive system for tracking pupils' attainment and setting individual targets which will then contribute to subject targets. Pupils are also being involved in this process. As yet, this system is not embedded within the practice of subjects across the curriculum but its potential is already apparent in some subjects where it is beginning to be used as a means of raising standards.

87.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

81. The school makes effective provision for most aspects of pupils' personal development, especially social development, and aims to produce pupils who will become effective citizens. The school is innovative in its provision for social and moral development, actively involving pupils in many processes from which they are frequently excluded. It makes good provision overall for pupils' cultural development but the fostering of spiritual development, identified as a key issue in the last inspection, remains unsatisfactory.
82. The last report found pupils' moral development was promoted effectively in the school and this inspection found moral development still well supported by the ethos of the school. A set of school rules has been developed in consultation with both pupils and parents and which is displayed in every classroom. The Principal has a system of awards for good work and social behaviour or action. There are written guidelines to promote the school's anti-bullying policy and lessons about this in Year 7 PSE appear effective, and are remembered by older pupils. Older pupils are involved in mentoring younger pupils and are trained in helping skills by the school counsellor. Subject teaching contributes to moral development, for example in the unit on ethics and morality in religious education, in comparing examples of social breakdown through literature in English and in the role models set by many teachers. Assemblies often deal with moral themes, and pupils reflect their moral development in their positive attitudes to each other, to visitors to the school and in their care for property and the school environment.
83. Social development was seen as a strong feature of the school's work in the last report and that is still the case, with many examples being seen and heard of pupils' positive and mature social attitudes and behaviour. This is supported in many lessons where group work is a normal part of the activities in the classroom and in subjects where team efforts are important, such as the mini-enterprise scheme in business studies and in team games. Community awareness and citizenship are strongly promoted by the school parliament, where each form elects a member of the school parliament, and which was found during the inspection to be noteworthy for the quality of the formal presentations and for the respect and maturity shown by pupils towards the conventions related to public speaking, towards those with

different views and towards the Principal of whom they can ask anything at Question Time. Two pupils participate in parliament *ex-officio* as they are the elected representatives of the whole school on the governing body. Charities continue to be supported in various ways, through a termly non-uniform day and through sponsorship of an Ethiopian child, to give just two examples. Pupil librarians help staff the desk in the library and tidy shelves on a rota basis. Contacts with adults outside school through the work experience scheme and through schemes for mock interviews and business mentors assist maturity and social awareness. The Principal has established 'focus groups' in each year whom he invites to discuss and report to him on an issue of current concern. Support for the pupils from Tewin Water School by Monk's Walk pupils was found to be impressive. The on-site youth centre provides some younger pupils with important social and personal development and the post-16 consortium allows older students to mix freely and well with students from other educational establishments.

84. Monk's Walk School continues to do much to help pupils be aware of their own cultural heritage, but it is conscious of the fact that the school is not representative of the population of Britain as a whole and that it is located near to more urban and multi-cultural areas. Contributions to helping pupils appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures were found in the visits by the 'gamelan' orchestra and jazz workshop in music; in English, where the Gujarati poem 'Search for my tongue' was being studied as part of a unit on poetry from other cultures; in history topics on the Crusades and Islam and on slavery and the native American peoples; through the visits to a Buddhist monastery and Islamic mosque in religious education linked to curriculum units on those religions and in the exchanges with Berlin and visits to Normandy in languages work as well as through an Internet link with a German school where scientific experiments are discussed in German. Efforts are being made to ensure that pupils are more multi-culturally aware than they might otherwise be, but there is a need to develop a more proactive whole school policy for multi-cultural education and to devise a set of strategies which more systematically address this issue.

85. Spiritual development was found to be under-developed overall in the last report and this inspection has largely confirmed that judgement as still true. A few advances have been made: the provision in religious education has been reviewed and revised so that it now contributes well to pupils' knowledge and insight into beliefs and values and a sixth form conference on Human Rights, which had been addressed by an ex-prisoner whom the school had supported whilst he was in prison through Amnesty International, was remembered by students as a 'spiritual' experience. The science club and the use of videos in science provide pupils with opportunities to experience awe in the face of natural and scientific phenomena. Overall, the spiritual dimension is still undervalued in the school and as a result pupils' spiritual development comes mainly from the experiences they may have elsewhere. Assemblies contain some material which helps pupils develop their spiritual awareness, but opportunities for pupil participation, for example through music, are lacking and there is insufficient of a feel of collective participation in a communal celebration about them. Taken together with tutorials, where there is no expectation that a collective act of worship will take place, the school is still some way from meeting the statutory requirement for a daily collective act of worship.

92. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

86. The school's provision for pastoral care is a clear strength. A policy on the school's pastoral structure communicates the belief that pupils who are happy will work well at school. The school is viewed by parents and pupils as a safe environment. Parents appreciate the way the school looks after its pupils and are content with the attitudes and values promoted by the Principal and staff. Teachers know their pupils well and are very committed to their welfare.

87. Monitoring of academic progress is good. There are clear guidelines on the responsibilities of subject teachers, form tutors, Heads of Year and Heads of School on monitoring progress. The new pupil tracking system is not far enough advanced to yield very much meaningful information yet, but good structures are in place. The form tutors and Heads of Year are to have one-to-one interviews with pupils in December. Personal tracking of progress and details of target setting are included in pupil planners and for pupils in Years 10 and 11, their current predicted GCSE grades. Monitoring of personal

development is good. This is mainly the responsibility of form tutors with support from the Heads of Year who readily contact parents if a problem arises. The school is very quick to identify potential problems.

88. Monitoring and promotion of behaviour are very good. The 'Respect for All' policy is in the prospectus, diaries and working spaces throughout the school so that all are aware of the school's high expectations. The incentives and sanctions structure is understood and valued by pupils and many opportunities exist to celebrate good behaviour and high achievement. The school has a highly focused anti bullying policy backed up by discussions in personal and social education. Parents and pupils are confident that staff will do what they can to follow up any bullying promptly if it comes to their attention.
89. The school is effective in monitoring and promoting of attendance. Registration procedures are clear and absentees are recorded on a separate pro forma, and a list of absentees is sent to all classrooms during first lesson so that checks can be made for any internal truancy throughout the school day. Monk's Walk enjoys good liaison with the Educational Welfare Officer who visits the school once a week. Late arrivals are monitored by form tutors every day and by Heads of Year and Heads of School several times a week. A personal attendance record is filled in by pupils in their diaries so they have their own record of attendance.
90. The personal and social education programme is well organised and staff involved in teaching the programme have received training. Some very good tutorial periods were seen during the inspection, but more rigorous monitoring is needed to ensure a consistently good and meaningful preparation for the school day for all pupils. Valuable curriculum time is wasted in tutor groups where pupils are simply allowed to chat.
91. The sex education policy is clear and teaching is organised by the sex education co-ordinator. A team of staff is involved in the delivery of the programme. This and the policy is reviewed annually and the school takes its responsibilities very seriously. Very good examples of sex education lessons were seen during the inspection. A new initiative at Monk's Walk involves teenage mothers who are invited into school to give talks on their personal experiences and the real life difficulties of being a teenage mother, so giving pupils a unique insight into this topic. The school has a comprehensive drugs policy and drugs education is delivered through assemblies, personal and social education, and relevant subject areas.
92. Child protection procedures are effective. All staff are made aware of procedures through the staff handbook and through in-service training. The Head of Lower School has received extensive training over a long period and is available for consultation by all staff. Incidents are dealt with in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council guidelines, and care and support is offered through an effective inter-agency network. There are clear guidelines and procedures for pupils' welfare at school and these operate effectively. Several staff are trained in first aid and medicines are kept centrally for safety and ease of access.
93. Attention to health and safety is thorough and procedures are conducted in accordance with the local education authority policy. Site inspections and risk assessments are carried out regularly. The three caretakers on site deal with general maintenance under the guidance of the estates manager.
94. Preparation for life after school and careers education and guidance are excellent, and some aspects of the support provided to pupils and the information given to parents are exemplary. Careers education has an unusually detailed scheme of work and the personal and social education programme includes several related modules. Pupils have mock interviews with local businessmen, and are taught how to produce a curriculum vitae. There is a good level of support from the Careers Service. Options information and guidance for parents and pupils is of excellent quality. Options evenings are well supported and appreciated by parents. Guidance for Year 11 pupils and sixth form students before exams is also excellent. Pupils are given examination timetables well in advance for mock examinations, and newsletters are sent to parents. Deadlines for coursework and key dates are included in student planners.

95. Preparation for entry to school is thorough. All prospective Year 7 pupils are visited by the Head of Lower School. Pupils and parents have opportunities to visit prior to starting to meet tutor groups and their tutor. The present Year 7 pupils have settled in very quickly and are at ease in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to settle in very well also, due to the high quality liaison between the special educational needs coordinator and the feeder schools. Primary school teachers attend an evening session in November to meet up with their former pupils; both pupils and teachers really enjoy this opportunity.

102. **Partnership with parents and the community**

96. The school works very hard to encourage parents to become involved and in return receives a high level of support from a significant proportion of parents. A current priority is to communicate more effectively with those parents who at present have limited contact with the school, but the quality of information the school provides for parents is excellent. There is a far greater quantity of information than is usual and it is also of a higher quality. This has been recognised by the Department for Education & Employment, which has requested examples of the school's information for parents for inclusion on its web site.

97. Pupils are very well informed about their children's progress through reports and parents' evenings. Parents value the quality of reports: they inform them of what their children know, understand and can do within subjects, of targets for further development and they involve an element of pupil self-evaluation. Annual reports and Records of Achievement are produced at a time most appropriate for each pupil's course, with reference to any decisions to be made concerning options or examination entries. Issuing of reports is always appropriately followed by parental consultation sessions. Pupils' planners are another important source of information: they record homework, detentions, impositions, merits and commendations. They include a personal attendance chart, the time of any late arrivals and a number of other very useful points of information. Pupils always carry their planners with them and they are checked regularly by parents, teachers and form tutors.

98. The school provides excellent opportunities for parents to be involved in planning, supporting and reviewing individual education plans, and the special educational needs coordinator liaises very effectively with parents in order to involve them as partners in provision. Pupils are also fully involved in reviews of their progress and discussion about their targets. Parents are rightly pleased with the work of the special educational needs coordinator and the team of learning support assistants and specialist teachers. The governors' annual report to parents provides good information to parents on the provision made for pupils with special educational needs, but it does not comment on any changes made to the special educational needs policy since the last annual report.

99. There is a comprehensive homework policy. Most parents support pupils' work at home well and in many cases very well. A homework club operates three times a week after school and is supervised by volunteer staff to give help and support to pupils.

100. The Monk's Walk School Association & Social Club is open to former pupils, parents and governors and other well wishers as well as all current parents and school personnel. Last year £7000 was raised which is to be used help a number of subject departments with purchases such as a digital camera and equipment for computer aided design.

101. There are excellent links with the local and extended community. Community links cover a number of organisations and Monk's Walk is held in high regard locally. The local community policeman who offers support in many areas to whole classes and to individual pupils. The sex education programme brings in National Health Service midwives to talk to pupils. A Youth Centre on site is open four evenings a week for all pupils and at lunch times. The school hosted a successful Amnesty International Conference for sixth form students, which was attended by a recently released prisoner of conscience with whom students had communicated over an extended period. Students found this meeting very inspiring. The inclusion programme with Tewin Water School was highly praised in the last report and

has moved forward significantly since then with the opening of the new Tewin Water School on the same site, to the benefit of staff and pupils of both schools.

102. Liaison with local businesses is very good. Some forty national and local organisations are involved in the school's programme to provide interview experience for all Year 11 pupils. There are strong links with the Hertfordshire Education Business Partnership through the Pathfinder project of work related learning. A mentoring scheme with local businesses has been very successful. This involves pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are on the edge of disaffection and out of 13 pupils involved 11 are still on the scheme and doing very well as a result. Science projects and awards are linked to a number of local companies. Very good links exist with further and higher education institutions, including Oxbridge, and with other schools such as the science link with a German school, Eton College for summer school.
103. Overall, links with parents, the community and local business make an excellent contribution to pupils' enhancement of the curriculum.

110. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

110. **Leadership and management**

104. The Principal provides strong and effective leadership: he has clear vision, combined with a commitment to continual improvement and innovation. He sets high expectations for other staff and for pupils in the school, and is held in high esteem by teachers and parents alike. The same is true of other members of the senior management group who fulfil their individual roles equally effectively, as well as working coherently as a team. Staff with senior management responsibilities have all worked in the school and held these positions for a considerable time and this brings a stability which clearly has a positive impact on what the school is able to achieve for its pupils. The inclusion of other members of staff, by invitation, in the senior management group is a creative means of introducing new ideas to the group as well as strengthening links between senior and middle managers.
105. The school's decision making and consultation structure is made up of a number of different management groups, so that a wide range of staff is involved in decision making. The system is comprehensive. The school is highly committed to developing staff expertise in management and to this end, all staff with key management responsibilities are members of governors' committees.
106. There have been a number of changes in the membership of the governing body since the last inspection; governors provide satisfactory support, acting as critical friends to the school. The governing body operates through a number of committees and is appropriately involved in school development. In addition, there is a Monk's Walk and Tewin Water joint governors' committee, an urgency committee, and an appeals panel. There is a governor attachment programme, whereby each governor is attached to a department for one year, and this is enabling governors to develop a rounded understanding of the school's work. The Chair of Governors works closely with the school as well as with other governors, and it is clear that her insight and awareness contribute to the school's effectiveness.
107. Line management has been strengthened since the last inspection, especially through a redefinition of the responsibilities of the two deputies. Responsibilities are clearly designated and an extensive programme of lesson observation involving senior and middle managers has been established since the last inspection, and particularly over the last two years. As a result, senior staff are very aware of the strengths within teaching and equally of where there is scope for further development. The results of this programme can be seen partly in the significantly higher proportion of satisfactory and better teaching since the last inspection. Heads of upper and lower school have responsibility for monitoring the received curriculum and the results analysis programme, plus tracking and target arrangements, provide further means by which the effectiveness of the curriculum can be monitored. Heads of faculty are responsible for monitoring schemes of work and this works satisfactorily in most instances but where

curriculum planning is less developed – as in business studies and modern languages – there is currently no clear means of this being picked up at a more senior level.

108. Members of staff with management responsibilities generally discharge their responsibilities effectively. This is true, for example, of heads of year, heads of faculty and most heads of department. The management of English, mathematics and science is particularly strong and has a direct impact on standards. Dynamic subject leadership also has a positive impact on pupils' experiences in history and physical education. There is clear educational direction in art and good management in religious education. Subject leadership is satisfactory in other subjects.
109. The hard working and purposeful special educational needs coordinator provides a clear vision for special needs provision in the school and commands the respect of staff and parents alike. He has led a number of initiatives to improve the school's provision since the last inspection, which include the development of an excellent communication system, involving the school's computer network. This has substantially reduced paperwork and ensures immediate access to information by subject departments. The coordinator has also provided wide-ranging and highly relevant in-service training. The coordinator supports a dedicated team of learning support assistants and support teachers, providing effective direction to their work through a thorough system of regular support meetings. However, the special educational needs coordinator's role - particularly in the area of systematic monitoring to ensure that all pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the curriculum - is under-developed, due to inflexibility in the use of coordination time. The special educational needs policy does not sufficiently guide staff in their everyday practice: the policy statements are too general; some are misleading; roles and responsibilities for special educational needs are not clearly defined. Additionally, the policy does not explain what the stages of support mean for the school in relation to its actual provision and co-ordination, and there is insufficient guidance on the formulation of learning support plans from diagnostic assessments. The policy forms part of a special needs folder which provides useful guidance on the use of support assistants, and on the work of a variety of external professionals; with accompanying guidance on particular special educational needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. Statutory requirements for special educational needs are fully met. Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs are timely.
110. The sixth form consortium is well managed. All aspects of the consortium are organised jointly and it is governed by regular meetings of the directors (the three headteachers and the vice principal of the further education college), and is administered by a co-ordinator who also teaches in all the institutions. The school has featured in two recent official national publications, 'Post-16 Collaboration' and 'Curriculum Guidance for 2000'. One area where liaison could be further improved is in forming a more direct link between the key skills programme at Monk's Walk and the GNVQ course at Stanborough.
111. The school's documented policies and other guidance papers are very brief though invariably well focused with clear expectations of what is expected. This gives an unequivocal message to all who work in the school and shows a deep understanding in many key areas. A very clear understanding of the essential elements which make for a successful school is embedded in much of the school's documentation. The well-focused and informative staff handbook provides a very useful overview of the school's systems and organisation. The school has the policies it is required by law to have, plus a number of other policy statements.
112. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school has a very good capacity to improve further. There is a clear commitment to continual development and very good progress has been made on almost all issues identified in the previous inspection. Line management has been strengthened and there are now clear systems for monitoring the curriculum and assessment. Senior and middle managers have undertaken a considerable amount of lesson observation in the last two years and the quality of teaching has improved substantially in this time. There is more variety of teaching approaches, for example in mathematics and science, but work is not always sufficiently matched to the full range of ability and the learning needs of all pupils in the class. The school evaluated its provision in relation to its equal opportunities practices, giving a particular emphasis to improving the attainment of boys. Inspection evidence shows that boys and girls are making similar progress. The school carried out an

audit of its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development following the last inspection, but little further action has been taken to improve provision for spiritual development. Provision for spiritual development remains unsatisfactory and the school still does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils or to ensure that religious education is taught to pupils in Years 11 to 13.

113. In its aims, the stated intention of Monk's Walk is to be 'an improving and effective school', and it is evident that the school is continuously looking to raise standards and to provide ever richer experiences for pupils. Much evaluation takes place and the school has as a current school improvement plan to 'improve and extend school evaluation systems'. It is clear that senior managers are making good use of national developments and initiatives and papers related to Investors in People status show that the school has coherent systems for documenting and evaluating its own effectiveness.
114. The review and development planning cycle provides a means by which all groups within the school are fully consulted and encouraged to contribute. Governors are appropriately involved at various stages. The school has moved to an annually revised three-year school improvement plan to combine longer-term vision with a more effective time scale. There are subject development plans whose targets link into whole school development priorities; this is an improvement in coherence since the last inspection. They are not costed, however, and are just points for action in order to achieve a specified goal. Three school targets are being pursued through subject development plans for 1999/2000: to improve pupil attainment; to improve school evaluation systems; to extend the school's resources development programme. A number of subjects have made good use of the findings in the last inspection to develop and further evaluate provision.
115. The school has a very positive ethos. It combines high expectations, for instance, encouraging pupils to apply to Oxbridge, with a real sensitivity and care for individual pupils. The vast majority of pupils are keen to learn and relationships in the school are of a high quality.
116. The school has clearly stated aims, which focus on high standards and on producing pupils capable of making a full contribution to society throughout their lives. The school's documented goals and objectives are appropriate and well thought out and these aims are being met, but they make little reference to provision for pupils' spiritual development and the key issue relating to spiritual development in the last report, although receiving attention by means of an audit of provision, has led to insufficient action.
117. Most statutory requirements are met, except for the following:
 - the school does not provide a daily act of collective worship;
 - religious education is not taught in Year 11 or in the sixth form;
 - curricular requirements for information technology are not met at Key Stage 4;
 - there are some omissions from the special educational needs policy.

• **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

1. The school has sufficient staff to meet the needs of the curriculum although the pupil to teacher ratio has increased since the last inspection. Class sizes are average for the type of school and consortium arrangements enable a cost effective sixth form provision.
2. The staff are well qualified and almost all are teaching in their specialist area. All teachers have a minimum non-contact of three periods per week with the exception of newly qualified teachers who have five. There is a good balance of long serving and recently appointed staff or newly qualified teachers, providing a stable but dynamic teaching force. Staff turnover is approximately ten per cent with a staff

absence rate of only two per cent, reflecting a good level of teacher morale.

3. Currently, the school has six newly qualified teachers who are well supported through good induction procedures; these school procedures enhance the statutory requirements for newly qualified teachers. The comprehensive guidance and handbook given to newly appointed staff is very much appreciated. Numbers of support staff are above average both in learning support and technician grades. Clerical and administrative support is average for the size of school. All staff have job descriptions and, as stated in the previous report, staff resources are well managed. Although responsibilities are outlined in the job descriptions, there continues to be inconsistencies in practice between faculties, particularly in the level and comprehensiveness of long and medium term planning. The achievement of Investors in People status in 1995 and 1998 is an indication of the strength of the school's commitment to its staff. Appraisal continues to run successfully providing one of the mechanisms for determining staff development needs. Procedures for continuing professional development are very good, linking well to the development needs of the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff are equally valued, with training and development opportunities for all being ensured through effective management.
4. The special educational needs coordinator is sufficiently experienced and qualified to undertake the demands of the role and ensures that he keeps up to date with recent research and developments. There are sufficient learning support assistants, who work very well with the coordinator and in lessons to support pupils with special educational needs. However, the quality of teamwork with teachers varies. In some lessons, teachers follow the good guidance provided by the special educational needs coordinator and involve learning support assistants in planning to ensure that pupils who are supported make good progress in those particular lessons. In other lessons, this is not the case and there is a distinct lack of joint planning in subjects, particularly in the medium and short term. This has a negative impact on pupils' progress, as very often the choice of effective strategies and the selection of relevant resources are 'hit and miss.' The special educational needs coordinator involves a range of external professionals, particularly the educational psychologist, and the speech and language therapist, in planning for improvement in provision. The high quality liaison with external professionals, which is a strength of the school, has a positive impact on the progress of pupils.
5. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, except for resourcing of information technology. Learning resources meet the demands of the curriculum in most subjects. However, there are insufficient textbooks for middle and lower attainers science, a lack of range and number of percussion instruments in music and inadequate access to information technology in business education and geography. There are sufficient resources in the special educational needs except for insufficient diagnostic assessment materials to formulate effective learning support plans.
6. The school recognises that it is under resourced for information technology and its pupil to computer ratio is well above the national average. There is insufficient capacity to allow the school to meet its legal obligation to provide information technology for all at Key Stage 4. It has insufficient funds to remedy this, although the planned provision of thirty more machines will go some way towards improving access for pupils. The school is currently as much constrained by lack of accommodation to create a further computer network as by insufficient hardware. Therefore, further development in information technology is not only dependent on current local and national initiatives but also on the school's anticipated building programme.
7. A professional librarian ensures that the library is stocked appropriately and adequately, working closely with subject staff and responding positively to pupil requests. A good, relevant and modern book stock of 15,000 books is supplemented by 6 Internet-linked computers and a range of periodicals. The previous report commented on good use of the local and wider community as a resource for learning, and this continues to be the case.
8. Being situated in extensive grounds, the school is fortunate to have a good range of outdoor sport and recreation facilities. Accommodation is provided in a number of separate blocks, all of which require external decoration and some require more extensive maintenance. The internal fabric is generally good as a result of a rolling programme of redecoration which is organised by the estates manager and carried

out using on-site maintenance staff. There are curriculum areas that have difficulty accommodating current group sizes, in particular, design & technology, science, and business studies which does not have an identified base. Some parts of the building, particularly the hall and dining area of Block A serve a number of functions, acting for instance as a music room, drama studio, gymnasium and fitness room, with the inevitable difficulties of noise and access. The previous report highlighted problems of storage and the need for improvements to the changing rooms adjacent to the gym. Both of these problems remain, despite the ceiling being replaced in the boys' changing room. Certain parts of the school remain inaccessible to wheelchair users. The proposed building programme is essential to the school's further development, especially in view of the school's rising numbers.

132. **The efficiency of the school**

132.

9. Financial planning is very effective. Budget planning is a year round event and the budget is based on a three-year school improvement cycle. Money is distributed to budget holders on a formula basis, agreed with staff and governors. Members of the senior management group meet to pool ideas for the forthcoming budget, based on ongoing dialogue with heads of faculty. This leads to the formation of the outline budget based both on a long term and short term strategy. Senior managers look at curriculum requirements and translate them to Heads of Faculty. The governors' finance sub-committee then becomes involved in helping to prepare a draft budget for approval by the full governing body.

133.

10. Internal financial control is excellent, and systems are managed most efficiently by a most able finance manager and two finance officers. There are clear terms of reference for the finance sub-committee of the governing body and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all staff concerned in managing the budget. The school complies fully with the financial regulations and advice given by the local education authority, for example, the minor recommendations of the last auditor's report have all been implemented fully. The governors have also produced their own check sheet to monitor the efficiency of the school's financial procedures and this constitutes exemplary practice. The chair of finance receives a monthly analysis of income and expenditure to scrutinise and seeks to resolve any emerging issues by liaising closely with the school. The finance sub-committee meets at least once per term to evaluate, review and take action on the budget. The school's administrative system for controlling expenditure is fully computerised with appropriate back-up procedures. All transactions are traceable from ordering through to payment of invoices. All insurances are in place and the school complies fully with the Data Protection Act. Procedures for purchasing are very efficiently managed, for example, the finance manager ensures that each cost centre manager obtains value for money. The school also manages its accounts effectively. All goods and services received are checked and monitored and clear payment procedures are in place. Procedures for administering the personnel function of the school, the security of stocks and property, the school's income and banking arrangements are excellent. Very effective systems are also in place for managing petty cash and the school's voluntary funds.

11. The school makes very good use of its grants for training: expenditure on staff development is very well matched to the school's priorities for improvement. Each budget holder has an allocation ranging from £800 to £1,300 to support training in curriculum areas and an allocation of £8,150 is held centrally for whole school initiatives such as training in monitoring, school improvement and the development of aspiring heads of department. Excellent systems are in place to evaluate the quality of training and to ensure cost effectiveness.

12. Funding for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very well used and ensures that provision matches their needs. The special educational needs coordinator uses the special needs budget to purchase relevant resources but there has been insufficient purchasing of new resources, particularly in information and communications technology and standardised tests. Staff and accommodation are very well used to support pupils with special educational needs but learning resources, particularly information and communications technology in subject lessons, is not sufficiently used to ensure pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

13. Excellent use is made of staff, who are fully deployed to deliver the curriculum. Excellent use is also

made of learning support assistants and technicians to support the curriculum. There is a close match of qualifications and expertise of teachers to the subjects of the curriculum. Class sizes are appropriate and administrative staff are deployed effectively to ensure that teachers are not over-burdened with administrative procedures. Specialist accommodation is used to capacity and excellent use is made of learning resources including available information technology and the library.

14. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. Attainment in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is high and results at GCSE are above the national average. Results at A level are generally above and sometimes well above those nationally. Most pupils make progress and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in subject lessons and good progress when receiving specialist support, particularly in their behaviour and attitude to learning. Pupils are well behaved and have positive attitudes to their learning. The school is very well managed and teaching is a strength of the school, with very little unsatisfactory teaching and a significant proportion that is very good. The school manages its budget very efficiently and provides good value for money.

138. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

138. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

138. **English**

15. In the end of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in 1998, the best results were achieved in English, where pupils reached levels well above those nationally and also well above those for similar schools. In 1999, there was a significant further rise in standards so that 86 per cent of pupils reached Level 5 or above, 55 per cent reached Level 6 or above and 16 per cent reached Level 7. When compared with schools with a similar intake, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 6 and above in 1999 was very high. Both boys and girls achieve outstanding success in the end of Key Stage 3 tests and there has been a clear upward trend in results since the last inspection. Attainment is higher in English than in mathematics or science.
16. GCSE results in 1998 were above national averages for A* to C grades. Boys' results for A* to C grades were above results nationally and girls' results well above. The results in 1999 improved on those of 1998, bringing them well above comprehensive schools nationally, with a significant number of pupils achieving A* or A grades. Results in 1999 for English literature were high, with 79 per cent of pupils achieving A* to C grades, showing an improvement on the results in 1998, which were broadly in line with results nationally. The school's results for English at GCSE have been well above national averages at A* to C for the last three years, and have steadily and significantly improved since the time of the last inspection. Results at A level have fluctuated from year to year; in 1998, the percentage of students gaining A or B grades was well above the national average but has fallen slightly in 1999. The small number of students entered for the new language and literature course in 1999 achieved very good grades.
17. By the end of Key Stage 3, when pupils speak clearly and many are articulate. Pupils of all levels of attainment are required by teachers to give answers and make points, and they are expected to use standard English. For example, in a lesson starting an essay on World War I poetry, every pupil around the room was asked to make a comment on 'In Dulce et Decorum Est'. In group work higher attainers in particular negotiate well, but all pupils develop ideas effectively together, and display good listening skills. Strong emphasis is placed on reading throughout the key stage and teachers work closely with the librarian. Pupils can cope with various texts and work in class showed good levels of understanding from reading a range of material, including Wilfred Owen, Martin Luther King and reference books. There is evidence that pupils have developed a critical appreciation of literature by the end of the key stage. In an analytical comparison of short stories, higher attaining and average attaining pupils show a keen awareness of character and relationships, while lower attainers understand plot and situation. Higher attaining pupils write fluently and at length, with very good levels of accuracy of expression. They structure their writing effectively, both technically through good use of paragraphing, varied sentence forms and lengths, and in presenting their ideas. The work of average attainers contains many similar features but falls down sometimes in spelling and grammar, with less variety and skill in their prose style. Some pupils with special educational needs are writing well below national expectations by the end of the key stage but lower attaining pupils generally produce shorter pieces of writing of a simple and straightforward style with an adequate range of vocabulary.
18. Higher attaining pupils by Year 11 are mostly working towards grades A and B at GCSE. They write at length and in a lively style, and know how to change the tone of their writing for different purposes. Most pupils use a good range of structures and interesting vocabulary, and the main difference between the work of higher attainers and that of average attainers lies in the level of technical accuracy. For example, the essays of higher attainers comparing the writing of Swift and Golding are well structured and show a good understanding of the social context in which the authors worked. The highest attaining pupils know a great deal about literary technique by this stage, and their ability to relate the form of a work to its meaning is well above average. Their understanding of structure in poetry, for example, enabled them to identify a poem by Ted Hughes from hearing the teacher's description of the technical pattern of the poem. Lower attaining pupils have produced a range of interesting writing on work related

themes; they mostly use basic grammatical structures correctly although their vocabulary is limited and their written work contains some inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation. Higher attainers make a range of contributions in class which show that they have listened perceptively and are sensitive to the development of the discussion. Lower attaining pupils listen to each other and to the teacher carefully, and can articulate their ideas and views on a topic, but use a mixture of standard and non-standard English.

143. By Year 13, attainment is above average. Discussion is sophisticated and thoughtful, as for example, in work on the character of Bosola from 'The Duchess of Malfi', with good use of evidence and reason to support points. Students have the linguistic tools with which to engage in work at this level. Writing is of high quality generally and that of the highest attaining students is of a very high quality. Students analyse text well and, in the language and literature course, they produce some very effective creative work.
19. Pupils make at least good progress in the vast majority of lessons. Over time, higher and lower attainers make good progress, whilst average attainers make very good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress, both reaching higher than average levels for their gender in national examinations and tests.
20. Progress at Key Stage 3 is good for pupils at all levels of prior attainment including those pupils with special educational needs. Through the many opportunities for discussion in lessons, pupils learn to develop confidence and all learn to speak in front of the class and to share ideas. The excellent support from the school library ensures that all pupils read widely. Reading is given high priority in the English curriculum and there is marked improvement in reading competence through the key stage. From the start of Year 7, pupils are expected to write clearly, to take their writing seriously and to aim for the targets that are set for them. Skills improve because of the structured teaching of grammar and the gradual exploration of style in writing.
21. Progress in lessons at Key Stage 4 is also good, with all pupils completing substantial amounts of quality written work. All pupils progress well in their knowledge and understanding of texts, their development of skills of literary analysis and in their language skills. Most pupils with special educational needs also progress well through the key stage, and the progress of pupils from Tewin Water Special School is very good. They are well integrated as full and active members of Monk's Walk classes. Higher attaining pupils are aware of the targets set for them, and are challenged by them, but rise to the challenge. Writing styles and skills progress well beyond Year 9; there is more varied vocabulary, sentence structure and more precise use of technical terms. The highest attaining pupils show very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of technical language for literary analysis. Lower attaining pupils are increasingly able to express their ideas well in a work-related and life skills context, although their skills of reading and writing remain at low levels in relation to the majority of their age group.
22. There is clear evidence from oral contributions in class that sixth formers are acquiring appropriate language for advanced studies in English language and literature or English literature. Students systematically acquire appropriate registers of structure and vocabulary. Reading of more academic and analytical texts is developing well by Year 13. There is good development of appropriate academic discourse, which increasingly is used unselfconsciously in class. Progress in the sixth form is very good, with many students working well above their predicted grade levels in response to the skilful setting of tasks.
23. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations and they are attentive and willing to answer questions. Some exceptional levels of interest, enthusiasm and sustained hard work were seen in lessons. For example, a Year 7 class was able to sustain quiet reading in the classroom even when unsupervised; a Year 9 class was totally absorbed by Martin Luther King's speech for freedom, and a Year 11 class was enthusiastic about poetic structure. Homework is conscientiously completed, above average numbers of books are borrowed from the library, and pupils' planners are used well, especially at Key Stage 4 when examination targets are set and monitored. Behaviour is very good in lessons. Seating arrangements made by the teacher to promote mixed gender working are accepted without complaint or embarrassment. Relationships between pupils are good-natured and constructive, and relationships with

teachers are predominantly open, mature and warm. Pupils almost always collaborate effectively, stay on task and work well with each other. A Year 12 group was seen engaging enthusiastically in devising and acting a role play of the trial of Bosola from 'The Duchess of Malfi'. Pupils are supportive of their peers when they are presenting work and show respect for the beliefs of others, as when a Year 12 group showed mature consideration of each other's views in their discussion of feminism. Pupils show initiative in their choice of books and know where to go for information. They use dictionaries well to check vocabulary. A Year 9 group showed initiative and a sense of responsibility in their group work on 'joyriding'.

24. Teaching in English is a significant strength of the school. In all the lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory, 80 per cent was good or better, and over a third is very good or excellent. The subject knowledge and understanding of teachers is of a very high order throughout the department. Units of work are planned within the guidelines of an overall scheme which contains choices, and lessons are planned to provide a range of activities within the hour, some very clearly and in detail. There are high expectations generally of behaviour and attitude to work. A variety of strategies seeks to maximise attainment and progress:

- reading is supported by regular short visits to the library, followed by silent reading in class;
- teacher-led whole class question and answer sessions are briskly undertaken in short time spans;
- a good balance is achieved between whole class work, group and paired work, with well-focused tasks being set;
- cheerful and enthusiastic introductions to lessons, with a high degree of flair and charisma is evident in some teacher presentations;
- clear links are made to previous work to prepare for new ideas.

1. Management of pupils is very skilled so that there is little in the way of problem behaviour in English. Sensitive extra support is given to lower attaining pupils in mixed ability classes and extension options are provided for higher attaining pupils. Work is often but not always matched to the learning needs of different abilities. Relationships are purposeful and mutually respectful and individual pupils are well known by teachers. Lessons have pace and purpose. Time is almost invariably used effectively and pupils are effortlessly kept on task. All work is marked with National Curriculum levels, GCSE or GCE grades. Specific targets are set and written on pupils' work with formative comments making clear its strengths and weaknesses. Progress is carefully monitored. The homework set follows on naturally from lessons, is appropriate and forms an essential part of the course.

2. Key contributory factors to the good progress overall are the strong leadership of the subject, the dedicated and specialist teaching team, and the strong systems for curriculum planning and for assessment which all staff follow. The only factor that limits progress, to some extent, is the lack of access to information technology as a key resource for the study of English; potential access to information technology suites is not taken up. Improvement in response to points made in the previous inspection report has been good.

151. **Mathematics**

3. In the National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils consistently attained well above the national average in the years 1996 to 1998, and above the average for similar schools. This standard was maintained in 1999. In the 1998 GCSE examinations, results for mathematics were significantly above the national average and improved further in 1999. GCSE results have risen each year over the period 1996 to 1999. Pupils' results for mathematics are also significantly higher than their results for most other subjects within the school. Attainment in A level examinations varies year by year, but on average is at or slightly above results nationally. Since the last inspection in 1994, the good standards of attainment in mathematics have been sustained and standards at GCSE have improved still further; boys and girls are now performing equally well.

4. In lessons and in work seen at Key Stage 3, attainment is largely in line with or above national standards, improving as pupils move through the key stage. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have developed good number and investigational skills and are able to explain their thinking strategies. Higher attaining pupils are confident in algebra and lower attainers have satisfactory mental arithmetic. In Key Stage 4 lessons and in work seen, attainment is largely in line with or above national expectations, with some pupils attaining at an outstanding level. Most pupils can use and rearrange formulae and use spreadsheets to manipulate and present data. Higher attaining pupils are able to apply trigonometry to complex situations. Lower attainers can use simple probability and explore number patterns. Attainment in A level lessons and work seen is at least average and sometimes above expectations. Most students can use calculus techniques and higher attainers in the further mathematics course are able to solve geometric problems using matrices and vectors.
5. Progress at Key Stage 3 is good over time, and pupils are progressing more quickly than is expected nationally. Progress is at least satisfactory in all Key Stage 3 lessons, good or better in just over half of lessons and occasionally very good. There is no variation in the progress of boys or girls. Some higher attainers make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs generally progress in line with their peers, often with the help of learning support assistants. Hearing impaired pupils from Tewin Water Special School use technological aids to access lessons and they make good progress. Progress in Key Stage 4 is also good as evidenced by examination results and pupils' written work. In lessons, progress is generally satisfactory and it is good in a third of lessons, though a small number of pupils make unsatisfactory progress because of poor motivation. Many lower attainers make satisfactory progress towards GCSE and some, including some pupils with special educational needs, make good progress on the Graduated Assessment Scheme. Some higher attaining pupils make very good progress as a direct result of challenging teaching. In the sixth form, progress over time is generally good. In A level lessons, progress was at least satisfactory in five out of six lessons and good in two thirds of lessons. Students with previous high attainment at GCSE make faster progress in the sixth form than lower attainers and in the A level further mathematics course, it is evident that lower attainers are struggling.
6. Pupils' response in lessons is always at least satisfactory, and somewhat better at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form than at Key Stage 4. Pupils behave well and are generally attentive to the teacher. They are willing to answer questions and listen well to each other. In some mixed ability lessons in Key Stage 3, pupils organise their own work under the supervision of the teacher. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good. In Key Stage 3 lessons and in some classes at Key Stage 4, pupils show a genuine interest in tackling mathematical challenges. Sixth formers organise their work well and use resources sensibly to further their own learning. In the well-organised system of investigations and the recently introduced scheme for cognitive acceleration in mathematics, pupils develop an ability to think independently and communicate their understanding orally and in writing. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively from time to time and a small but significant number of pupils extend their mathematical thinking through the mathematics club and the many competitions that are offered.
7. Teaching is at least satisfactory in over 90 per cent of lessons, good or better in half the lessons and very good in almost 10 per cent of lessons. In general, teaching is better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4 or in the sixth form. Teachers have a good command of the subject and this is a particular strength in A level teaching. They manage pupils well, maintaining effective discipline together with good relationships. Planning is usually sound. The scheme of work ensures a variety of activities in lessons, including the use of textbooks and individualised booklets, regular use of information and communication technology, mental arithmetic practice, investigations and the development of thinking skills. In the mixed ability classes in Years 7 and 8, teachers usually prepare work at a variety of levels to suit pupils' individual learning needs. Homework is set and marked regularly. In the best lessons, very good planning gives rise to very clear explanations, together with careful questioning of all pupils to develop their thinking. All pupils are involved in a strong learning ethos and teachers use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to take full advantage of learning opportunities. Pupils are given thorough practice in the development of skills. Where teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3, work is pitched all at one level and some pupils make insufficient progress; at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, a small number of lessons are poorly planned.

8. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved at Key Stage 3 and there is now a full team of qualified teachers. The very good leadership of the faculty is a significant factor in the good progress made by pupils. The head of faculty has a clear educational vision, provides very good support for teachers and pupils and monitors standards carefully. The curriculum is very well planned and organised, and there are very good records of pupils' attainment.

157. **Science**

9. In National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3, results in 1998 were above the national average for pupils reaching Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above, and they were broadly in line with those for similar schools. The results in 1999 were very close to those in 1998, remaining above the national average. Results in science at Key Stage 3 have consistently exceeded national results over the last few years. At GCSE in 1998, 55.4 per cent of pupils gained A* to C grades in the double science award, compared with 49 per cent nationally; the percentage of pupils gaining an A* to G grade was slightly above the national average, as was the points score. In 1999, there was a slight decline in the number of pupils gaining A* to C grades but a very slight increase in the proportion gaining A* to G grades. Whilst results in single award science were well above those nationally in 1998, at 50 per cent A* to C, results in 1999 were more in line with the national average. In the two years that pupils have been assessed through the Certificate of Achievement, the school has gained mostly distinctions and no pupil has achieved less than a merit. The attainment of boys as compared with that of girls varies somewhat from year to year. In the end of Key Stage 3 tests between 1996 and 1998, the results of boys were above the national average, whilst those of girls were close to the average nationally. However, at GCSE over the same period, girls have at times outperformed boys. At A Level, results in biology, chemistry and physics fluctuate a little from year to year and there are too few entrants to make clear comparisons with national results. There are, however, some examples of students performing significantly above the national average. For example, in 1998, 67 per cent of students achieved A or B grades in chemistry and 50 per cent gained A or B grades in physics.
10. Attainment at all key stages has shown a gradual improvement since the last inspection, with more pupils being entered for GCSE and lower attaining pupils achieving success in the Certificate of Achievement. Some pupils have taken part in national science competitions winning prizes for the school, for example a cash prize for the best poster. Above average attainment in lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4, together with scrutiny of pupils' work, suggests that standards are continuing to rise.
11. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is above national expectations. Higher attaining pupils know that muscles work antagonistically to produce movement in the human body. In their experiments with light, they can show that the angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection. They know that compounds are formed when elements combine chemically; and they can quantify this data, for example, they can draw a graph to show the proportional relationship between the mass of magnesium burned and the mass of magnesium oxide produced. Pupils of average ability can identify various types of joints in the body, and they know that the action of muscles on the skeleton causes different kinds of movement. They can investigate light using a ray box, identifying the incident ray and the reflected ray; and they can write down the chemical symbols for most of the elements and familiar compounds such as magnesium oxide. Lower attaining pupils know that muscles are attached to the skeleton, and work to produce movement; that light is reflected from smooth shiny surfaces such as a mirror, and that mixtures of substances, such as crude oil, can be separated to yield different chemical compounds.
12. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is above national expectations. Higher attaining pupils can draw a graph to show the effect of enzymes on plant growth and compare the occurrence of live species identified at two contrasting sites of a freshwater river. They know that stars are arranged in groups called constellations, often named after Greek gods; they understand the physical and chemical differences between compounds with covalent and ionic bonds, and they can investigate the factors which affect the electrical resistance of a wire, recording their results on a graph. Pupils of average ability know that living things respire, move, excrete and respond to environmental stimuli. They know our sun is part of the Milky Way galaxy; they understand the reactions in the Blast Furnace process for

producing iron from iron ore, and they can apply Ohm's law to calculate current and potential difference in electricity. Lower attaining pupils know that our sun is a star; they can label the parts of a plant and animal cell, understanding their differences; they know that potassium is more reactive than lithium and that electric current can flow through a wire.

13. By Year 13, attainment is broadly in line with course requirements. In physics, students know how to calibrate a refraction grating in order to determine the spectrum of a mercury vapour light. They understand how to calculate the resistivity of a wire by applying the appropriate formula and they can calculate the velocity of a stationary wave using measurements of frequency. In chemistry, students can arrange organic acids in order of their strength by examining their chemical structure; calculate equilibrium constants, and they can investigate redox reactions with ferric and ferrous salts. In biology, pupils know that basking heliotherms are a class of ectothermic reptile that absorb heat by radiation; that sickle cell anaemia occurs when faulty haemoglobin crystallises causing red blood cells to become sickle – shaped; and they can separate amino acids using chromatography.
14. Progress in science is good in lessons and over time. In two thirds of lessons, progress is good and in one third it is satisfactory. In most lessons at Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils make good progress because the curriculum has significantly improved since the last inspection to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop scientific thinking, to take part in discussion and to extend their vocabulary. In some lessons, average and lower attainers make satisfactory progress, whilst higher attainers are making good progress. This is largely because higher attainers have a more positive attitude to learning and are more motivated to succeed. They build systematically on their knowledge and understanding of science and develop their skills of investigation. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, and sometimes good progress when work is clearly matched to their needs or when support is available. Occasionally, they make unsatisfactory progress due to a failure to match work to their learning needs or as a result of the teacher's unsatisfactory management of behaviour. There are no differences between the progress of boys and girls or of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
15. Overall, progress in science is good at Key Stage 4. There are equal numbers of lessons where pupils make good and satisfactory progress. However in one lesson, most pupils made unsatisfactory progress due to poor classroom behaviour and ineffective behaviour management. Good progress results from systematic teaching, which includes greater emphasis on investigative science and the extensive use of information technology, where pupils are encouraged by teachers to extend their work, using CD-ROMs and the Internet for research, and word processing skills to present high quality pieces of course work. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in consolidating their knowledge and understanding in lessons due to insufficient differentiation. However, lower ability pupils are making good progress towards their Certificate of Achievement, because the award is closely matched to their level of ability. Students in the sixth form are making good progress and occasionally very good progress in lessons due to greater consistency in teaching and the extensive use of information technology. Tewin Water Pupils make very good progress in science, due to the high quality support arrangements in lessons and excellent use of radio aids.
16. Pupils throughout the school respond well in science lessons. Attitudes and behaviour are very good in a third of lessons, good in a third and only occasionally less than satisfactory. The best attitudes are displayed in the sixth form and at Key Stage 3. Most pupils are courteous, polite and respectful of staff and each other. Many pupils enjoy science lessons and some experience a sense of awe and wonder when they connect their scientific knowledge to the real world, for example when they saw and heard hydrogen gas explode in 'Chemistry Week'. Many pupils listen attentively to staff and are eager to carry out their tasks. Most pupils handle scientific equipment very safely. They try hard and concentrate well. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, for example, when carrying out experiments, pupils often help each other and take responsibility for getting information, rather than relying on the teacher to provide it. However, where attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory, pupils call out, talk while the teacher is talking, lose interest in the topic and waste time. In one lesson, the poor behaviour of some pupils resulted in a very noisy and disrupted learning environment for all.

17. The majority of teaching is at least satisfactory, in almost two thirds of all lessons teaching is good and in a third of lessons it is very good. Teaching was most often good at Key Stage 3. Where teaching is good, teachers have high expectations for learning and behaviour; lessons proceed briskly; and a variety of strategies are used to consolidate learning, including clear explanation, lively discussions, demonstrations and opportunities for group investigative work. Planning nearly always includes some matching of work to different abilities; pupils' behaviour is well managed; information technology is effectively used to support learning, and homework is usually always set. Where teaching is very good, the same strengths are evident but teachers also match resources and activities precisely to the different needs of pupils using ongoing assessment within the lesson to vary approaches, thus accommodating individual difficulties in understanding. They focus intensively on the development of scientific vocabulary and use information technology resources particularly well. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers are secure in their own knowledge of science but they often fail to match teaching methods and learning activities to the different needs and abilities of pupils. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher's behaviour management strategies were inadequate in the face of unsatisfactory behaviour.
18. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection through the high quality leadership of the new science co-ordinator who ensures that members of the faculty are working effectively. The revised curriculum will take time to impact on examination results but there is evidence to suggest that effective measures are being taken to raise standards.

167. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

167. **Art**

19. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with that expected nationally. At the end of Key Stage 4, GCSE results for both art and photography are well above the national average. Pupils tend to obtain higher grades in art than in many of the other subjects that they take. Performance at GCSE in 1998, with 81 per cent of pupils gaining A* to C grades, was well above schools nationally and similar results were achieved in 1999. Attainment in the sixth form varies but was higher than national results in 1998, though fewer students achieved A and B grades in 1999.
20. In work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is mainly sound and broadly matches the national expectation for 14 year olds. Much of pupils' work at this key stage tends to be more restricted in size and media but some pupils in Year 7 have painted exciting constructions inspired by the work of Howard Hodgkin. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to draw from observation, they know how to use single point perspective in composition and have a basic understanding of colour theory. They have looked at the work of different artists from secondary sources but have little knowledge of art in the context of time and place. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is good and higher than the national expectation. At this stage, higher attaining pupils have a growing knowledge about past and current movements in art though for many, their art historical knowledge remains slight. Pupils are able to make informed decisions about their own work, they select from a wider range of materials and scales and are encouraged to produce experimental and individualised work.
21. From work seen, attaining in the sixth form is higher than course requirements. In Year 12, there is excellent progression from Key Stage 4. At this stage, students are joined by other sixth formers from the consortium and start to become fully independent learners. By the end of the sixth form, students have acquired a wider appreciation and knowledge of the art world including modern art movements. They develop ideas into three- dimensional work using 'found' materials and keep good records of their planning.
22. Progress is sound at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Students make very good progress in the sixth form. Expectations are not always high enough for high attaining pupils at Key Stage 3, with the result that although their work shows promise, they are not able to achieve enough. Planning at this

stage does not always build on previous work and as there has been no increase in time for Key Stage 3 since the last inspection it is more difficult for pupils to consolidate their knowledge. Most pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress. Pupils from Tewin Water Special School make satisfactory progress. One boy from Tewin Water is working with confidence and preparing for the GCSE examination. At Key Stage 4, the open-ended nature of many of the GCSE projects encourages initiative, enabling pupils with marked aptitude make good progress. Gallery visits at this stage also have an impact on standards and progress. In the sixth form, progress is very good. The residential visit to St. Ives, which students undertake in Year 13, has a positive effect on standards.

23. Pupils' response to art at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in sixth form level is good. Although a few pupils have difficulty settling to work in Key Stage 3, most are well motivated and able to sustain a good level of concentration. Pupils with special educational needs respond well and work with interest. Pupils enjoy being asked about their work and some are able to use a subject specialist vocabulary. Several come and work in the department at lunchtime. Relationships are positive, behaviour is generally good and classes are orderly.
24. Overall teaching is good and teachers are up to date in their knowledge and expertise. In half the lessons, teaching is very good and at times excellent. At times in Key Stage 3, where teaching is satisfactory – and occasionally unsatisfactory - expectations are not high enough or the organisation of the lesson does not fully support progress. There are limited opportunities for pupils to talk about their work, no student presentations or group evaluations of work were seen in any key stage during the inspection. Schemes of work meet statutory requirements except in the use of information technology. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are being further developed but have still to be fully put into practice. This was an issue in the previous inspection. There are no central records held in the department, which makes it difficult to compare achievement or to monitor individual performance through the curriculum. Homework is not consistent in Key Stage 3 and it is not always clear from the marking what pupils have to do to improve their work. Sketchbooks are well developed in Key Stage 4 and some are excellent in the sixth form.
25. The department is effectively led and managed, and there is clear educational direction for the subject. Accommodation is good and has been further improved by the new head of art who has developed a learning resource and information technology centre. Computers are a recent acquisition but other resources are limited which means that printmaking is under developed and ceramics cannot be offered. This is a good department which makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the school.

174. **Business studies**

26. Attainment in business studies, taken as part of a combined course, is good. Pupils performed in line with national expectations at GCSE in 1998 and well above the national average in 1999. In 1998, pupils achieved 76 per cent A* to C grades compared with a national figure of 54.4 per cent. The syllabus has changed since the last inspection, now combining with information technology. Whilst boys appear to perform less well during the course the results at GCSE show no variation by gender. Attainment in lessons compares well with that expected of business studies pupils nationally. Work produced throughout the course at Key Stage 4 shows the development of knowledge and understanding along with the ability to apply that knowledge. In lessons by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use analytical skills to identify reasons why companies are structured as they are. They use business language with confidence and higher attainers can explain with clarity the characteristics that distinguish one form of ownership from another. Average attainers, both boys and girls, are able to describe the features of organisational structures but are less confident in determining the consequences of such structures. Higher attainers are able to state the relevant financial ratios and explain their purpose, whilst those identified as attaining at a lower level were able to explain what was meant by the span of control.
27. Students at post-16 match the attainment of sixth formers nationally, both in business studies and economics. Whilst overall figures at A level are in line with national results, students at the school tend

to gain marginally more higher grades. However, numbers entered are relatively low and therefore statistical comparison is less reliable than at Key Stage 4. Students studying economics analyse and interpret economic data from various sources, such as the Bank of England Briefing on inflation, with confidence. Business studies students in Year 13 have a good understanding of examination requirements. They produce competent responses to trial questions drawing on a solid knowledge base. In considering the concept of price transparency in relation to car sales in the European union, they could explain how the euro aids the consumer. Students are able to use knowledge of extension strategies in answering questions on product development. They all use technical language with confidence. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls within the A level subjects of business studies or economics.

28. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make good progress in the majority of lessons. They apply knowledge gained in previous lessons accurately, for example they were able to identify who would use financial information on a given company and why. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress with the benefit of material specifically designed to help explain the concept of hierarchical structures. Students in the sixth form make good progress in all lessons. They increase their understanding of subject matter, both in economics and business studies. Although over time the rate of progress may vary, during lessons all students make gains in their understanding of examination requirements, their ability to analyse data used in examination questions and basic subject knowledge. Year 12 students considering promotional activity within companies were able to relate relevant, previously learned theory, to current business situations, for example the recent problems facing high street retail outlets.
29. Attitudes are positive towards the subject, with pupils keen to explain the purpose of the work in which they are involved. They display a mature attitude in group discussions and only a small number of those observed needed to be targeted during question and answer sessions. Whether required to work individually, for example on trial examination papers, or during whole class teaching, pupils sustain concentration well. Sixth formers cope well with the extended sessions in both business studies and economics. Despite the cramped conditions in Room 124 and the distractions of Room 36, students respond extremely well to teachers. They readily share their ideas with staff and fellow students, being prepared to recognise shortcomings in their work and learn from the efforts of others. The very good relationships students enjoy with the teaching staff undoubtedly enhance the quality of their work.
30. Teaching in business studies and economics is at least satisfactory and in the majority of lessons, it is good or very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good; the enthusiasm shown by teachers for their subject is a strength and influences the way in which their teaching is received. Where teaching is good the pace of the lesson is right, relationships ensure that there is a mutual respect between teacher and pupils and the work is pitched at a level that stimulates the students. Examples used to illustrate relevant theory are current and presented in a way that is accessible to students of all abilities. Where teaching is satisfactory, students are taught using a limited range of teaching strategies and lessons are heavily teacher directed. The result is that students are given limited opportunity to enhance their understanding and develop the skills of independent learning. Teachers have a good knowledge of the learning needs of students with special educational needs and support is generally good.
31. Documentation relating to the planning of courses and lessons is a weakness of both economics and business studies. Schemes of work do not provide adequate detail of content, methodology or resources in order to ensure consistency in the teaching of the courses. The absence of an adequate teaching base and the limited access to computer equipment means that at Key Stage 4 and post-16, students do not have the opportunity, during the lessons, to use information technology to enhance their learning. (Students studying either subject should have ready access to CD-ROM and Internet facilities.) Although attainment is good at both key stages, the lack of an appropriate base for the department prevents the creation of a stimulating environment in which examples of students' work could be displayed. There is also no opportunity to display commercially produced materials. Teaching space, particularly that used for economics and some business studies, is cramped and restricts the opportunity to employ a variety of teaching styles.
32. At post 16, the school supports consortium vocational programmes by teaching Monk's Walk students

the key skills element of GNVQ intermediate business. Currently, only two students from the school are enrolled on GNVQ courses, both in the vocational area of business. The level of liaison between the teachers supporting the key skills and those responsible for the vocational programme is minimal and affects the level of integration of key skills. There is no sharing of tracking documents or co-ordinated planning of common assignments. Despite the clear shortcomings in the planning and in the accommodation available for key skills, the students, as a result of competent teaching, are receiving a good grounding in the use of appropriate hardware and software.

181. **Design & technology**

33. Overall, attainment in design & technology is in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show an improving trend since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have completed designing and making tasks using a wide range of materials. They forge and braze metal to produce some very well designed metal candlesticks. Wooden automata are imaginatively designed with humorous themes, and pupils design and finish them well. Pupils have a sound knowledge of mechanisms and explain how cams change the direction of movement to achieve movement in the automata. They plan and cook dishes that reflect a healthy diet and have a sound grasp of the functions of the ingredients of dishes. Drawing skills are satisfactory and pupils understand the purpose of design, using their own working drawings and models to identify and overcome design problems before the final making stage. Higher attaining pupils achieve good levels in both designing and making, and are encouraged to take on more challenging skills to achieve more complex artefacts. Lower attainers are well supported by teachers and given additional support to ensure that they finish their projects to a satisfactory standard.
34. Attainment at Key Stage 4 has remained close to national averages for the past three years, with some variations in attainment across the four GCSE options of resistant materials, graphical products, electronics and food; results are lower in electronics and resistant materials than in graphics and food. There has been improvement in overall attainment since the last inspection. In 1999, every pupil entered for GCSE attained a pass grade. By the end of the key stage, pupils produce a portfolio of designs as part of their coursework. Not only are drawing skills sound, but pupils are thorough in producing a well researched project with good presentational skills, for example in the Millennium project for which pupils visited the Dome and have used material from the visit as part of their GCSE coursework. The electronics projects based on children's toys include some good imaginative use of circuitry to produce interesting effects. Coursework projects for food are well presented, thorough and well researched. A level design & technology is taken by one or two candidates and grades vary but are good on the whole; the subject is not taught at Monk's Walk.
35. Progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in all lessons where teaching is at least sound. In Year 7, pupils make an electronic money box and explain how the coin - as it enters the box - completes the circuit, linking this with their understanding of electricity. They work confidently with soldering irons and woodworking tools, and learn to handle a range of other tools in the workshops. Lower attaining pupils use a computer drawing package to make a net from which to construct a box to protect a chocolate egg, and match designs on opposite sides. As well as learning practical skills, pupils begin to understand how the materials they use fit into a wider context, for example they considered why making an electronic dice using plastic might not be environmentally friendly. They learn that food has an important social role and that we use several senses when choosing the foods we eat, so that appearance, texture and taste are all factors to consider.
36. In Key Stage 4, progress is sound overall and sometimes good. Year 10 pupils learn how the physical characteristics of cooked food can be altered by using different thickening agents and apply their knowledge of chemistry to explain why yeast or baking powder causes flour based products to rise. They develop graphical skills well through considering the impact of design on publicity material for a nightclub. Pupils begin to work on projects early enough to complete their artefacts, for example their storage units for GCSE resistant materials. They learn skills at a sound pace and are set well-targeted homework to consolidate the knowledge they gain from lessons. Lower attaining pupils are generally

well supported in design & technology and make satisfactory progress toward targets set for them.

37. Pupils' attitudes toward the subject are generally good. Many enjoy the lessons and in particular the creative aspects of the subject, whether cooking a dish to take home or making a badge or a box. Behaviour is generally good and pupils are well motivated, the exception being when teaching is insecure or dull. When given opportunities to collaborate, pupils do this well. They are supportive of each other and willing to help each other. Relationships with teachers are nearly always good. Pupils are generally respectful and attentive. Most complete their homework on time and some use computers at home to present their coursework. A few persistent offenders fail to produce homework or to attend the detentions set for them, despite constant reminders.
38. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 80 per cent of lessons, and good or occasionally very good in 60 per cent. Most of the very good teaching seen during the inspection occurred in food technology. Teachers' knowledge is good across all subjects and there are staff with expertise of a high order in all subjects offered at GCSE level. There are particular strengths in the teaching of food, graphics and resistant materials where teachers have established good relationships with pupils, classes are well managed and there is a good structure to the lesson. Strategies that include challenging questions, a range of activities, timed targets and good assessment techniques lead to a pace of progress in both key stages. Teachers have high expectations of pupils both in terms of work and behaviour. The skilled technician gives very good support to both teachers and pupils. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, there are some weaknesses in class control that result in noisy lessons and relationships with pupils are not always positive. There is an over reliance on copying drawings and copious notes from worksheets in electronics. The assessment system is potentially very good but is not yet consistently applied by staff so does not lead to the tracking of progress and target setting which will be possible when the system is implemented.
39. The school recognises that the accommodation for design & technology is shabby and in need of refurbishment; it hopes this will come with the new building project. The workshops have too many redundant machines that need removing and there is insufficient hardware and software for teaching control or computer aided design and manufacture. Consequently, the department has an old fashioned ethos which needs to be changed. There is a health and safety issue in that the technician's machines, including the circular saw, are in a workshop used by pupils. The room is often dusty and the technician is prevented from using machines during lesson time. The department is part of a faculty which is well led with good, well-structured systems in place to move it forward. The food area is well led and improving steadily but leadership of other areas of the subject is in the process of being clarified.

188. **Drama**

40. It was only possible to observe a small sample of drama lessons as part of the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons and on the scrutiny of work. Attainment in drama at Key Stage 3 is in line with national expectations and progress through the key stage is good. Pupils collaborate very well in group activities, sharing and negotiating ideas and developing confidence in presenting their ideas to the class. As audience, watching the work of other groups, pupils acquire an appreciation of the effect of the techniques they are learning.
41. Attainment in the GCSE examination was well above the national average in 1998, and a substantial proportion of the pupils obtained passes at the highest A* and A levels, with only a small minority failing to reach grade C. Results in 1999 fell quite significantly and were broadly in line with national results. Progress at Key Stage 4 is very good: pupils' written commentaries on their work in lessons and on their special projects show understanding of dramatic process and effect. Numbers taking the theatre studies GCE Advanced level course vary from year to year. Here too, results have been well above national averages.
42. Teaching in the department is good. Consideration has been given to the points raised in the last report, and there is now a well-structured scheme of work within a useful handbook. Assessment of written

work is thorough, with a clarity of focus on the use of appropriate language; this is bearing fruit in the very good examination results. The department contributes well to the extra-curricular life of the school. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in or contribute to a public performance during the school year, either in productions connected with examination courses, or in work arising from after school clubs.

191.

Geography

43. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, as judged by teacher assessment, is in line with what is expected of pupils nationally. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is below national expectations. GCSE examination results in 1998 were below those for schools nationally, 40 per cent of pupils achieving A* to C grades compared to the national average of 51.5 per cent. There have been fluctuations in GCSE results over the period 1996 to 99: an explanation for these changes lies in the different syllabi undertaken over this period; the school finds the syllabus currently adopted as best suited to its requirements. This is reflected in the recent improvement in GCSE performance, with 50 per cent of pupils gaining A* to C grades in 1999. Attainment at A level was below national expectations in 1998 but the 1999 figures show a good improvement in the average point score. Boys' and girls' performance is broadly similar.
44. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with national averages. Most pupils have satisfactory knowledge of place and can identify major features like the River Nile and the Himalayas on a world map. They can begin to relate varying population densities to physical and human characteristics of a region, and they can explain the various indices of development that define a less economically developed country. Lessons and pupils' written work show that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above expectations: a little better now than indicated by the 1999 GCSE results. Pupils of all ability in Year 10 demonstrate a good knowledge of place and could, for example, name a number of areas of upland glaciation. Pupils in Year 11 were able to relate physical geography to human response in considering issues facing the development of tourism in the Lake District. The higher attainers could express these differences lucidly in writing. Pupils have good map and data handling skills, which are well demonstrated in their course work. In lessons, the attainment of students in the sixth form is in line with course expectations. Students in a Year 13 lesson showed good knowledge of weathering processes in hot deserts. Guided by the teacher, they were able to relate what they knew to their understanding of such processes in other environments. Pupils use appropriate geographical vocabulary well. The difference between this current attainment and A level results in recent years is explained by the relatively small numbers undertaking the course. In common with pupils at Key Stage 4, sixth formers undertake a quantity of relevant fieldwork which benefits their attainment.
45. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory, both over time and in lessons. In half of lessons, progress was good, all others were satisfactory. Pupils learn key skills such as map work in Year 7 and the school maintains a good emphasis on the development of skills. However, work is not matched to the range of different abilities and this impacts on the progress that pupils make in some lessons and over time. Teaching is aimed at those of average and lower ability, so that higher attaining pupils are given work that lacks challenge and they progress more slowly. A Year 7 group with a very wide range of ability saw most making satisfactory progress studying micro-climate in the school environment. This was due to both the teacher's care in managing them and her clarity of expression; however, higher attainers completed the tasks with ease and were insufficiently stretched by the activities in the lesson. Many pupils with special educational needs progress too slowly, as teachers tend to be unaware of their specific needs so lesson planning fails to address them adequately.
46. At Key Stage 4, pupils also make good progress in lessons. In half of lessons seen, progress was at least good. Teachers' close attention to recapitulating earlier learning before building on it is a strong factor. Teachers maintain a strong focus on the needs of the examination syllabus. The positive response of pupils is channelled in the right direction and the high expectations manifested by teachers are invariably met in the performance of pupils. Over time, the attention paid to the development of specific

skills, knowledge and understanding that flows from the good assessment practices and associated target setting means that all pupils make good progress. Pupils all know their predicted GCSE grades and their higher target grades and what they need to do to move from one to the other. These developments in assessment address a criticism of the department in the last inspection report. The hearing impaired pupils seen in Key Stage 4 lessons made similar progress to other pupils due to help given by effective support assistants and strong personal commitment.

47. The progress that students in the sixth form make both over time and in lessons is good. Two out of three lessons showed good progress. Lessons are well planned to consolidate earlier work, so that progress can build on prior learning. A close match of work to the needs of the examination syllabus and good teacher knowledge contribute to the progress that students make.
48. Most pupils have positive attitudes to geography and they responded well in most lessons. They like answering questions and entering into discussion, where they are confident performers. Their response to challenge is strong, showing a good work-rate when under pressure. Behaviour is usually good, and pupils usually relate well to one another and to their teachers. On entry to classrooms, they are quiet and quickly ready to work. Most pupils show good skills as independent learners and also work well in groups. They are good listeners. A Year 11 group enthusiastically entered into role-play speaking for or against developments of tourism in the Lake District, providing an effective summary of their study of the topic.
49. Overall, just over half of lessons seen were satisfactory, the rest were mostly good and occasionally very good. Teaching of geography at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Good or better teaching took place in a third of the lessons seen, the remaining two thirds were satisfactory. Work is insufficiently adapted to pupils' individual needs in the mixed ability groups that are taught in Years 7 and 8; lessons are usually pitched at middle to lower attaining pupils so they fail to stretch or stimulate those of above average levels of attainment. However, pupils are well managed and lessons have a purposeful air, proceeding at a good pace. A Year 7 lesson on weather recording saw pupils well managed and had a calm atmosphere; pupils enjoyed looking at the monitor which displayed current climatic data but some of their other tasks were routine and failed to challenge the higher attaining pupils in the mixed ability group. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is good. Good or better teaching took place in half of the lessons seen, the remainder were satisfactory. As in the sixth form, teachers display very good subject knowledge, and lessons are well planned and invariably have good pace. In most lessons, pupils are well managed and teachers have strong expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic performance; these aims are invariably met by the pupils. A very good Year 10 lesson exemplified these strengths. The pace was good, expectations were high and a pleasant working atmosphere was engendered by the teacher's positive relationship with the class. This was further aided by very good pupil response, ensuring that all made very good progress in considering the conflict arising from the multiple use by tourists of Lake Windermere. Teaching at post-16 is good. It is characterised by good subject knowledge and good relationships with pupils. At its best, a good range of resources is used, lessons are lively and interesting and the pace never flags. Less good teaching can be too dry and fails to capture pupils' interest sufficiently.
50. Geography teaching displays many good qualities, curriculum planning is sound and the subject is satisfactorily led. There are, however, some inconsistencies despite the considerable amount of monitoring of classroom practice undertaken by the head of department and members of the senior management team. If standards are to be raised, tasks need to be much more closely matched to the learning needs of pupils of different abilities; at present, results are depressed through higher attainers receiving insufficient challenge and teachers need to become more aware of how to accommodate pupils with special educational needs. Learning resources are generally adequate, with most resources targeted at raising performance at GCSE; there are not enough textbooks in the sixth form and those at Key Stage 3 are in need of replacement. Pupils of all ages have too few opportunities to use information technology in their study of geography; this is partly due to the school's shortage of facilities but also reflects a lack of IT skill within the department.

History

51. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average, as indicated by the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 and above in teacher assessments. Girls perform far better than boys, the difference being twice that nationally and even more than that at Level 6 and above. Attainment at GCSE was well above the national average at A* to C in 1998. Of pupils entered, 73 per cent achieved these higher grades, one of the best results in the school. Girls did significantly better than boys, especially in achieving A* or A grades, and by far more than the gender difference nationally. The proportion of those attaining A* to G grades was in line with national figures. There has been a marked improvement in GCSE results at the higher levels since the last inspection. The GCSE results in 1999 fell somewhat, with 59 per cent of pupils achieving A* to C grades, but these results saw the gap narrowing between boys and girls. The GCE A level results for 1998 were below the national average at the higher grades A to B, though those attaining A to E were in line with the national average. However, the 1999 results were significantly better with the proportion attaining the higher grades well above the national average, a markedly improving trend in the last three years.
52. Overall, attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 is in line with the national average. Nearly all pupils have a good historical knowledge and a satisfactory understanding of chronology and the key features of the period, an area of weakness at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils can select, record and deploy evidence from different sources, as when Year 9 pupils could distinguish the characteristics of different classes in 19th century British society. They have satisfactory research skills, promoted through well-planned enquiry tasks. These often produce sound extended writing in various forms, as exemplified by the pamphlets of Year 7 pupils advertising castles for sale or a vivid and fluently expressed newspaper account by a high attaining Year 9 pupil of the assassination at Sarajevo in 1914. Most have a good understanding of causes, with many higher-attaining pupils showing the ability to prioritise and evaluate. Awareness of short and long-term causes is weak, however. Weak literacy skills are also hampering the note-making of lower attainers and those with special educational needs where they are not provided with appropriate materials to help them. Attainment overall at Key Stage 4 is above the national average. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the main features of a particular historical period and understand change and continuity, as when Year 10 pupils could evaluate the changes brought by the railways. Most pupils have good skills of research and organisation, as seen in their course-work studies. Skills of extended writing of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are at least satisfactory, while higher-attaining pupils are capable of detailed and analytical written work. The level of attainment in the sixth form is above the national average. Most students demonstrate an appropriate depth of knowledge and a good understanding of issues. They can select and use effectively evidence from a variety of sources, including the views of a number of historians. Year 13 students can present a balanced view based on sound background reading and an awareness of a broad range of ideas.
53. Pupils' progress over time is good in all the key stages compared with their prior attainment. In lessons, it is always at least good and at Key Stage 4, and in the sixth form, it is always very good. By the end of Key Stage 3, nearly all pupils develop good historical knowledge and understanding. They develop effective skills of organisation and selecting and deploying evidence relevantly for research work. Higher attainers learn to evaluate causes, though their critical awareness that an event can have more than one interpretation is less well developed. Well-developed literacy skills lead to a generally high standard of extended writing. However, inadequate provision for matching tasks and materials to the needs of lower attainers and those with special educational needs, when support teachers are unavailable, has constrained their progress. At Key Stage 4, skills of note taking, extended-writing and enquiry are more fully developed in such pupils, whose historical knowledge is also well developed. Nearly all pupils have learned to express themselves confidently orally through group work and through being effectively involved through teachers' questioning. Higher attaining pupils have learned to analyse sources, causes and ideas critically. This good progress in critical, historical understanding and evaluation continues into the sixth form. Students learn to think broadly and in an informed way in making comparisons across and between periods in history. Good skills of extended essay writing have been developed in most students as a result of teachers setting high expectations and providing helpful guidance through thorough marking and advice on essay planning. The highest attaining students learn

to express well-considered analytical arguments clearly, though they are less ready to challenge each other's views.

54. The attitude of pupils to work throughout the school is good and it is occasionally very good. Pupils' response is best at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. This is a definite strength of the department and an improvement on the situation previously reported. Nearly all pupils listen attentively, settle quickly and concentrate well for the whole lesson. Most are eager to participate, readily answering questions, reading aloud, joining in discussion and taking part in role-play. They behave well and have a good and respectful relationship with the teacher. They cooperate with each other and show respect for each other's views and feelings, as when Year 11 pupils role-played nineteenth century medical innovators in revising, and Year 13 students worked effectively together in discussing the aspects of Napoleon III's rule. Nearly all pupils work well on their own and strive hard with difficult tasks, including lower attainers and those with special educational needs when appropriate support materials are available. They do homework regularly, and particularly enjoy research tasks. Most pupils across the attainment range take a pride in their work and only rarely is it left incomplete. Nearly all pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic about the subject, responding well to the recently initiated and successful residential trips to the Belgian battlefields (Year 9) and to the Beamish Museum (Year 10).
55. The quality of teaching is good in nearly all lessons throughout the school and it is frequently very good. Teaching is best at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, where it is always very good. This is a marked improvement on the situation previously reported, when a third of lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 were considered to have 'shortcomings'. This has clearly contributed to raising the level of attainment and improving progress. Teachers are well qualified and have a very good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are well planned with learning objectives clearly explained to the pupils. Classroom management and control are good, there are high standards of discipline and very good relationships with the pupils, usually combining firmness and humour to control and motivate the class. A wider variety of teaching strategies has been deployed since the last inspection, promoted by the recently revised and very coherent schemes of work. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing historical skills and encouraging more individual enquiry and problem solving by the pupils. Teachers encourage empathy in activities and writing, often in an exciting way. For instance, Year 9 pupils had to report to Lloyd-George on the conditions in the trenches, and a teacher dressed up as George Stephenson to explain the brilliance of his new railway to Year 10 'reporters'. Materials are now beginning to be provided which match the needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, though this needs much more development. Homework is set regularly and marked thoroughly with helpful suggestions to enable pupils to improve. Teachers assess pupils' progress well in class with effective questioning techniques and monitoring of their work.
56. This is a significant improvement on the situation previously reported. It is very much attributable to the consistently high quality of teaching throughout the department that makes the subject both exciting and challenging, and the strong educational direction provided by the new head of department, especially in promoting more varied teaching strategies. Pupils' overall progress at Key Stage 3 is being better monitored through three assessed pieces of work, accurately moderated to National Curriculum standards and centrally stored. However, these results are not yet being analysed centrally as they are at Key Stage 4 and, consequently, do not inform pupils of their targets or the teachers in their planning of teaching or curriculum revision. The head of department is well aware of the need for these developments in order to promote further the good progress already made in the quality of teaching.

205. **Information technology**

57. Attainment in information technology (IT) is generally in line with national expectations at Key Stage 3 and above the national average at Key Stage 4 for the minority of pupils who follow a GCSE course. Standards in A level computing, from lessons and work seen, are below average. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 suggests that attainment is above average and has remained at levels similar to those of the core subjects over the past two years. This assessment reflects pupils' attainment in communicating and handling information but does not take account of the weaker aspects of controlling

and measuring. By the end of the key stage, pupils are confident in their use of the school's network and they process text and combine this with graphics, for example to produce well-designed leaflets and posters. Pupils have good levels of skill, knowledge and understanding of the functions of spreadsheets and they use them very well to solve mathematical problems, for instance to find out how long it would take to produce a million bacteria from a single bacterium. They calculate cost effectiveness using a spreadsheet formula to compare printing and photocopying costs and have a good understanding of the use of computer modelling. Other aspects of IT, such as control technology, are restricted because of shortages of hardware and until recently IT based research was also limited by resources.

58. The attainment of higher attaining pupils is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 as a result of targeted tasks which give additional challenges to those who complete the work assigned more quickly than others. Lower attainers are given good support in lessons and attain at appropriate levels. The learning support assistant who is assigned to IT provides very valuable individual teaching for pupils who require this and teachers provide additional support verbally and in written form.
59. Only a minority of pupils have access to the Programme of Study for IT at Key Stage 4 and the school is in breach of statutory requirements in this regard. A short course in IT at GCSE is offered with business studies. In addition, there is an office studies (now information studies) course offered at Oaklands College for Monk's Walk pupils. Results for both these GCSE courses are well above national averages. Some lower attaining pupils take a Certificate of Achievement course and attainment is generally in line with course expectations. The take-up for both GCSE courses is two-thirds boys and only a third girls. The school is aware that the gender balance needs to be redressed. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have a sound grasp of the IT skills and knowledge required to attain a good grade at GCSE. They understand how to construct a database and explain the merits of its use for handling large data files. They apply skills and knowledge well to complete individual projects, which contribute significantly toward GCSE marks.
60. Computer studies is offered by the sixth form consortium and some teaching takes place at Monk's Walk. A level results over the past 3 years have been below average and group sizes small but increasing. In lessons, attainment is below expectations for A level and students have struggled with the mathematical concepts required to complete earlier modules.
61. Pupils come into Year 7 with varying experience of using computers in primary schools. They quickly become accustomed to the school's system and all make satisfactory progress in using a narrow range of applications. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils are given work matched to their capabilities and this supports sound progress. Higher attainers are well catered for and often work outside the lesson on projects set by teachers or of their own design. Pupils' progress in lessons is satisfactory to good but progress over time is unsatisfactory because timetable arrangements give each class half a term learning IT and the other half learning another subject, the alternative lesson being different in each year group. When learning new skills, the break of half a term means that it takes longer to master them and the end result is that pupils have insufficient curriculum time at Key Stage 3. Cross-curricular IT is developing well within the school's resource constraints and makes a sound contribution to progress but is not yet strong enough to compensate for the lack of time for instruction in discrete IT lessons. There is very good use of information and communications technology in science, good use of IT in mathematics and in modern foreign languages. In design & technology and music there is also some good use which supports pupils' progress in learning skills of different computer applications. Those pupils who have a computer at home have a distinct advantage in that they can continue to practice their IT skills outside school.
62. Those pupils who choose an IT-based GCSE course make good progress through the course. They are taught in small groups and teachers match the tasks set to their individual needs. However, the majority of pupils leave Key Stage 4 not having used IT sufficiently to prepare them for the next stage of their education.
63. When using computers, pupils are well motivated, they concentrate well on the task set and enjoy their lessons. Behaviour is very good and pupils collaborate well, sharing their skills and patiently helping

others. Pupils respond well to teachers and come to lessons eager to learn. The PC's in the library are very well used outside lesson time and pupils are eager to use CD-ROMs and the Internet. They come to the computer rooms for additional help at lunchtime and whenever the rooms are available. Only a minority choose to continue IT beyond Year 9.

64. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and it is good overall with some very good features. Staff have very good knowledge of the IT system and manage it well. Relationships with pupils, management of classes and the brisk pace of lessons are all strengths. Planning is detailed and there is good provision for the varying interests and abilities of pupils. Teachers establish a good working atmosphere and pupils enjoy the lessons. The scheme of work is well matched to the school's hardware and the development plan shows a vision for future provision. Teachers make very good use of limited resources and time is effectively used to raise attainment in IT. Assessment is regular and securely linked to National Curriculum levels. The system for assessing the contribution to IT skills made by other subjects is not yet implemented.
65. The school recognises that it is under resourced for IT and its pupil to computer ratio is well above the national average. There are too few computers to enable pupils in Key Stage 3 to have a continuous curriculum or to give sufficient access to all subjects with a National Curriculum requirement to use IT. There is insufficient capacity to allow the school to meet its legal obligation to provide IT for all at Key Stage 4. It has insufficient funds to make adequate provision for IT, although the planned provision of thirty more machines will go some way towards improving access for pupils. The school recognises this but is currently as much constrained by lack of accommodation to create a further IT network as by insufficient hardware; further development in IT is not only dependent on current local and national initiatives but also on the school's anticipated building programme.

Modern foreign languages

66. Teacher assessments over the last three years indicate that attainment is below the national average at the end of Key Stage 3. GCSE results have improved considerably since the last inspection when the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades was below the national average. In 1998, 48 per cent of pupils gained passes at A* to C in French, compared with 43.3 per cent of pupils nationally. In 1999, the school's results in French at A* to C rose to 52 per cent. In 1998, 62 per cent of pupils entered gained A* to C grades in German, compared with 50.9 per cent nationally. However, the proportion of pupils gaining A* to C grades in 1999 fell to 48 per cent. The number of students going on to A level has been low in recent years, particularly in French. There has been considerable variation over the last three years in results at A level.
67. At Key Stage 3, pupils develop their listening skills and pronunciation and learn to spell and copy the target language accurately. As they move through the key stage, they become more confident in speaking and writing, and are able to take part in short, prepared conversations. In Years 8 and 9, pupils begin to write longer passages in the target language, for example producing personal descriptions, and extend their knowledge of grammar, such as adjectival agreement and tenses other than the present. However, by Year 9 average and higher attaining pupils do not do this with sufficient frequency to enable them to demonstrate consistent attainment at the National Curriculum levels which they are capable of achieving or which are expected nationally at this stage. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils learn to understand the target language when it is used by the teacher for routine class communication, but they do not use it themselves for this purpose. At Key Stage 4, attainment is generally in line with expectations. Average and higher attaining pupils write increasingly at length and in tenses other than the present. In the sixth form, students develop their ability to understand, speak and write on topics of current interest such as the environment, films, music and political change. Students use the target language for class communication with increasing confidence, although some students still have difficulty with pronunciation and grammatical accuracy.
68. In lessons at Key Stage 3, progress is usually satisfactory. Pupils learn to understand the target language when it is used by the teacher for routine class communication. However, they do not use it themselves

for this purpose. They develop their listening skills and pronunciation and learn to spell and copy the target language accurately. As they move through Key Stage 3, they become more confident in speaking and writing following a model. Progress over time at Key Stage 3 varies. Higher and average attaining pupils do not make as much progress in Years 8 and 9 as they might if the work undertaken were more demanding. In Year 9, for example, there is insufficient extended writing and the range of language and structures covered is too narrow. Progress in lessons seen at Key Stage 4 was satisfactory in two thirds of lessons but unsatisfactory in the remainder, as a result of unsatisfactory teaching. Progress over time is more secure at Key Stage 4. Pupils continue to progress in the range of vocabulary and grammar they are able to recognise and use. However, they still do not use the target language for routine class communication and in one lesson in Year 10, some higher attaining pupils spent too great a proportion of their time writing descriptive passages in the present tense. Progress in the sixth form is good in lessons and satisfactory over time.

69. Pupils generally display satisfactory attitudes to the subjects. Behaviour is good or very good in most classes. Pupils are usually co-operative and have good relationships with the teacher and each other. In most lessons, they are interested in their work and concentrate well. In a few lessons, pupils appear uninterested and lack concentration as a result of unsatisfactory teaching.
70. Teaching has improved to some extent since the last inspection but in a third of lessons observed at Key Stage 4, teaching was unsatisfactory. (One unsatisfactory lesson was in French and one in German.) Very rarely, teaching is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3, as in a lesson in German, but teaching at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form is generally of a better quality overall. Teaching is at least good in a quarter of lessons overall and it is occasionally very good in French at post-16. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan lessons carefully and the pace of lessons is usually at least satisfactory. Teachers monitor pupils well, both throughout lessons and through regular end of unit tests. Pupils' work is normally carefully marked. Pupils have regular opportunities to use information and communication technology in language lessons. Assessment information is used for setting pupils after the end of Year 7 and to track pupils' performance, but not always sufficiently to inform teaching, for example in order to decide how challenging work should be. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by: too narrow a range of resources and tasks, leading to lack of interest and concentration amongst pupils; inappropriate work (for example, translation into English at Key Stages 3 and 4); excessive use of English by the teacher; work that is insufficiently challenging. Although the scheme of work specifies in detail assessment opportunities for each unit of work, in practice there is insufficient matching of work to different abilities or learning support within sets to ensure that all pupils within each set are always able to realise their full potential. Teachers do not expect or encourage pupils sufficiently in Key Stages 3 and 4 to use the target language for routine class communication.
71. Modern foreign languages contributes to pupils' cultural development in that they gives pupils insights into cultures, languages, customs and lifestyles other than their own. Sixth formers have opportunities to take part in exchange visits to France and Germany and a residential trip is planned to Normandy for other pupils next year. There are good opportunities for students to gain additional language skills through the school's provision of short courses in Japanese and business German in the sixth form. However, the suggestions within curriculum plans at Key Stages 3 and 4 for matching work to different abilities need to be more closely interpreted in lesson planning, and teachers generally need clearer guidance on appropriate teaching methods and tasks. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to make progress on many of the issues raised, and a firm foundation has been laid upon which to improve further.

Music

72. On entry in Year 7, pupils demonstrate a generally low level of attainment, having come from a wide background of musical experiences. Few show more than a basic familiarity with key musical terminology and skills. During Key Stage 3, pupils begin to develop recognition of how sound is used in compositions and sing and play with increasing control of the various elements of music such as pitch and pulse. Aural and composing work shows an awareness of texture and structure, and most pupils are

able to recognise aspects of musical styles, refine and improve their own work and help others to do the same. By the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion achieving national expectations is higher than average and one in ten pupils achieve a level beyond that. There is no regular classroom support for pupils with special educational needs but they are fully integrated into all set tasks and succeed in relation to their prior attainment. At Key Stage 4, those pupils who choose to continue with music are mostly well motivated and show some confidence when discussing musical matters and using music technology: this is a strength of the department. Handling this medium, they are able to display some understanding of texture and form and a general ability to cope with staff notation both in real and step-time. Relating to music heard, structural concepts are recognised and they are able to apply basic theoretical knowledge to questions.

73. With one exception, GCSE results over the last five years have been considerably higher than the national average. All eleven pupils gained A* to C grades in 1999: clearly an outstanding outcome for the pupils involved. This is particularly commendable considering the course is taught as a 'twilight' class within a limited time allocation. There were no entries for AS or AL in 1999 and previous years' entries have been too small to make any meaningful comparisons with results nationally. Present sixth form work is varied but mostly at the national average for this stage in the course. Students find the move from GCSE work to the more exacting analytical, stylistic and historical A level requirements difficult to contend with. During the last year, more than forty instrumentalists have been successful in external examinations over a range of grades, some attaining merit level and above. Overall, high standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
74. At Key Stages 3 and Key Stage 4, progress within lessons and across year groups is good for most pupils at all levels. Pupils know what is expected of them and what they have to do to complete assignments successfully. At Key Stage 3, this is exemplified as they work through and complete performing and composing assignments and present the results to each other. Practical tasks clearly matched to different abilities allow all pupils to work to their strengths and the higher attaining pupils to develop aural and playing skills in greater depth and to extend their work beyond the basic objectives. Overall curriculum time at Key Stage 3 is a little lower than the national recommendation and actual contact time varies considerably from year to year; this is further exacerbated by the rotational timetable system, especially in Year 9. This is managed satisfactorily at present but barely allows for the scheme of work to be met in any real depth or breadth and can constrain continuity and progression for certain groups. Key Stage 4 work in multi-tracking musical textures demonstrates individuals' on-going progress. Pupils' competence in applying acquired knowledge and understanding of the various aspects of the subject leads to their ability to cope successfully in GCSE and A level examinations. In the sixth form, progress is good and students are steadily improving their ability to analyse and discuss the more detailed musical responses required of critical listening. More talented older students also take opportunities to help with the direction and accompaniment of ensemble rehearsals, thus supporting and enhancing their practical skills. Instrumentalists progress satisfactorily through the various grades of examination as set by external boards.
75. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and their attitudes and behaviour are consistently good. Most can sustain concentration and be trusted to work in unsupervised groups, where few are off task for any length of time and there is very little disruption to others' work. Discipline is sound, as are relationships between pupils themselves and the teaching staff. Collaborative work is also good and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and care of equipment and to respect and commend each other's work. A good rapport between staff and pupils characterises rehearsals in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities which involves approximately 170 pupils together with some adult support, including peripatetic staff, a caretaker and parents.
76. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, more than often good and can be very good. Expectations are realistic and the management of lessons is confident and generally well paced. The most effective lessons combine clear explanations of objectives, a good sustained pace, the use of appropriate questioning and the organisation of a range of opportunities in which all pupils can participate. Somewhat less successful are those which narrow the range of musical activities and where a more holistic approach to topics would permit more participation and progress at all levels.

77. The day-to-day leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Improvements since the last inspection include a scheme of work, which now covers National Curriculum requirements satisfactorily and a more manageable assessment system, which allows for pupils' self-assessment and the regular grading of progress lesson by lesson and through key stages. This has not, as yet, had any significant effect on curriculum planning. Notwithstanding a limited budget, early consideration needs to be given to expand the provision of classroom instruments which at present is inadequate in range and sufficiency, thus limiting pupils' access to different types of sound sources and opportunities to appreciate and develop a variety of aural and practical skills. Music accommodation is good and well used, and as a result in need of much overall tidying up. The work of the department is enhanced by its instrumental work, the quality of which is reflected in examination successes and the good standard of corporate music making.

226. **Physical education**

78. The percentage of pupils gaining A* to C passes in the 1996 GCSE examination was 51 per cent, which was above the national average, although the number of pupils gaining these grades in the 1999 examination fell significantly to 31 per cent. The two students taking the A level examination both gained good pass grades.

79. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 continues to be higher than national expectations. In games activities, pupils have an emerging knowledge of the rules and conventions of a number of games and are developing the skills to enable them to compete successfully. Pupils are able to adapt and refine their performances to meet the challenging situations created by the use of grids for group work and small-sided games. The standard of gymnastics is in line with national expectations. Pupils can execute a satisfactory range of gymnastic skills, and their ability to practise and refine their movements to achieve quality performances is being developed. The overall standard in swimming is above the national average, with a significant number achieving high standards of performance in a variety of strokes and in life saving techniques. The attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 4 is also higher than national expectations. Good levels of skills development are clearly evident in a variety of activities, including athletics, soccer, and netball. In health related education, pupils are attaining satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding of fitness issues and practices and are able to maintain activity levels for appropriate periods of time. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from Tewin Water Special School, are well integrated, are given much support and encouragement by teaching staff and fellow pupils, and reach a very satisfactory level of attainment. The teaching is sensitive and supportive and there are no instances of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the provision on offer. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The school has a justifiable high reputation for the performances of its school teams, and individual pupils. Many teams take part in inter-school competitions and gain much success. A number of pupils have been selected to represent Hertfordshire and one of the pupils has gone on to gain national honours.

80. Levels of attainment show a steady improvement throughout the school. Across all year groups, pupils make good progress and are consolidating their skills, knowledge and understanding. This is particularly the case when teachers allow sufficient time for pupils to practise and refine their work. Most pupils are prepared to listen carefully to the teachers' instructions and work hard at the skill practices in order to improve their performances. In general, the best progress is seen when teachers require pupils to evaluate their work.

81. In all aspects of their physical education, pupils are highly motivated and have a positive attitude to the subject both in their lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They sustain concentration, cooperate, and demonstrate an ability to challenge themselves. They work with enthusiasm and interest and respond well to the tasks set, working cooperatively with each other. Behaviour and discipline are good. Many pupils at Key Stage 4 are able to work productively without close supervision and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils display great enthusiasm for the subject and derive much pleasure from taking part.

82. The quality of teaching is at least good and in almost a third of lessons, it was very good or occasionally excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to pass on their own enthusiasm to their pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are sensitive and positive. Practical work is purposeful and vigorous. There is an expectancy that pupils will be well behaved and achieve at least a satisfactory level of performance. Teachers show a care and concern for their pupils, whilst encouraging the best in fair play, co-operation and competitive experiences.
83. The physical education curriculum covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. The needs of higher attainers and those who are most interested are met by a GCSE course, which has been taken up by a large and enthusiastic group of pupils. Students in the sixth form have the opportunity to take A level in the subject and also to take part in timetabled recreational activities once a week. The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are in line with statutory requirements. Many teachers give very freely of their time to provide a range of extra-curricular activities, which are enthusiastically taken up by large numbers of pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in skiing holidays abroad, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, to join teams who are competing in the Ten Tors expedition on Dartmoor and to visit national sporting events.
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84. Since the last inspection, one of the large playgrounds has been resurfaced and now provides an excellent all-weather playing area. The very good on-site facilities are supplemented by the occasional use of the facilities at the Goslings Sports Centre and the Stanborough Water Sports Centre. These facilities combine to have a positive effect on the attainment of pupils, although when bad weather prevents the use of the outside facilities there is a shortage of suitable indoor alternative accommodation. The department's budget allocation is good and the time allocation for the subject is satisfactory.
85. Strong leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the department. Schemes of work ensure that all pupils benefit from a wide range of physical education experiences. Documentation is comprehensive and of good quality. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other, and show a very strong commitment to the pupils.

234. **Religious education**

86. The results of the small numbers of pupils who took GCSE in the last two years were well above the national average and show a rising trend. Of the candidates who took the examination in 1999, 80 per cent gained A* to C grades, and in 1998, 75 per cent of candidates gained A* to C grades compared with 50.8 per cent nationally. Results at A level are well above average, but the numbers are too small for valid national comparisons to be made.
87. By the end of Key Stage 3, overall attainment is in line with or just above the levels expected nationally. Pupils are learning about religion and learning from religion in accordance with the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Written work in Years 7 and 8 reflects accurate knowledge about Christianity and Islam; it identifies key beliefs, practices and people, recounts and explains beliefs and practices, and illustrates pupils' understanding and response to key ideas within the religion being studied. Written work in Year 9 reflects thoughtful responses to ultimate questions but the amount of work covered is limited because pupils are only taught religious education for half the year. Mixed ability classes in Year 7 contain pupils with a wide range of attainment. Higher attaining pupils refer to Jesus and the Son of God, and can easily distinguish 'fictional' from 'historical' characters. Lower attaining pupils confuse words like 'Son' and 'Sun'. Most pupils in Year 8 have clear and accurate knowledge of the basic facts about Islam; they find words like 'attribute' difficult but are able to use dictionaries to define new terms. Pupils can discuss the ideas they have for role-play, in groups and in front of the class. In Year 9, most pupils can define words like 'perseverance' and can explore the list of values being considered in one-to-one discussions.
88. At Key Stage 4, pupils' written GCSE work reflects a good level of detailed knowledge about Buddhism.

In class, pupils demonstrate a developing knowledge of Buddhism and can discuss the three universal truths meaningfully. Pupils make humorous and successful presentations in class based upon their group research. Levels of comprehension and language use are of a good standard for pupils of this age. In non-examination work in Year 10, pupils increasingly understand concepts like suffering, and recognise how other people respond to their awareness of events where extreme suffering is apparent, as for example, in the account of Bob Geldof's response to the Ethiopian famine. In their discussion and written work, they exhibit a well-developed moral sense of the need to help others less fortunate than themselves.

89. In the sixth form, the course folders of A level students reflect a good range of work, with detailed and accurate notes covering the course and supporting revision for the examination. Detailed knowledge of the historical background to the New Testament texts being studied, along with notes and essays covering questions such as authorship and dates, is reflected by the written work. Students can discuss their work with varying degrees of knowledge and understanding and are developing well their ability to apply their knowledge of the text to critical questions based upon them and their context.
90. Progress is at least satisfactory and sometimes good in lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4. In Years 7 and 8, pupils demonstrate the development of secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity and at least two other world religions. They are developing their ability to think critically about religion, for example in work on the evidence for the historicity of Jesus. They increasingly use correct terminology when describing, for example, facets of Islam, such as the 99 names used to describe Allah. In Year 9, they show an increasing ability to recognise and understand words that describe spiritual values. In some mixed ability classes, higher attaining pupils do not progress as fast as they could and some lower attaining pupils make little gains in knowledge and understanding as a result of all pupils being set the same task. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress, although they would progress faster with more targeted additional support. At Key Stage 4, written work in Year 10 reflects good progression from the knowledge, skills and understanding achieved by the end of Year 9. New and more detailed material about Buddhism develops knowledge and understanding and builds well on earlier work. Pupils progress in their ability to write at length and to be reflective. In non-examination work, pupils make good progress in their understanding of suffering and of contemporary responses to suffering in the modern world. The written work of students in the sixth form shows progress in knowledge, understanding and skills since the beginning of the course. Work seen in class illustrates that understanding of the first century world and the text of I Corinthians is developing well by Year 13.
91. Pupils are attentive, behave well and show interest in their work. Good attitudes to learning were seen in nearly all classes at all key stages. Take-up rates at Key Stage 4 for the optional GCSE course are good, as the course is held after school and is a voluntary additional subject for the pupils involved. Take-up rates for A level are satisfactory, given the wide range of subject choice available in the sixth form consortium. Levels of sustained concentration are very good overall and were particularly impressive in classes seen in Years 8 and 10, and in Year 13 where students were working on an essay in class. Pupils' capacity for personal study is being developed in class through individual completion of worksheets and research tasks from textbooks, as well as in tasks set for homework where some pupils are keen to use their access to resources such as the Internet. Where behaviour and concentration is weaker, this is due to tasks being too demanding or less well focused. Pupils form constructive relationships with and respond sensitively to each other and to their teacher, and work well together in groups preparing for a presentations which are then made to the whole class. They show respect for other people's feelings, for example in the work on suffering, and for their values and beliefs, for example in lessons on spiritual values and on aspects of world religions.
92. The teaching seen is at least satisfactory and 60 per cent is good, although no very good teaching was seen in religious education during the inspection. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, particularly of Buddhism and Islam. Expectations of pupils are always at least satisfactory, and at times they are high. Lessons are well planned overall but more detailed planning of specific learning objectives within the overall context of the subject's curriculum would improve attainment and progress. A range of methods and organisational strategies are in use across the department. More use needs to be made of work specifically levelled for pupils of different prior

attainment in mixed ability classes. The management of pupils and standards of discipline are good. Some effective resources are in use, but teaching would benefit from a wider range of resources being deployed than was seen during the week, in particular, the use of video extracts and information technology. Assessment is planned in to the scheme of work for each unit of the course and marking is regular and helpful in raising the standards of pupils' work. Homework is used to extend learning but some homework set considerably advances on the content of the lesson and needs more explanation in class if it is to be fully effective.

93. The school is not meeting the statutory requirement to teach religious education to all pupils in Year 11 and in the sixth form. The time allocation for religious education is limited at Key Stage 3 and for non-examination pupils in Year 10. Provision for religious education formed part of a key issue at the time of the last inspection and the school has made insufficient progress in meeting statutory requirements for the subject.

242.

242. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

242. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

94. Before the inspection, a wide range of documentation was analysed. A meeting was held for parents, to gather their views, and a questionnaire was circulated to all parents of pupils at the school. Additionally, a number of parents expressed their opinions about the school's work in letters to the Registered Inspector.
95. A team of fourteen inspectors, including a lay inspector, spent a total of 54 inspection days in the school. One hundred and ninety lessons or part lessons were observed. A total of 172 hours 38 minutes was spent directly observing lessons and other formal sessions, scrutinising pupils' work and talking with pupils from each year group. In addition, inspectors analysed pupils' records, statements of special educational need, annual reviews and individual education / learning support plans.
96. Interviews were held with senior managers, with teaching and non-teaching staff with particular responsibilities, and with some governors. Many professional discussions also took place between staff and inspectors during the inspection. At the end of the inspection, subject co-ordinators received oral feedback on provision within their subject.

245. **DATA AND INDICATORS**

245. **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 – Y13	1190	38	193	42

245. **Teachers and classes**

245. **Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	63.85
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.7

245. **Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)**

Total number of education support staff:	23
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	474

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	78
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KS3	23.3
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KS4	20
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245. **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998/99
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	£
Total Income	2,855,906
Total Expenditure	2,902,512
Expenditure per pupil	2,520
Balance brought forward from previous year	103,789
Balance carried forward to next year	57,183

245. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	812
Number of questionnaires returned:	141

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	35	58	4	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	39	56	1	1	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	21	48	16	4	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	28	55	9	8	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	29	55	9	6	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	53	6	3	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	32	56	10	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	29	55	9	4	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	31	55	9	1	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	29	52	10	4	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	36	56	6	1	1

245. **Other issues raised by parents**

- Parents praise the school for 'adopting a completely rounded approach' to enabling pupils to fulfil their potential. Extra-curricular activities are identified as a particular strength.
- Parents listed as particular strengths the pastoral provision, the very good relationships between pupils and staff, the integration of pupils from Tewin Water School, the Principal's leadership ('He sets very high standards'), the very stable senior management team, the commitment and personal touch of the staff.
- Induction into Year 7 and careers guidance are identified as particular strengths.
- Most parents are pleased with the information they receive from the school, especially information about the curriculum for new parents and that provided at parents' evenings.
- Most parents are impressed by pupils' behaviour and by the respect they show visitors. They say that staff are very quick to act in response to any known bullying.
- Parents feel that there are many opportunities to play an active part in the life of the school, though the response from parents is varied.
- Parents believe work is insufficiently matched to ability and some favour more setting.
- Some parents expressed concern that peer pressure sometimes adversely affects the progress that their children make but parents agreed that the school is doing what it can to address this.