

INSPECTION REPORT

Ashfield School

Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire

LEA area: Ashfield

Unique Reference Number: 122827

Inspection Number: 183936

Headteacher: Mr I Fraser BA FRSA

Reporting inspector: Mr K W Valentine

Date of inspection: 15 – 19 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708224

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

Information about the school

Type of school: Comprehensive all-through

Type of control: Community

Age range of pupils : 11-18

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Sutton Road
Kirkby-in-Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8HP

Telephone number : 01623 455000

Fax number : 01623 455001

Appropriate authority : The Governing Body

Name of chair
of governors : Gordon Wilson

Date of the previous
inspection: 21/11/1994 - 25/11/1994

Information about the inspection team

Team Members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr K W Valentine, Registered Inspector		Main Findings
		Key Issues for Action
		Characteristics of the school
		Key Indicators
		Attainment and progress
		Teaching
		Leadership and management
Mrs S Boyle, Lay Inspector		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs P D Freund, Team Member	Art	The curriculum and assessment
Mr G Haney, Team Member	Mathematics	The efficiency of the school
Ms P A Flannery, Team Member	English	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr J G Hughes, Team Member	Design and Technology	
Mrs S Foster, Team Member	Religious Education Geography	
Mrs M White, Team Member	Modern Foreign Languages Spanish	
Mr A Hendry, Team Member	Non-National Curriculum at Key Stage 4 Business Studies Economics	
Mrs J Woolley, Team Member	Information Technology	
Ms L R Taylor, Team Member	Physical Education	
Mr G Lewis, Team Member	Special Educational Needs Equal Opportunities	
Mr R L Hutchinson, Team Member	History	
Mr P Ramsden, Team Member	Science	
Mr G Thomas, Team Member	Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Doncaster Inspection Services
Directorate of Education and Culture
PO Box 266
The Council House
College Road
DONCASTER
DN1 3AD

Tel: 01302 737253

Fax: 01302 737270

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

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

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school 1 - 2
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress 3 - 16
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development 17 - 23
Attendance 24 - 26

Quality of education provided

Teaching 27 - 32

The curriculum and assessment 33 - 44
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 45 - 49
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare 50 - 54
Partnership with Parents and the Community 55 - 60

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management 61 - 65
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources 66 - 70
The efficiency of the school 71

- 77

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

**English, mathematics, science, religious education
and information technology** 78 - 115

Other subjects or courses 116 - 176

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence 177

Data and indicators

Main Findings

What the school does well

- The school achieves good progress for average and less-able pupils.
- Pupils show good behaviour and good social development.
- Very good strategic planning is leading to school improvement.
- The school provides a good quality of teaching.
- Special educational needs pupils are included effectively in the work and life of the school.
- A good range of subjects is on offer in the sixth form.
- There are strong links with the community.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The attainment of more-able pupils should be improved.
- II. There is a lack of structured provision for personal, social and health education.
- III. Homework is not being well used to improve pupils' attainment.
- IV. The time currently allocated to tutor time is not well used.
- V. The school is not meeting statutory requirements for the provision of religious education and collective worship.

The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The GCSE results have improved since the last inspection at a faster rate than that found nationally. Although results vary from year to year, the trends in the Key Stage 3 national tests and A-level results over the last four years shows little improvement.

In two areas judged in need of improvement in the last OFSTED inspection there has been satisfactory progress, and good progress in a further two areas. However, in two areas progress has not been satisfactory. The improvement in assessment arrangements and the use of assessment has been satisfactory. This is also the case in the improvements the school has made in the use of the pastoral system to help raise pupils' standards of attainment. Good progress has been made in developing an understanding of management roles and establishing a whole-school vision of what needs to be done. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in the school's efforts to monitor and evaluate budget allocations and judge value for money. Good progress has been made in planning for buildings and maintenance priorities. Poor progress has been made in the provision for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils in accordance with statutory requirements.

In addition to issues raised in the last OFSTED report strategic planning has improved considerably. Pupils' behaviour has also much improved. Overall, the school has made sound progress since the last inspection and it has a good capacity for further improvement. The school's targets for 2000 are appropriately challenging and are achievable.

Standards in subjects

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

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

Although the comparison with similar schools shows below average performance, information about pupils' prior attainment is now available and indicates that pupils enter the school with below average attainment. An analysis of results shows that pupils are generally making sound progress. However, in the GCSE results in 1999 underachievement was noted in boys' attainment in English, in the graphics and realisation courses in design and technology and in art. Particularly good GCSE results have been recorded in modern foreign languages.

The school is achieving its best results with pupils of average and below-average ability. The attainment of pupils has been best for those attaining one A*-G grade at GCSE. For these pupils the school is achieving well above-average results. Similarly, above-average results have been achieved in the case of pupils attaining five A*-G grades at GCSE. The school's results for pupils attaining five A*-C grades are less good. Here, the results achieved are below the national average.

For the school to meet its own aim of the highest standards for all pupils a concentrated effort is needed to improve the performance of more-able pupils. The A-level results are satisfactory in relation to pupils' abilities. The GNVQ results in the sixth form are good.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
· Years 7-9	Satisfactory	History, Modern Foreign Languages, Information Technology, Religious Education	
Years 10-11	· Good	History, Modern Foreign Languages, Information Technology, Special Educational Needs	
Sixth form	Good	Spanish, Information Technology, Music, Geography	
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Satisfactory		

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons observed; it was good in 44 per cent and very good in 12 per cent. The teaching observed was slightly better in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the sixth form. Teachers manage classes well and encourage good behaviour and positive attitudes. Homework arrangements must be improved and in some subjects more attention given to the review of earlier work.

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

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good: pupils show good attitudes to their work; behaviour is good in classes and around the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory: improving attendance as a result of the school's effective procedures.
Ethos*	Good: the school is improving and provides a good quality of education.
Leadership and management	Good: very good strategic planning is leading to improvements; effective management throughout.
Curriculum	Generally good, but weaknesses in personal, social and health education, and religious education.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good support is given which allows pupils to take a full role in the school and to achieve nationally-recognised accreditation.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory; sound for moral and cultural development; and good for social development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory staffing, but curriculum requirements are not met in some subjects; satisfactory accommodation and good resources.
Value for money	Good value for money: good quality of education; pupils make sound progress; and good personal development.

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

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good standard of work achieved by their child. • The school achieves high standards of behaviour. • They find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work pupils are given to do at home. • The information they receive about their • They are not clear about what is taught.

Inspectors agree with all of the parents' views except they judge that more-able pupils could attain higher standards in external examinations. Inspection findings also show that the school does make adequate arrangements to inform parents what is taught.

Key Issues for Action

To raise further the standards of work and provision, the governors and senior management should:

- seek to improve the attainment of more-able pupils (paragraph 7) by:
 - continuing newly-introduced arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress, mentoring and target setting; and
 - strengthening the emphasis on the review and revision of work for examinations;
- introduce appropriate arrangements for a structured provision for personal, social and health education (paragraphs 40,45);
- improve arrangements for the provision of homework (paragraph 30) by:
 - a more effective structure for the setting of homework;
 - ensuring that homeworks are set;
 - ensuring that homeworks are of good quality and present a reasonable level of demand;
 - having a much tighter scrutiny of the use of homework diaries to avoid parents and form tutors signing only partially filled entries;
- review the use of time which is currently allocated to tutor time (paragraph 40) by, for example:
 - either continuing the existing tutor time but improve the content of the session, or, seek alternative arrangements for registration and tutor support;
- seek to meet statutory requirements for the provision of a daily act of collective worship and for the teaching of religious education (paragraphs 33,45) by:
 - making arrangements for assemblies or worship in tutor time
 - allocating sufficient curriculum time for religious education

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

- Tackle the previous key issue of evaluating the success of budget allocations to curriculum managers and establishing value for money decisions (paragraph 73);
- Strengthen the role of the governing body in evaluating value for money decisions and in strategic planning (paragraph 61);
- Improving the curriculum for some sixth form pupils so that their time is accounted for and well used (paragraph 37);
- Improve the reports to parents (paragraph 56).

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1 Ashfield School is a mixed, 11 to 18 comprehensive school with 1801 pupils on roll. The school has been designated by the Government as having Technology College status since 1998. The catchment serves part of the towns of Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield, and the surrounding area. Pupils come from homes ranging from those experiencing significant deprivation to those with a more average social background. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. There are 11 pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is broadly in line with the national average: there are 245 pupils on the SEN register, 5 of whom are statemented. Some 17.2% of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is broadly in line with the national average.

2 The school's mission statement makes reference to the aim of maximising the attainment and aspirations of all its students so that they develop into successful and caring adults. The school's priorities include projects on a pastoral review; teaching and learning; a Key Stage 3 review; and the issue of enhancement. School targets for the year 2000 state the objective of (at least) 38% of pupils to gain 5 GCSE certificates at A*-C grades; 100% of pupils to gain 1 GCSE certificate at A*-G grades; and an average points score per pupil of 33.

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	145	156	301

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	49	86	70
	Girls	92	104	88
	Total	141	190	158
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	47 (67)	63 (61)	52 (49)
	National	64 (64)	62 (59)	54 (56)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	14 (33)	27 (23)	20 (22)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	64	94	88
	Girls	110	115	109
	Total	174	209	197
Percentage at NC Level 5 or above	School	58 (44)	69 (64)	65 (52)
	National	65 (62)	65 (63)	60 (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	25 (20)	31 (34)	28 (26)
	National	32 (30)	38 (37)	29 (30)

¹

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

Attainment at Key Stage 4²

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	144	139	283

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	33	126	137
	Girls	58	135	137
	Total	91	261	274
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	32 (34)	92 (93)	97 (99)
	National	47.9 (46.1)	88.5 (87.3)	94 (93.4)

Attainment in the Sixth Form³

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

Year	Male	Female	Total
1999	45	51	96

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		
	M	F	All	M	F	All
School	14.5 (14.6)	12.9 (18.7)	13.7 (16.7)	2.3 (1.5)	1.8 (1.5)	2.1 (1.5)
National	19.1(18.7)	19.4(19)	19.3(18.9)	3.2 (3.2)	3.3 (3.4)	3.3(3.3)

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

	Number	% Success Rate
School	28	82 (91)
National		NA (79.1)

²

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

³

Figures 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 Absence	School	7.8
	National comparative data	7.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.0
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	22
Permanent	5

§ Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	12.0
Satisfactory or better	94.7
Less than satisfactory	5.3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational Standards Achieved by Pupils at the School

Attainment and Progress

3 Standards of attainment in the school are below the national average. Overall results at GCSE since the last inspection have shown a rising trend at a rate faster than that found nationally. The school has achieved its best results in this period with pupils of average and below average ability.

4 Standards of attainment of pupils at the age of 14 are below the national average for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In 1999, the overall results were largely unchanged compared with those in 1998: they were slightly better in mathematics and science, but worse in English. The trend in results at Key Stage 3 shows little improvement in standards.

5 Although the results of pupils at the age of 14 are well below average when compared with similar schools, their progress compared with prior attainment is sound. Best progress is made by pupils with low prior attainment. The most recent mathematics results have shown particularly good progress on the part of weaker pupils and this is also the case, to a lesser extent, in science.

6 The standards pupils attain at GCSE are broadly in line with schools nationally, including those of similar type. The rising trend achieved in GCSE results since the last inspection has been better than that found nationally and there is a good deal of consistency in the improvement. The 1999 GCSE results show standards are being maintained. The attainment of pupils has been best for those attaining one A*-G grades at GCSE. For these pupils the school is achieving well above average results. Similarly, above average results are achieved in the case of pupils attaining five A*-G grades at GCSE.

7 The school's results in the case of pupils attaining five A*-C grades at GCSE are less good. Here, the results achieved are below the national average compared with schools nationally and of a similar type. The progress of many more-able pupils studying for GCSE in 1999 was sound when measured against prior attainment, but there is some evidence of underachievement, particularly boys. It remains a challenge for the school to gain attainment for more-able pupils in line with the good level of results with other ability groups.

8 In the sixth form the attainment at A-level in 1999 was well below the national average. The A-level results have varied since the last inspection with the trend showing a broadly unchanged level of attainment. Standards over the last three years have been below the national average, but they reflect pupils' abilities and prior attainment. Pupils' results in the vocational courses taken show an above average percentage of candidates achieving qualifications.

9 Standards in English are below average and there has been a decline in the levels achieved in 1999 compared with 1998, both at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE. At Key Stage 3 most pupils make sound progress but very few achieve better than expected. At GCSE there is evidence of underachievement, particularly in the case of boys. In the sixth form the 1999 A-level results showed a good spread of grades and sound achievement. Standards of literacy are generally sound throughout the curriculum. There are limited opportunities for pupils to provide extended spoken answers but standards in speaking are satisfactory. Less-able pupils are making good progress in

literacy, particularly in Key Stage 4.

10 Mathematics standards are broadly in line with national averages at GCSE and below average at Key Stage 3. At both key stages most pupils are making at least sound progress. In Key Stage 3 the 1999 results have improved slightly compared with 1998 and the performance of less-able pupils is better than might be expected. At GCSE many pupils achieve well in comparison with their prior attainment and there are few cases of pupils underachieving. Although the 1999 A-level results showed many good grades, too many of those entered failed to achieve any grade. Standards in numeracy throughout the school are sound. Pupils are able to cope with the numeracy demands of the subjects they undertake.

11 Standards in science are below the national average at GCSE and below average at Key Stage 3. The GCSE 1999 results are lower than those in 1998, but there was a small improvement at the end of Key Stage 3. Throughout the school, pupils make sound progress in science in comparison with their prior attainment. The 1999 A-level results in the sciences showed many good grades and sound achievement.

12 Standards in art and design are below average although the GCSE results have improved slightly this year. A significant number of pupils, mainly boys, underachieve in their GCSE course. Standards in design and technology are well below average. In both the graphics and resistant materials GCSE courses there is underachievement on the part of boys, whereas girls achieve broadly in line with their prior attainment. Standards in home economics are in line with national averages and pupils make sound progress. In information technology, standards are in line with national expectations in both key stages.

13 In geography, standards of attainment at GCSE level are well below national averages and the 1999 results are significantly lower than those in 1998. The 1999 results show a wide spread of attainment and, in the light of pupils' prior attainment, some pupils badly underachieved. The 1999 GCSE history results are an improvement on the previous year and they represent standards slightly below the national average. Many pupils make good progress in history.

14 The recent GCSE results in modern foreign languages have been good and in all three languages offered the 1999 results were better than the previous year, markedly so in the case of Spanish. Standards in French are about average and many pupils make progress beyond that expected. Strong results have also been recorded in German, with standards above the national average with all pupils making sound progress, and often better than this. Standards in Spanish are very good. The results in 1998 were above the national average and the 1999 results were significantly higher yet again.

15 Standards in music are variable, but broadly average. In physical education standards are average and most pupils make sound progress. Standards in religious education are satisfactory. Pupils attain standards expected in the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus.

16 SEN pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form they make good progress. The good progress in Key Stage 4 is reflected in the high numbers of pupils gaining at least one GCSE. Progress by pupils on the intermediate General National Vocational Qualification course is similarly of a good standard.

Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development

17 Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes to their work. They are mostly interested, concentrate well and are often enthusiastic about their lessons. They show a commitment to work by settling to tasks quickly and mostly working hard. They are confident to join in discussion and to share their ideas with others. Pupils mostly listen well and are keen to answer questions. They can select their own resources and some good examples of this were seen in art, modern foreign languages and information technology. Pupils are developing good independent learning skills. However, the lack of a structured homework programme means that pupils' personal study habits at Key Stage 3 are less well developed.

18 Pupils with SEN demonstrate good attitudes to work in most lessons. Their behaviour is good, but there are some exceptions particularly at Key Stage 3, where the behaviour of some challenges the skills of the staff at a significant level. These challenges are dealt with firmly.

19 The school appropriately advertises its view that pupils' behaviour can change and that everyone is valued. Staff implement the school's values effectively in practice. Multi-agency work and the preparation of Pastoral Support Plans in conjunction with special needs provision mean that pupils are provided with a wide safety net when management of their behaviour is a problem for the school.

20 Pupils' behavior has much improved since the last OFSTED report. In most lessons behaviour is good, and pupils do as they are told. Parents are satisfied with the standards of behaviour at the school. The corridors are mostly orderly and pupils behave sensibly in congested areas. They go quickly and purposefully to their lessons, but some pupils at times can be quite noisy and boisterous. Pupils are always courteous, cheerful and friendly to visitors. They readily help when asked, and will also happily volunteer to help. They are mostly polite to their teachers and demonstrate appropriate respect. There is no evidence of vandalism in the school, but pupils do not show appropriate regard for outside areas. There is, for example, little attempt by pupils to use litter bins, and chewing gum is discarded on the ground.

21 Exclusion is used appropriately and the rates, which are average, are falling. The school makes every effort to avoid excluding pupils.

22 Relationships in the school are good. Pupils work well in groups, where they co-operate and help each other. Pupils enjoy being in mixed-year tutor groups, and younger and older pupils get on well with each other. Through discussion, particularly in religious education and science, pupils demonstrate respect and understanding for the beliefs of others. In drama, pupils show empathy and an understanding of how others might feel, a good example is a Year 10 lesson when pupils were looking at issues to do with racism and equality.

23 Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils are confident and are willing to take responsibility. When asked to do something they perform tasks conscientiously. There are various roles and responsibilities within the house system which encourage pupils to contribute to the school community and to take responsibility by being a prefect or house representative. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have opportunities to act as receptionists, and they perform this role well, greeting visitors and ensuring that they are well looked after. Sixth form pupils are keen to volunteer to help younger pupils who have learning difficulties.

Attendance

24 Attendance rates are broadly in line with the national average. The trend is rising quite

significantly and recent initiatives suggest that this pattern is set to continue.

25 There is no significant difference in the attendance rates of pupils who have special educational needs.

26 Pupils are punctual for school. They move quickly between lessons, which start promptly.

Quality of Education Provided

Teaching

27 The quality of teaching in the school is good and it has improved since the last OFSTED report. 95% of lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, 44% were considered good and 12% were considered very good. Teaching is sound in Key Stage 3, and good in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in sixth form lessons.

28 Teaching was considered to be most effective in both Key Stage 3 and 4 in history, modern foreign languages and information technology. Most effective teaching was also observed in religious education in Key Stage 3, and in the teaching of SEN pupils in Key Stage 4. In the sixth form most effective teaching was observed in Spanish, information technology and music and geography. In no subject was teaching found to have a significant level of weakness.

29 The best teaching observed was based on good management of pupils; good knowledge and understanding on the part of teachers, and good expectations in their conduct of lessons. In one excellent Spanish lesson the teacher demonstrated very good subject knowledge. Very good use was made of the target language and a good range of resources were used to provide variety in the activities involved. The teacher ensured that all pupils were engaged and corrected errors sensitively. High demands were made of the pupils. In another very good lesson using information technology in science the lesson objectives were made clear to the class. The teacher showed good knowledge and understanding of the use of the internet. The class was well managed and work was presented in a motivating way. The lesson concluded with good summing up and targets set for next lesson.

30 During lessons pupils often make good progress. This is not fully reflected in the school's examination results, particularly in the case of more-able pupils. Poor use is made of homework to reinforce work undertaken in class. The setting of homework is not based on an organised homework timetable and parents express concern about the irregularity of work set. Pupils themselves comment on the fact that often little homework is set and much can be completed quickly.

31 In a number of subject departments efforts are being made to build on pupils' progress in class lessons. There is increased attention to reviewing work and encouraging pupils to revise work later, for example in the proposed use of revision guides in the science department. However, there are still weaknesses, for example some advice on revision techniques in design and technology was considered unsatisfactory, and some targets for less-able pupils lack clarity.

32 Some teaching is weakened by the use of non-specialist teachers. A greater proportion of such lessons observed was judged unsatisfactory than was found generally throughout the school. The school makes satisfactory provision for the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum although this is not a strong feature in planning.

Curriculum and Assessment

33 The quality of the curriculum is good, but the school is not meeting the statutory requirements for religious education and there is insufficient time devoted to music and art in Key Stage 3. In addition, there is insufficient time for pupils' personal development. Nevertheless, there are many strengths in the curriculum, including opportunities for a broad education in Key Stage 4 for all pupils. The Curriculum has been improved since the last OFSTED report, particularly as a result of a Key Stage 4 review and improvement in information technology teaching in a number of subjects. The provision for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is not strongly developed.

34 The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broad. It includes all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The quality of the curriculum is good in a large number of subjects, notably in information technology, the creative arts and history. The balance of the curriculum is distorted because of the short time allocated to art, music and religious education across the key stage.

35 The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides good balance because all pupils have the option to take a humanities, creative arts and a modern foreign language in addition to the core curriculum. The good results in the GCSE A*-G category show that all pupils benefit from the courses and the least able attain well.

36 Sixth form provision in the school has improved since the last inspection; subject options are better organised and pastoral arrangements have been improved. Plans are in place to further develop the curriculum provision.

37 Sixth form students are offered a good range of subject at A-Level and GNVQ Intermediate and Foundation level and all but a few pupils are studying their preferred subjects. All sixth form students take part in the Diploma of Achievement course which provides good opportunities for personal development and the acquisition of key skills. All students have the opportunity to undertake a period of two weeks of work experience and, wherever it is possible this is linked to their work in school. Tutor arrangements for sixth form students are very good and the tutor system promotes positive attitudes towards learning and supports student progression. The school has a compact arrangement with three universities, which is very supportive to students progressing on to Higher Education. The individual timetables of some students are unsatisfactory in that they have as little as 13 out of a possible 30 periods of timetabled time. A significant number of students are not able to use non-timetabled time in a productive way and this situation is exacerbated by the shortage of suitable private study facilities.

38 Pupils do not attend a daily act of collective worship, and this, together with the low amount of time given for religious education does not give much opportunity for developing the spiritual dimension to life. The school indicates that insufficient teachers are prepared to deliver collective worship in the school.

39 The banding and setting arrangements, together with the blocking of subjects on the timetable enable pupils to move to higher sets should they attain well. The quality of the curriculum for those pupils on the school's register for SEN is good. There are good schemes of work in most subjects, which ensure continuity, although some refinements are required in mathematics and art. The mixed-age tutor groups work well and the atmosphere is very civilised in tutor sessions.

40 The provision for pupils' guidance is not secure. All pupils have a tutorial time of 25 minutes each day in which personal and social education, tracking of attainment and target setting should take place. A large amount of energy has been expended in providing support materials for personal and social education, but the opportunity for discussion and argument in order for pupils to form and express their own opinions is limited in tutorial sessions. Many pupils say that this time is often wasted and evidence during the inspection week suggested that this is the case.

41 Careers education is supported by a good policy and is enthusiastically led, but because it is delivered through a number of subjects, there is no guarantee that all pupils receive a similar entitlement. Support for individual pupils from the careers service is good. All pupils have access to health education, sex education and drugs education and this provision is satisfactory.

42 There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include sporting and cultural activities, some subject 'clinics', the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, residential visits and visits to countries in Western and Eastern Europe. The 'hub' information and communication technology centres are a very popular addition to extra-curricular provision at lunch-times. Around 300 pupils participate in competitive sports led by 8 teachers, and opportunities occur for pupils to become involved with activities with a national football club and an athletics club.

Assessment arrangements are much improved since the last inspection. The school made satisfactory progress in improving arrangements as recommended as a key issue of the previous OFSTED report. The school has both an assessment and marking policy to which departments adhere. All subjects do target-setting and reviews, and there is increasing pupil participation in this process. Monitoring is not yet rigorous at all levels, but there is an increasing awareness of the process. The system of mentoring those pupils who could attain better results has been established, although it is still early days and benefits have not yet been realised. In the past little use was made of Key Stage 2 national test results because not all schools were able to supply them on transfer; the analysis of progress from Key Stage 3 to 4 is still in its infancy.

43 Assessment processes vary according to the needs of each faculty. Good developments are occurring, notably in English, science, history, geography, and French. In mathematics the department does not assess against the attainment targets in Key Stage 3 and is therefore, in breach of statutory requirements.

44 Some good developments are taking place with the standardisation of marking within faculties at Key Stage 3 for example in art. Across the school teachers' comments in marking do not always point out to pupils how they could improve their work.

Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

45 Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. However, some opportunities for promoting these elements are missed through insufficient analysis and planning. The school is at an embryonic stage in bringing coherence to this area.

There is limited scope for spiritual development and this is a weakness in the school's provision. The school does not meet the statutory requirements for collective worship. There is little planning for reflection in assemblies and tutorial time. Religious education provides some time in Key Stage 3 for pupils to consider their own and others' beliefs. In history, at Key Stage 3, pupils' work on 17th century faiths embraces spiritual issues, and in expressive arts there are examples of work within the scheme of work which provide pupils with opportunities for reflection. Listening in music helps pupils develop some spiritual awareness in Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, opportunities are restricted. There is no provision for religious education for all pupils in the

sixth form. There is no overall plan of how the school can provide for pupils' spiritual development.

46 Provision for the moral development of pupils is satisfactory. The school successfully emphasises the importance of good relationships. Pupils are generally well behaved in lessons and their attitudes are good. The school's behaviour policy has made a difference and helps to create an atmosphere of respect, particularly when pupils are working in groups. The tone of many lessons enhances moral development. Moral issues such as debates on Northern Ireland are discussed sensibly in English and expressive arts at Key Stage 4. Race is specifically addressed in a Year 9 topic on the Americas in history lessons. In science pupils in Key Stage 4 discuss the problems of genetic engineering, energy crises and global warming. However, there is little attempt to challenge pupils on the problem of litter which spoils the pleasant environment of the school.

47 Provision for pupils' social development is good and there is positive encouragement for pupils to take a full part in school and community life. This is done through a wide programme of extra-curricular activities in drama performances, musical concerts, sport, trips and visits and fund-raising activities for charity. Opportunities for exercising responsibility are available through the reception duty system in Years 7, 8 and 9 and with the many posts of responsibility available through the house system. Relationships in lessons between teachers and pupils are good. There is also an extensive range of mentoring and buddying schemes which offer counselling to many pupils. However, not all tutors exploit the mixed-age tutor group system to full effect and some opportunities are lost for older pupils to work alongside younger ones. Social provision in the sixth form is good with a range of activities, many of which are organised by the pupils themselves.

48 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. European culture is promoted well within the modern languages area, where a wide range of exchanges and visits is in operation as well as through work in lessons. There are regular exhibitions in art and visits organised in expressive arts, English and history. Visitors such as poets and theatre groups come regularly into school. Multi-cultural issues are less well addressed, but there is some work undertaken in expressive arts and religious education.

49 The school has made poor progress on the key issue in the last OFSTED report recommending compliance with statutory requirements for the provision of collective worship.

Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare

50 Pupils' pastoral needs are well met through the house system. More recently, the houses have taken on a more active role in monitoring pupils' academic progress. Heads of house and form tutors now have regular information about pupils' attainment in the different subjects. The role of the form tutor has developed since the last inspection and is now well placed to become an integral part of the monitoring process. However, as yet the system has not had time to develop, and form tutors are not having a significant impact on the monitoring of pupils' academic progress. The use of the pastoral system to help raise pupils' standards of attainment was a key issue in the last OFSTED report and satisfactory progress has been made.

51 Monitoring of pupils' academic progress by subject tutors is fairly well developed throughout the school. Monitoring information is used well by sixth form tutors and there is good monitoring and support for pupils at Key Stage 4, for example through the Year 11 interviews.

52 There is very effective monitoring of pupils' attendance and punctuality through the use of

an electronic recording system. The system identifies absence and lateness and has effectively dealt with the issue of internal truancy, which was identified at the last inspection. Attendance is well promoted, for example, through certificates for good attendance. At Key Stage 4, all pupils participate in the 'Compact Scheme' in which they have to set targets for their attendance. These initiatives, and the electronic system for recording attendance, are all having a pleasing effect on attendance rates, which show a rising trend.

53 The behaviour policy has been reviewed recently and is an effective working document. There is a clear system of rewards based on credit and compact points, which is well understood by pupils. The school has very good relationship with outside agencies and has been quick to respond to recent government initiatives by developing Pastoral Support Plans for those pupils who need help to manage their behaviour. Bullying is taken very seriously and there are effective procedures to deal with incidents. Pupils are taught about bullying, and are encouraged to take any concerns they have to peer counselling service.

Pupils with SEN have good support. There are regular review meetings and teaching staff use effectively pupils' individual education plans to influence their teaching.

54 The school follows local child protection procedures and there are effective systems to deal with child protection issues. There are sound systems in place for the health and safety of pupils, and regular monitoring of health and safety. However, there is a lack of awareness by some staff about health and safety and a number of minor issues were noted during the inspection period.

Partnership with Parents and the Community

55 Parents are keen to send their children to the school which is over-subscribed, with many pupils coming from outside the traditional catchment area.

56 Information for parents is comprehensive. However, the parents annual report from governors has limited information about the school's arrangements for pupils with SEN. Pupils' annual reports are good at Key Stage 4 with a wealth of information about what pupils know and can do and the progress they have made. The reports for sixth form pupils are satisfactory overall, although the quality and amount of information is often scant. The reports for pupils at Key Stage 3 do not meet statutory requirements for reporting on information and communications technology. Information on National Curriculum subjects is often limited and does not give parents a clear picture of the progress their child has made, or their level of attainment.

57 The school gives parents some good opportunities to find out about learning through open days and through the annual parent consultation evening. The homework diaries have the potential to involve parents in learning but they are not as effective as they might be because pupils, teachers and parents are not using them well. Parents of some Year 11 pupils are invited into school to talk about how they can give support for examinations.

58 Parents are quickly contacted if a pupil is absent without an explanation. Parents of pupils with SEN are well involved with their child's reviews and individual education plan.

59 The school's links with the community are extensive and wide ranging. Members of the senior management team sit on local area forum groups, and this has involved pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13 talking about local issues and what they would like for their community.

60 Pupils in Years 10 and 12 have opportunities to sample the world of work through work experience placements. Older pupils, through the textiles department, work with people from industry, which culminates in a fashion show. The careers department invites speakers to talk about their work. The local community are invited into school to view art exhibitions. The school has close links with the North Nottinghamshire Training and Enterprise Council which sponsors the 'Compact Scheme' and 'Compact Link' which are designed to help pupils' personal development and help them with skills needed for work. The school has a link with a local engineering company which sponsors a graphics project. Some students participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and this involves them in voluntary work. These and other links support the curriculum and pupils' personal development. Local primary schools use the school pool, and there is a Summer Literacy School for pupils in Year 6 supported by business. The school has a partnership with a local college to provide education for adult learners. There are currently three courses running.

The Management and Efficiency of the School

Leadership and Management

1The school aims are appropriate and largely met. Only in the aim of gaining the highest academic standards has the school some way to go, particularly in the case of more-able pupils. The leadership and management of the school are good, and significantly improved since the time of the last OFSTED inspection. The governing body is supportive and closely involved. It has sound working arrangements through its committees and a good knowledge of current issues. There is scope for the governing body to play a more significant role in the formulation of school policy and in the subsequent evaluation of progress, for example by judging the cost effectiveness of decisions taken.

62 The headteacher offers very good leadership and the senior management team is very effective in encouraging a corporate approach to issues followed by clear decision taking. Strategic planning is very good. It is based on well-researched analysis of views and issues followed by detailed planning in working groups. The outcome of recent initiatives has been good, although in some cases the effects of changes have yet to be fully felt. The recent planning for Technology College status has contributed further depth and precision to planning and the development of priorities is now very good.

63 Middle management is generally good and staff are given suitable guidance in subject teaching. In some subjects good quality management is seen directly in the standards achieved and in the good quality of teaching. The development of technology in the school, which has Technology College status, poses high demands on departmental management and these demands have yet to be fully met. The management of the humanities faculty is sound and in some areas of work good. However, there is some unevenness in the progress being made by constituent departments, with history being most advanced in, for example, the use made of assessment and monitoring pupils' progress. There is strength in the management of pastoral support through the house and form tutor arrangements.

64 The school has dealt well with the key issue in the last OFSTED report which recommended better understanding of management roles so that consistency of action is achieved based on a clear vision of what needs to be done. Now, staff in a wide range of roles express confidence in and understanding of the school's priorities. This aspect of school management is good.

65 The school administration is very good. Day-to day matters are dealt with very effectively and the running of the school is orderly.

Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources

66 The number, qualifications and match of staff to curriculum need is sound, although some teaching is weakened by the use of non-specialists. These include mathematics, religious education and geography. Science is affected by having a significant number of lessons taught by staff from outside the department. In English, mathematics and science there are too many classes being taught by more than one teacher and lessons are also shared in music and physical education. Arrangements for the timetable are being reviewed, with a view to reducing the number of such lessons. The extent of duties allotted to the SEN co-ordinator reduces the effectiveness of the post.

67 The number of support staff is adequate, except in science. In some areas the work of support staff extends, in a very active way, into support for learning. This happens in information technology, the library and support for SEN. The environment for learning is improved by the work of the site manager and his team, and there is also, unusually, a technician for expressive arts which benefits work in that area.

68 Staff development is good. In recent years, it has included an induction programme for all new staff, including a large number of newly qualified teachers. There are opportunities for staff to mentor less-experienced colleagues, and attend professional development evenings. In English, humanities and science, shared observation of lessons helps focus on good practice. There is also a range of opportunities for support staff, some of whom are taking NVQ qualifications. Provision for appraisal is currently in abeyance, as the school awaits clarification of the new national scheme.

69 Accommodation is sound overall, and very good in some areas, including expressive arts, geography and art. There is inadequate provision in physical education, science and business education, affecting the quality of learning. The school has seen much improvement to the environment and is aware of the need to continue its rolling programme of refurbishment. There is an inadequate social area for sixth form pupils, which impoverishes their experience.

70 Learning resources are good in range and quality. Staff produce many high quality resources themselves, and access to information technology is good. The new resource 'hubs' are impressive and well used, as is the library. However the lack of computers in the business education area was identified as a weakness, restricting learning opportunities for GNVQ students.

The Efficiency of the School

71 Overall financial planning in the school is good. The school's expenditure is in line with its income, and it has sufficient money in reserve to ensure that small changes in educational funding would not cause a return to the deficit budget problems it experienced a few years ago. The school is also expanding in size due to its increasing popularity amongst parents in the area. This rise in the school population is being appropriately planned for, with different budget scenarios prepared for by the senior management team and governors.

72 The school has attracted significant extra funding through the specialist technology schools' initiative. This funding is very well managed. Planning for the Technology College developments contains clearly identified outcomes and spending costs. As a result, the success of these plans can be clearly evaluated in the future by the school. Some initial, interim evaluation has resulted in

appropriate modifications of the original tasks and planned time scales.

1 In contrast to the technology bid, the identification of outcomes and their clear link to educational spending is less helpful in some other areas of the school's planning. Some faculty, and pastoral strategic plans show clearly measurable success criteria and the allocation of money to development priorities. Others are of poor quality and show limited understanding of value for money and financial planning issues. It is impossible to evaluate these plans. There is some good practice in the school, but greater consistency needs to be established. This aspect of defining success criteria for plans, and the development of cost effectiveness measures, was a key issue in the previous OFSTED report and unsatisfactory progress has been made. Good progress has been made with the organisation of the Technology College funding.

2 The available accommodation is used efficiently. Appropriate changes enable educational initiatives in areas such as information technology, design and technology and drama to be undertaken. The buildings maintenance programme is efficiently and effectively managed. Although maintenance costs are above average, they have allowed the significant progress in improving the quality of the accommodation. This was a key issue in the previous OFSTED report and the school has made good progress. Although much remains to be done, the school has well organised and costed plans.

75 Although the school has sufficient teaching staff, a small number of staff teach outside their normal subject specialisms. In addition there is a considerable number of subjects that have split classes where more than one teacher teaches a set. These split classes have benefits in areas such as modern foreign languages, but they provide problems for subjects such as English, mathematics and science. In each case the subject faculties have procedures to minimise potential difficulties, but there is evidence that the deployment of staff is causing problems in the quality of education provided. This was an issue in the previous report and there appears to have been little progress in improving the efficiency of the school's timetable. Faculties soundly manage and use their learning resources.

76 The school has an efficient financial control system. Clear administrative processes have been organised that are well understood by all staff. Regular financial reports, provided for individual budget holders, allow the carrying out of effective monitoring.

77 The school's costs per pupil are low in comparison with other secondary schools. Taking this cost of provision into account with the good quality of education, and the sound progress made by pupils, the school gives good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education

English

78 Standards of attainment in English at Key Stage 3 are below the national average. At Key Stage 3, in 1998, the results were around the national average, but in 1999, went down. Over time, while girls' results have been below average, boys' results have been well below. At Key Stage 4, in both Language and Literature a similar pattern emerges, and once again boys' results have been well below average in recent years. At A-level, there is a more variable pattern, with results reflecting the ability of pupils, but overall below average.

79 Individual pupils' progress at Key Stage 3 indicates sound progress for the majority. While progress is generally sound at Key Stage 4, there is underachievement for some boys, particularly those of middle or upper ability. Lower-ability pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. Girls, make better progress than boys. In lessons observed, progress was sound and occasionally good.

80 Pupils show confidence when responding to opportunities for talk. In Key Stage 3, pupils of all abilities answer questions enthusiastically and work well in groups. They use opportunities for self-evaluation well. At Key Stage 4, paired and groupwork gives opportunities for more-inhibited pupils to contribute ideas. A minority of Key Stage 3 pupils need to listen more attentively, and the use of standard, grammatical speech needs to develop at both key stages. In middle and upper Key Stage 4 groups, discussion demonstrates a good knowledge of how to put forward ideas effectively and justify them from textual evidence.

81 Reading in lessons indicates sound attainment, in line with ability. At Key Stages 3 and 4, texts chosen were challenging, and pupils worked hard to uncover meaning, and comment on form, structure and presentational devices. More-able pupils at both key stages are able to infer meaning beyond the literal, and to describe how their personal response is shaped by the text. Reading aloud, while enthusiastic, is often lacking in expression. Less-able readers were not familiar with many authors, or a range of reading beyond the classroom.

82 Writing covers a rich range. In Key Stage 3 a few more-able pupils found some of the work easy. At Key Stage 4 there is good progress in writing in less-able groups. Pupils of all ability have a good understanding of writing for particular purposes and audiences, and of drafting and re-drafting work. They make good use of information technology for this, which improves the quality of their presentation. A-level work includes some excellent, incisive, sensitive writing.

83 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and a co-operative atmosphere in lessons enables work to go forward productively. Less-able pupils in Key Stage 4 are working hard and behave courteously to teachers and each other.

84 Teaching observed was never less than satisfactory, and had many strengths. The staff have good knowledge and experience, and pupils are given a rich experience of the subject, across key stages. The department has positive links with the library and the drama department. These enhance pupils' motivation and learning. At Key Stage 3, planning is often good, but objectives, although shared with groups, can be too general to help them improve. Pupils also need consistent opportunities to generate as well as respond to questions. Some very good teaching was observed, including a Year 7 class, which was motivated and challenged by the clarity of the teacher's

objectives, and variety of task and pace. Preparing an interview, based on autobiographical writing, enabled these pupils to use their own experiences as a basis for learning. At Key Stage 4 a GCSE group gained confidence in approaching their written examination, through effective, focused discussion work. Assessment is sound, with target setting in place, but pupils need to know more precisely how targets can be used to improve their performance. The department has consistent marking, which is clear and diagnostic. Homework is sound but could be used more creatively as a means of developing independent learning. The department is tackling underachievement of boys by a variety of means. The efforts made need to be pursued further, and target setting followed through with rigour to ensure any dip in progress or performance is picked up promptly.

85 Leadership and management of the department is very good and sound progress has been made since the last OFSTED inspection. The large team has a sense of direction and purpose, enhanced by very good, systematic organisation and a commitment to development opportunities for both newer and long-serving staff, including a partnership system of support. Monitoring, which is now in place, and developing well, needs to identify more closely where progress is good rather than sound and which teaching strategies help achieve this. Resources are adequate and soundly managed.

86 The development of literacy across the school is at an embryonic stage, although the Summer Literacy School has been successfully run for the past two years. Standards of literacy are sound. It is important that the school maximises the opportunity afforded by Key Stage 2 development of the National Literacy Strategy, to address pupils' literacy needs across the curriculum, affording all those entering with insecure skills, the chance to catch up.

Mathematics

87 The overall standard of attainment in mathematics is average in comparison with national results. At GCSE, attainment was generally in line with national averages in 1999. Almost all pupils leave the school with at least a grade G in mathematics. Many pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4. In the 1999 national tests, for pupils aged 14, the overall level of performance was below average as a result of fewer than average pupils attaining higher grades. Pupils make sound progress in Key Stage 3 and many less-able pupils make good progress. In the lessons observed, pupils were working at levels in line with their ability. Standards achieved by pupils taking A-level mathematics have been variable; the results in the 1999 examinations were unsatisfactory, but results had been good in the previous two years. Standards, in lessons observed, showed pupils working at levels in line with the expectations of their A-level course. Overall, the department has made good progress since the previous report.

88 The work in pupils' books shows a balanced range of mathematical topics. This includes the study of number skills, in which most pupils demonstrate appropriate confidence. Mental arithmetic skills are generally sound, but many pupils still do not have quick recall of multiplication tables. Pupils show sound skills in investigating a mathematical problem when supported by teachers, though they often seem unsure of taking the next steps themselves. The development of 'using and applying' mathematics needs supporting by a more consistent assessment of pupils' skills. Pupils study a satisfactory range of data-handling topics that include graphical display and probability. There are good opportunities to use computers in the study of mathematical topics.

89 In the lessons observed pupils made sound progress overall and progress was good in most Key Stage 4 lessons. There were good examples of pupils being challenged, as in a lesson where pupils studying a revision of Pythagoras' theorem were encouraged to think problems through from

first principles rather than use an algebraic formula. On the whole, pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are generally good. They respond well to those teachers who are enthusiastic and give a clear structure to the work. In a minority of cases, usually in the lower sets, progress in learning is detrimentally affected by a lack of personal motivation from some pupils. In contrast, higher and average-attaining pupils often display perseverance and good concentration.

90 The quality of teaching during the week of the inspection was sound with many examples of good practice. The specialist teachers of mathematics have a good level of knowledge and competence, and organise pupils effectively. These skills were demonstrated in a lesson where pupils' previous knowledge of fractions was generalised to the algebraic form through clear and precise instruction. However, some mathematics sets are taught for part of their time by non-specialist teachers. In some of these, the knowledge and skills of the teacher is insufficient to make the most of the topic being studied. So, for example, in a lesson meant to be on ordering decimal numbers, most of the time was spent on subtraction using an inappropriate method. Teachers routinely describe the objectives for a lesson to pupils, but this good practice is often restricted by a lack of precision in what is to be learnt. For example, in a lesson where the quality of delivery by the teacher was very good, the objective of 'understanding different methods of graphical display' was limited by a concentration on techniques of drawing rather than making use of them. In general there is insufficient emphasis put on pupils talking about mathematics and becoming independent thinkers rather than following teacher-provided routines.

91 The department displays a good collegiate approach to new developments, and this is illustrated by the continuing development of the different learning approaches using computers in the 'mathematics hub' resource room. However, the departmental strategic plan is not used effectively to target financial and other resources, and it does not clearly define expected outcomes. As was the case at the time of the previous inspection, a considerable number of mathematics sets are taught by more than one teacher and this exacerbates the problems of ensuring continuity. The departmental scheme of work provides an outline structure for the teaching of mathematics, but mostly fails to identify the key objectives for learning. A clearer list of what pupils of different abilities should achieve would improve the planning for progression and help the non-specialist teachers.

92 The system of mathematical assessment has been developed since the previous inspection, and this has the potential for tracking pupils' progress over time. Whilst the assessments are soundly used by individual teachers, there is, as yet, insufficient collation and use of the results across the year groups. The department is also not making an assessment of each pupil's attainment in each of the National Curriculum Attainment Targets at the end of Key Stage 3.

Science

93 Standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 are below the national average overall and in comparison with similar schools, Attainment in science in the 1999 national tests showed a small improvement. Progress in Key Stage 3 is broadly satisfactory but some able pupils do not make enough progress.

94 Standards of attainment in GCSE are below the national averages and the 1999 results showed a significant drop. The performance of girls is better than that of boys. Progress in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory overall and at both key stages progress of pupils with SEN is good. Standards at A-level are broadly in line with national figures. In 1999 a full range of grades were obtained and pupils made good progress.

95 Standards of attainment seen in lessons are in line with national expectations. Pupils showed understanding of all aspects of the National Curriculum including scientific investigation. Pupils show generally good experimental skills and can work competently and safely. Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrated good skills of planning and carrying out investigations.

96 Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are good and are often very good in Key Stage 4 and at A-level. Pupils show interest in lessons and are very willing to answer questions and contribute thoughtfully to class discussion and many are able to work conscientiously without teacher intervention. They co-operate well in groupwork and show respect for each others' ideas.

97 Teaching is good. Teachers show good subject knowledge and communicate their interest in science to pupils. They plan carefully and make the purpose of lessons clear to pupils, although sometimes they need to be more specific about this. In the very good lessons teachers showed enthusiasm and maintained a good pace. Clear explanations and good probing questioning were a feature of many lessons particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. However at Key Stage 3 there was not enough use of questions which challenged the most able. Marking of pupils' work is good but the setting of homework is variable. The use made of information technology in lessons is currently a major development within the department and although this is not yet complete some very good practice already exists. Good progress has been made in the teaching of information technology in science since the time of the last OFSTED report.

98 The scheme of work for Key Stage 3 does not take enough account of pupils' prior learning in Key Stage 2 and so the levels of challenge in some topics, particularly in the introductory lessons is insufficient. The complexity of the school timetable impacts on Key Stage 3 science teaching in ways which hinder pace and progression. Firstly, Year 7 pupils are prevented from having all their science lessons with one teacher as the departmental planning intended, and in Year 8 several groups share three teachers and some groups only see each teacher once a week. Secondly, a significant number of science lessons in Key Stage 3 are taught by non-specialists whilst at other times of the week science teachers are used to teach other subjects.

99 Although two of the science laboratories have been refurbished the remaining eight are in a poor state of repair with worn flooring and split bench tops. They have had no major work on them for over 30 years. Staff have made good efforts to overcome the negative messages which such facilities give to pupils about science, by the wide use of excellent displays of pupils' work and of information to help pupils understand their assessments in science. The shortage of science laboratories affects pupils in both key stages, with some Year 8 pupils and some Year 10 pupils having restricted access to laboratories.

100 Resources are generally adequate although many major pieces of equipment are nearing the end of their useful life and there is a lack of up-to date textbooks with colour illustrations. Technical support is somewhat below that which would typically be found in a school of this size.

Information Technology

101 Overall, attainment is in line with national expectations. At Key Stage 3 pupils can use word-processing and desktop publishing effectively, but skills in modelling and control are less well developed. At Key Stage 4 attainment is satisfactory and often better than national expectations, with good skills and knowledge in communicating and handling information. In the sixth form all pupils are attaining satisfactorily and in line with their ability.

102 Progress is generally good in Key Stage 3, particularly in Year 7. Pupils are making better progress in communicating and handling information and recent development work is ensuring future progress in controlling and measuring. At Key Stage 4 progress is good in Year 10, but slower in Year 11. A-level pupils are progressing more quickly than most GNVQ pupils. There has been a notable increase in the rate of progress by pupils in all key stages in science. Progress in relation to prior attainment in all key stages is good. SEN pupils are progressing more slowly and a lack of keyboarding skills and literacy problems contribute to this.

103 Attitudes and behaviour are generally satisfactory or better. Pupils show interest in their work and are excited by the new technology. There is a purposeful working ethos in information technology which results in real progress, particularly at A-level. Relationships between peers and teachers are good and constructive, with staff and pupils sometimes working side-by-side and enjoying good relationships.

104 Information technology is taught by many subjects as part of their normal work, with more departments contributing to this than in the previous inspection. Information technology teaching is strong in English, learning support, technology and science and is developing in humanities and expressive arts. It is under-developed in religious education. Standards of discipline are good and pupils are kept on task. A good range of support materials is developing. In English they are suited to pupils' needs. The quality of teaching overall is good and results in good progress. It is most effective at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Technical classroom assistants make a valuable contribution in classes. During the inspection, no information technology homework was set.

105 The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Assessment is carried out by the departments teaching the skills and knowledge. Useful external certificates are awarded. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. National Curriculum levels are not reported to parents at the end of Key Stage 3 as is statutorily required.

106 Staffing is satisfactory, although some teachers need to further develop their skills. Hardware and software provision is good. However, some hardware is complicating the tasks and together with the lack of disk-drive facilities is affecting attainment and progress.

107 Leadership within the department is good. Development planning is well established and linked to financial arrangements. The department is efficient, with developments being supported by careful financial planning. Effective use is made of accommodation and learning resources.

Religious Education

108 Standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with the expectations of the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the study of a range of themes in some of the major religions of the world. Pupils show good progress in their work in religious education in Key Stage 3.

109 The school is currently failing to provide pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form with their statutory entitlement to religious education. However, plans are being made to re-introduce GCSE Religious Studies into Year 10 from September 2000 for some pupils and for all pupils from the following year. Improvements on curriculum provision since the last OFSTED inspection have been slow.

110 Pupils are able to respond to questions and discuss difficult concepts such as the arguments for and against the existence of God. They quickly settle to tasks set, responding well to time limits imposed. Group work is used effectively to enable pupils of all abilities to work collaboratively. Pupils with SEN are satisfactorily supported but the less able struggle with some of the concepts and technical terms. Progress in lessons is generally satisfactory.

111 Attitudes to religious education are good. The behaviour of pupils in lessons observed was normally good and sometimes very good. They listen attentively, remain on task and volunteer their own ideas and views.

112 The quality of teaching is sound and often good. Staff demonstrate sound class control. They are well prepared and well organised. In the majority of lessons observed there was clarity in the presentation of tasks and a logical development of ideas. In some lessons there was particularly good stimulus which promoted high standards, for example: the dramatic telling of the story of creation from three religions and the effective use of a thought tunnel for pupils to reflect on others' feelings. Videos and artefacts also provide good stimulus for pupils' learning and supplement textbooks.

113 Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the department. The new head of department is committed to high achievement and has energy, enthusiasm and vision. She leads her team well. Planning for the future of religious education in the school is in hand and the scheme of work is under regular review.

114 The assessment system is at an early stage of development and needs to contribute more effectively to planning for continuity and progression through all key stages. The head of department is already using the new national standards for religious education to assess pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. The marking of pupils' work does not always help them to see how to improve.

115 The availability and use of information technology to support learning is under-developed. Resources and other facilities available in the department are satisfactory. Religious Education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Other Subjects or Courses

Art

116 Attainment in GCSE A*-C grades is significantly below the national average for both boys

and girls, although there is a rising trend. Boys' attainment shows a much greater degree of underachievement than the girls, at both the middle and upper ability levels. However, attainment in A*-G grades is at a higher level than nationally, showing that the department does well for its least-able pupils. Attainment for GCE A level is in line with expectations. In Key Stage 3 attainment is closer to the expected levels, although, again there is underachievement in the middle and upper bands of ability. SEN pupils attain levels better than expected. Underachievement in Key Stages 3 and 4 results from a curriculum which emphasises a wide variety of techniques in art at the expense depth. Drawing skills are not well developed and pupils are unable to apply well the formal elements of art. Colour work is crude. Knowledge and understanding of art and artists is better, and has improved since the last inspection.

117 Technical skills are very well developed in all key stages. Pupils show a good knowledge of printmaking, photography and information technology. A screen-printing project based on landscape in Year 10 showed good progress and confidence in experimenting with materials. Good progress is seen in the sixth form. Both the A-level and GNVQ pupils show their increasing independence of thought and willingness to experiment with materials and techniques to express their ideas. Some extremely poignant, and technically proficient graphic work based on a visit to Auschwitz was seen.

118 Attitudes to work are good. Pupils are well motivated, show enthusiasm for the subject and are willing to experiment. They settle quickly and are able to work unsupervised. Pupils helping one another gives a lasting impression of the spirit of co-operation in the department.

119 Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. The many strengths include the commitment of the teachers, the secure subject knowledge demonstrated by up-to-date technical knowledge across the disciplines, use of correct terminology and an understanding of the commercial contexts of art, craft and design. Clear demonstrations and carefully-chosen resources match assignments. There are some weaknesses: unclear learning objectives and planning which over-emphasises techniques rather than in-depth study, limit pupils' progress. The teaching makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

Design & Technology

120 Standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 4 are well below the national average. GCSE grades A* - C over the past two years show inconsistency across the range of design and technology courses offered. Girls achieved significantly better results than boys and showed further improvement in 1999 whilst the results achieved by boys weakened. These results show underachievement by boys in graphic products and resistant materials courses. In terms of A* - G grades, the results are in line with the national average. In lessons, pupils show satisfactory understanding of the processes of designing and making. Making skills are better at Key Stage 3 but in Key Stage 4 the girls are more methodical than boys when designing. The level of knowledge and understanding shown is sound and includes some good links to industry. There is room for improvement in the range of design ideas generated and in evaluation skills. In relation to their ability, pupils make sound progress by the end of Key Stage 4. In the sixth form standards are below average, but pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their ability. The more-able pupils show good progress. Pupils with SEN also make sound progress. The use and understanding of technical language is not consistent, but good in some lessons.

121 Pupils' attitudes to work are at least satisfactory and often good. Most pupils behave well, show pride in the products they make and listen well when learning new CAD/CAM skills. They work successfully in groups and respond well to responsibilities where given the opportunity to do so. They apply safe practices sensibly when working on machines and equipment. Relationships between pupils and their peers and with adults are good.

122 The quality of teaching overall is at least satisfactory and quite often good. Planning and preparation is satisfactory overall. Pace and rigour in lessons needs further consideration and development across the faculty. Unsatisfactory features in lessons were mainly due to the lack of planned, shared objectives and review of progress. Homework is set but not always as an essential part of each unit of work. All teachers have a sound subject knowledge, but teachers require some re-training to make effective use of the new CAD/CAM resources.

123 The faculty is currently responding positively to the demands of Technology College status and satisfactory progress has been made since the time of the last OFSTED inspection. Leadership and management shows increased rigour, but the high demands to achieve a shared vision and further improvement in attainment have yet to be fully met. Progress on the use of teacher assessment has been less than satisfactory since the last inspection, but is now taking shape more coherently as part of Key Stage 3 planning. Development in the use of assessment data to monitor pupils' progress through the key stages also needs to be sustained to support the target setting process. Pupil group sizes are above average and need to be kept under review. The resources available are good, but not yet fully utilised to enhance the range and quality of pupils' work.

Geography

124 Standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with National Curriculum expectations. Pupils show their knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to studies of a range of places and themes. Pupils show good progress in their work in geography in Key Stage 3.

125 Standards of attainment are significantly below average in Key Stage 4. There has been a downward trend in GCSE results over a three year period. Boys have performed less well than girls. Progress over time in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory.

126 Standards at A-level are broadly average. Over several years results have been good with all candidates achieving a pass grade in 1999. The results show a good spread in the grades achieved. Pupils make good progress in their studies at A-level.

127 Standards in lessons observed do not always reflect recent GCSE examination results. Pupils generally show an ability to respond to questions and discuss natural hazards and their impact. They settle to tasks set and work with interest and concentration, responding well to time limits imposed. Progress in lessons is generally satisfactory.

128 Pupils are consistently able to handle geographical data in a range of forms, from symbols on maps to the tracking of hurricanes. They use information technology across a range of applications with increasing competence. Pupils generally show above average recall and understanding especially in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

129 Attitudes to geography are good. Pupils express interest in the subject; this was particularly evident in the Year 9 groups, where significant numbers are intending to continue with the subject at GCSE. Uptake rates into the sixth form have been good in recent years. The behaviour of

pupils in lessons observed was normally good and sometimes very good.

130 The quality of teaching is sound and often good. Staff demonstrate good class control. They are well prepared and well organised. In many lessons observed there was clarity in the presentation of tasks and a logical development of ideas. In some lessons there was particularly good stimulus, which promoted high standards. For example, an A-level role-play demonstrated excellent skills by the teacher and the students when considering environmental disasters and their long-term effects. A small proportion of teaching showed unsatisfactory aspects, which could be attributed to a lack of pace, challenge or clarity in the presentation of work. The marking of pupils' work does not always help them to see how to improve.

131 The use of information technology is good. Pupils regularly use the Internet to enhance their knowledge and understanding in geography. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

History

132 Results at both A level and GCSE have improved steadily over the last three years. In 1999 the majority of pupils achieved a good A-level pass grade. At GCSE pupils achieved below the national average. In Key Stage 3 standards are rising but are still below national expectation.

133 In all key stages the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and some make good progress. However, progress in lessons is better than performance in examinations, but this is now being tackled by the department through assessment tasks and planned revision programmes. In Key Stage 3 pupils demonstrate progress through a growing sense of chronology and a developing ability to combine information from a range of sources and make inferences and deductions. The important skill of extended writing is also beginning to develop by the end of Year 9.

134 By the end Key Stage 4 pupils can discuss the nature and reliability of historical sources and know why there are different interpretations of historical events. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behaviour in lessons is good. They respond well to questioning and work well independently and in groups.

135 The quality of teaching is good. All teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. Lessons are very well planned with clear learning objectives. A variety of teaching styles and effectively used resources ensures the pupils have a range of experiences. The marking of pupils' work is positive and constructive. SEN pupils have good provision, but work is not always well matched for some pupils in the middle-ability groups in Key Stage 3.

136 The department is very well managed and has a good policy document with clear aims and objectives. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection in a number of areas. In particular the monitoring and evaluation of the department has developed well. Processes for the use of assessment information to support pupils' progress are now in place and are being linked to target setting to help raise expectations and attainment. The development of good schemes of work has made a significant contribution to the improvements in curriculum planning and teaching. The department also makes a good contribution to the development of information technology and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

137 The learning environment is enhanced by good resources and displays. The creation of a teaching resource room is a very exciting development, particularly in the area of information

technology and is already being well used.

Modern Foreign Languages

138 At the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 standards are reaching the national average. Recently, there has been a leap in GCSE results. Standards of attainment in lessons are satisfactory in both key stages. In Year 8 French, pupils can write descriptions of faces on computers and in Year 11 German, they can understand instructions spoken at near normal speed. At A-level, pupils are reaching the required standard in German and are able to discuss opposing viewpoints. In French, pupils can answer routine questions and can understand complex fictional texts.

139 In all stages, the progress of pupils is satisfactory. In Key Stage 3, pupils use a mixture of language skills such as interpreting directions and taking part in dialogues. In Key Stage 4, pupils develop their analytical skills to improve their learning in German. In French and German in Years 12 and 13, they elicit information from texts for essay writing.

140 Pupils behave very well and are usually keen to participate in lessons in repeating new words with the teacher. They generally take pride in their work and organise themselves well. They work quietly on written tasks and concentrate well when listening to cassettes or each other's responses.

141 The quality of teaching is good throughout the faculty. Teachers have good knowledge of their languages and use it regularly. They use it in German consistently but in French sometimes miss opportunities to use it for explanations and classroom management. They plan a good sequence of varied activities which involve a wide range of resources to cover all the language skills and keep pupils' interest. They set appropriate work for pupils with SEN and treat pupils sensitively. Teachers create a good working atmosphere and provide opportunities for assessment of work. Work is marked in line with the faculty policy. Homework is not set on a consistent basis across the faculty and suggestions for homework are not contained within the schemes of work other than in Year 7.

142 All pupils can follow a course in foreign languages and there is a good amount of time allocated. There is no scope for pupils to study two languages after Key Stage 3. The Faculty has many links with European countries such as exchanges, trips and Internet and these contribute to the cultural and social development of the pupils.

143 The head of faculty is a very effective leader of a large group of staff, who work well together to share ideas and contribute to the success of the faculty. Documentation is comprehensive but the strategic plan is less coherent.

144 The accommodation is becoming cramped as the faculty expands, but there are adequate resources. Access to information technology is limited. Staffing expertise in information technology is an area for development. The area is welcoming with pleasant displays of pupils' work and posters. There has been considerable progress made in modern foreign languages since the last inspection report.

Spanish

145 Standards of attainment at GCSE Spanish are above average. Overall, in lessons and in written work, standards of attainment are satisfactory. Pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 can understand

Spanish spoken at near normal pace in classroom routines and by Year 13 have developed a good range of vocabulary to cope with complex tasks about the environment.

146 Pupils make good progress in lessons at all key stages. In Year 9, pupils are able to create their own descriptions of people and in Year 10 participate in conversations about the environment. In Year 12, they can compare the way they live now with that of their parents. Progress in written work at all levels is satisfactory.

147 Pupils are interested and well motivated in Spanish. Their attitude to lessons is frequently good. They are very focused on tasks and appear to enjoy their learning. They join in readily with exercises. In Year 8, pupils took delight in an exercise to practise directions by pretending to ride a bike and in Year 11 they took part in picking up new phrases to use in exchanges in a shopping context.

148 Teaching is consistently good and often very good. Teachers' knowledge of the language is good and they set tasks which challenge the pupils. Lessons have good pace, with clear direction and are well planned with a range of activities. Teachers use a variety of resources, for example in Year 10 exercises were organised which exploited different language skills. Pupils know what is expected of them and this encourages them to participate well. Pupils' books are marked in line with the faculty policy and helpful comments are given. Homework is set usually at the end of the lesson though often insufficient time is given to explain it thoroughly.

149 Spanish is studied by a large number of pupils from Year 8 upwards and there is a growing number who follow a course at GCSE and A level. Activities such as exchanges and Internet links, which link the school with Spain extend and enhance the opportunities for pupils to discover more of Spanish culture and traditions. Examples of these are displayed in the languages area which is buzzing with activity at lunchtime.

150 The head of department provides a very good role model in terms of teaching and organisation and collaborates very well with the head of faculty who has overall responsibility. Schemes of work are detailed, covering all the key elements. Pupils have access to a good range of text books and listening materials. The use of information technology is an area for further development, particularly when additional accommodation is available to relieve the problem of some overcrowding.

Music

151 At the time of the previous inspection, attainment at Key Stage 3 was variable and this is still the case, although it is satisfactory overall. GCSE results are also still variable, but were below the national average in 1999. Present Key Stage 4 pupils are attaining at the expected level for their age, whilst attainment in the sixth form is good. Attainment in peripatetic lessons and school ensembles is at least satisfactory.

152 Pupils' progress has improved since the last inspection. It is satisfactory or better at Key Stages 3 and 4 and very good in the sixth form. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 have matured in their ability to work productively in pairs and groups and also in appraising compositions. Pupils' instrumental skills are improving although they need to be encouraged to use correct fingering on keyboards. Progress would improve if marking and written comments supported and reinforced the good use of teacher feedback in lessons.

153 Teaching has improved since the previous inspection with all lessons being at least satisfactory and many being good. The new head of department's enthusiasm and secure command of the subject promote high quality music making. There is some lack of consistency across the department in expectation and use of time, but in all lessons teachers try to ensure that pupils are actively engaged and are consolidating learning. Planning is good, instructions to pupils are always clear and solutions to most problems are provided through teachers' subject knowledge or instrumental skills. Theory at Key Stages 3 and 4 is taught within a musical context, frequently with humour and, as a result, pupils relish the musical challenges.

154 The department has addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. In particular, it now has stronger, more confident leadership. As a result, planning is now thorough, National Curriculum requirements are met and assessment is used to inform future planning. There is a good balance of both attainment targets and teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' musical attainment both in and out of the classroom. There is the opportunity to study music throughout the school, but time for music at Key Stage 3 has been reduced since the last inspection and is now insufficient for appropriate breadth and depth of the music curriculum.

155 Lack of time for redrafting and refinement mean that pupils' work on display is not of good quality. The department makes a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Co-ordination across arts subject is developing well. Provision of accommodation is good, but it has not aged well and some repairs are needed both internally and externally. Resources are also ageing but the department is making provision for replacement and maintenance through sponsored events. The department is well supported by peripatetic staff, whose lessons and ensembles are subsidised by the school.

Physical Education

156 GCSE examination results in physical education show that standards of attainment are below average. The A-level examination results are good and compare favourably to those of previous years.

157 Standards of attainment overall in Key Stages 3 and 4 are in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 4 attainment is in line with national averages. In games such as basketball, netball and soccer many pupils demonstrate a satisfactory level of performance. Pupils show an understanding of positional play and knowledge and rules of the game. Many show good control when sending, receiving and travelling with a ball and demonstrate an understanding of individual and team play. In swimming many pupils showed good achievement in individual skills in a recognised swimming stroke. However, in the lesson observed in Key Stage 3 gymnastics and health-related exercise attainment was below average. Pupils are insufficiently challenged with low level tasks. In both key stages there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in planning and evaluating their own and each other's performance.

158 Progress is average overall in Key Stage 3 and average in Key Stage 4. Many opportunities are provided for practice and refinement of skills in all activities throughout both key stages. Pupils are asked to recall previous learning through questions. However, there are few opportunities for them to extend their observational and descriptive skills. Extended questions would support this process particularly with the more-able pupils. Non-active participants are not sufficiently included in the learning process.

159 Pupils' response is good. They enjoy their lessons. Pupils are ready quickly for lessons and are keen to work and improve their skills. They work hard and sustain their concentration. Pupils

are polite, well-behaved and responsive to tasks and requests. Relationships are good between pupils and between pupils and teachers.

160 Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good elements in both key stages. Where teaching is good, students are given positive, evaluative feedback. They are challenged in a variety of tasks demonstrating high expectations by the teacher. Activities are matched to pupils' abilities and there is a good level of questioning. Teachers' recap at the beginning of the lesson and at the end through a series of focussed questions. Class management is good and is conducted sensitively and with touches of humour. Most of the unsatisfactory teaching involved pupils in low level activities. Insufficient notice was taken of prior experience and of associated knowledge and skills. However, there is insufficient evidence of pupil involvement in, and how they can develop observation, evaluation and planning skills. Development of these processes would further enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding.

161 The department is well organised and routines are well established. Departmental staff are experienced and respected by the pupils. Documentation has appropriate information but there is a lack of detail and consistency in long-term and medium-term planning. This has not improved since the last inspection. The department should plan to increase the intellectual challenge made of pupils and present them with more opportunities to learn how to plan and evaluate. An assessment system is in place but is still not linked to curriculum planning and to the requirements of the end-of-key-stage descriptions. Consideration should be given as to whether the wide range of activities taught allows for a good depth of teaching and learning particularly in gymnastics and dance.

162 The condition of the accommodation has improved since the last inspection. More use is now made of the swimming pool. However, the larger indoor facility still remains an inappropriate teaching space and is difficult to keep clean.

Business Education

163 The attainment of pupils at A-level and Intermediate Level GNVQ is satisfactory. In 1999 all pupils who were entered for the A-level examination achieved grades which were on average slightly better than those achieved by pupils in 1998. All pupils studying for the GNVQ achieved an award in 1999. In general attainment in the subject is in line with predictions based on students' prior attainment and in some cases students achieve better than their GCSE grades would predict.

164 Pupils' coursework is satisfactory and assignment work is generally done to a good standard. However whilst there are some very good examples of the use of information technology by pupils for individual assignment work, there is little evidence of the systematic use of computers for the presentation of text and data.

165 Students show an interest in their work and have a positive attitude toward learning. They work confidently on their own and co-operate well when doing group work.

166 Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are well planned. The teaching in most of the lessons observed was satisfactory and in some lessons the teaching was good. Teaching methods employed are generally appropriate for the subject. Pupils' coursework is assessed on a regular basis and good feedback is given to them on their progress and the standard of their work.

167 The teaching rooms used for the subject are very basic and there is no access to computers in the teaching areas, this restricts the use of information technology in the subject and limits the

extent to which pupils are able to develop their information technology skills within the context of the subject.

168 Some good use is made of links with local businesses to provide a real context for learning some aspects of the subject.

Expressive Arts

169 The school has a creative arts faculty, but art, music and drama are mostly taught as separate disciplines and art and music are reported on separately as National Curriculum subjects.

170 Attainment at Key Stage 4 is well above the national average with 91% of pupils gaining A*-C grade in GCSE expressive and performing arts last year. Pupils, including those with SEN, make good progress. They respond very well in lessons, demonstrating enthusiasm, enjoyment and the motivation to succeed. The good feedback given to pupils encourages them to be more fully involved in their own learning. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. Teachers are enthusiastic and present the pupils with interesting and challenging activities.

171 The creative arts faculty is very well managed. Good links between the separate disciplines and the faculty staff contribute positively to the developing ethos. All disciplines make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The timetable should be reviewed in order to provide opportunities for the head of faculty to have a planned programme of monitoring and evaluation.

Drama

172 The standards in drama are sound and close to national average. This represents good progress for many pupils, including those with SEN, who are fully engaged in all aspects of the syllabus, including performance. Attainment in lessons is good, especially at Key Stage 4, and never less than satisfactory at Key Stage 3.

173 Pupils enjoy the subject and many become committed to it because it affords them the change to engage in learning from a whole range of perspectives. Many spoke enthusiastically about the positive effect it had on their self-confidence and capacity to work purposefully in groups.

174 Teaching is good. At Key Stage 3, pupils cover a well-planned syllabus which, with limited time, seeks to lay firm foundations and develop necessary skills, including experience of working effectively in groups, using the voice and body to communicate emotion and thought, and improvisation. Evaluating the consequences of different presentational styles is integral to the course. At Key Stage 4, pupils who have opted for the subject develop these aspects further, applying their dramatic skills effectively in putting together performances of a good standard. Non-specialist staff are well supported.

175 Drama is strengthened by the strong team spirit in the faculty and the good leadership which has helped steer development. The quality of resources and accommodation has had a very positive effect, enhancing the process of performance work and enabling pupils to develop the full range of skills required to stage a performance for public view. There are good extra-curricular opportunities and links to other departments are beginning to develop. Assessment of speaking and listening in drama, is shared with the English department, and a production of 'Romeo and Juliet' is underway, linking to the English syllabus.

176 Drama offers strong support for pupils' moral, social and personal development. Older pupils were exploring the complex issue of conflict in Ireland in a thought-provoking and reflective way which enhanced the depth of their understanding. Drama in the context of the creative arts faculty gives a strong dimension to community links.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

177 The inspection team consisted of 15 inspectors who were in school for varying proportions of the five-day inspection period. During the inspections 229 lessons and other observations were recorded, including a sample of registrations and assemblies. Samples of pupils' work at all ability levels and from each year group were scrutinised. Discussions were held with three pupils from each year group about their work and experience of the school. Inspectors also had informal discussions with many more pupils and attended a variety of extra-curricular activities. An extensive range of documentation was analysed before and during the inspection. The headteacher, members of the governing body and support staff were interviewed. In addition, discussions were held with a variety of teaching staff with additional responsibilities. The inspectors considered 147 responses to the parents' questionnaire and held a meeting attended by 29 parents.

Data and indicators

74 PUPIL DATA

Y7 – Y13	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) 1801	Number of pupils with statements of SEN 5	Number of pupils on schools' register of SEN 245	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals 309
----------	---	--	---	--

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	96
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Education support staff (Y7 - Y13)

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked each week	366

74 Secondary schools

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:

78%

Average teaching group size:

KS3	26
KS4	22

74 FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:

1998-9

	£
Total Income	3,777,130.00
Total Expenditure	3,827,385.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,216.63
Balance brought forward from previous year	94,000.00
Balance carried forward to next year	43,745.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	1473
Number of questionnaires returned:	147
Percentage return rate:	9.97%

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	12.5	64.6	11.8	9.7	1.4
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	32.4	55.9	6.9	3.4	1.4
The school handles complaints from parents well	17.4	53.6	21.7	4.3	2.9
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	12.5	56.3	15.3	13.2	2.8
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	18.6	49.3	17.1	13.6	1.4
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	33.1	55.6	9.2	2.1	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	24.8	55.3	14.2	4.3	1.4
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27.9	53.1	6.8	10.9	1.4
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	21.7	61.5	11.9	4.2	0.7
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23.6	59.3	12.9	1.4	2.9
My child(ren) like(s) school	36.7	49.7	6.8	4.8	2.0